



Lake Forest Church Series Discussion Questions

Series: Exchanging Christmas

Part 2 of 2

INTRODUCE IT

At Christmas time, people give and receive gifts of all sorts. Share with the group one of the all-time favorite gifts that you received. What stood out about it? Who gave it to you? Also, share with the group one of your all-time favorite gifts that you gave to someone. Share why it was your favorite.

STUDY IT

In the Bible, there are two common places that we hear our traditional Christmas story: Matthew 1-2 and Luke 2. Matthew tells the story with our main visitors being the Magi and Luke tells it with our main visitors being the Shepherds. Last time we looked at the story in Matthew and the response of the Magi. In this set of questions, we will look at the story in Luke and the response of the Shepherds. We will close this study with comparing the two.

Read Luke 2:1-7

Many times our best plans are interrupted with inconveniences. Name each of the inconveniences to Mary and Joseph that are shown in this story.

Like many situations that we see as inconveniences, God is using them for his glory. In what way did God use the census as opposed to just being a bad inconvenience?

Can you think of a situation to share with the group that you hated the situation because it was a major disruption to plans you had, yet in hindsight, you see how God did an amazing thing through it?

Read Luke 2:8-20

Here are some basic questions just to make sure you capture the story but in the questions after these, we will compare what you notice to the Matthew passage:

What are the Shepherds doing? When? Where?

What were the words of the angel to them?

What was the sign given to the shepherds as way of recognizing the savior?

What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus?

What do you find significant about the words of the angel to the shepherds and the shepherds response to seeing Jesus?

Now, let's take that information and keep your finger on Matthew 1:18-2:12 as well. We want to now compare the two stories to see what we can learn.

Discuss as a group the difference in the sign the Magi were given and the sign the Shepherds were given. What is significant about each?

Discuss as a group the differences in the way the Magi and the Shepherds responded after seeing Jesus. What is significant about each?

At that time, there were many people all over the world that the angel could have appeared to. Why shepherds? Why would Luke tell us about the appearance of the angel to shepherds?

In looking at the difference between Matthew's account of the Magi coming to Jesus and Luke's account of the shepherds coming to Jesus, what do we learn about who gets the invitation to witness the birth of Jesus?

During this series we have wanted to challenge you to spend less, give more, worship fully and love all. In what ways do you see an example of all four challenges in these two stories?

USE IT

The angel that came to the shepherds said that the good news is for all people. Who are people you know within the bookends of Magi and Shepherds who need to know this good news of Jesus? In what specific ways in the next week can you tell them the great news of Jesus' birth?

What is the best way for you to worship this Christmas-as a Magi, bringing gifts to our Lord that you have held really close to as your own; or as Shepherds-telling others the good news of Jesus instead of keeping it to yourself? Which is hardest for you?

Pray as a group that this Christmas God would give you courageous hearts to share this great news that is for all people. Give us boldness and not hide this news