

Advent 2016 Opportunities

Please offer suggestions and review the following information:

1. The People of the Nativity

Gather your entire church around learning from the people of the Nativity.

Have you ever considered the importance of the people of the nativity? This Church Discipleship Campaign will help your whole church gain wisdom from Joseph, Mary, the Shepherds, and the genealogy of Jesus.

This bundle includes four weeks of sermons for Advent, a Powerpoint presentation to use with the sermons, a four-week study for your church's small groups that follows the sermons, and a bulletin insert. Use these tools to get your entire church on the same page.

Note: The different formats for each piece of the campaign are bundled as follows: one PDF for all four weeks of preaching material, one PDF for all four weeks of Bible study material, one Powerpoint presentation for all four weeks, and one Microsoft Word document for the bulletin insert.

If you're interested in purchasing only the Bible study, [click here](#).

Session One

The Genealogy of Jesus

We tend to gloss over the genealogies in Scripture, but there's much about the human condition and about our Savior buried between the lines.

Matthew 1:1-17 Everybody knows the genealogies are the biggest yawn in the Bible. "Rehoboam begat Abijah, and Abijah begat Ralph." It warms your heart about as much as reading a phone book. What's not often said, but understood, is that it's probably best to skip over "the begats" and not get bogged down in all those funny old names. Yet, at the same time, we pay lip service to 2 Timothy 3:16, which says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." If that's true, it includes the begats.

Session Two

Joseph

Joseph was an ordinary man who sometimes believed his doubts and doubted his beliefs, yet he had enough faith to do what God wanted him to do.

Matthew 1:18-25 Most people know who Jesus was in the Christmas story. But most don't know him very well. He is often treated a bit like the father of the bride in a wedding—nobody notices him, but he has to pay for the whole affair. Christmas cost Joseph a great deal.

Session Three

Mary

God entered human history through Mary because she was open and obedient to his will.

Luke 1:26-28 From one generation to another, Mary has been known as the mother of God. She was the one who gave birth to Jesus Christ, who was fully human and fully divine, God's own son. What was God doing, and why did he choose Mary to do it?

Session Four

The Shepherds

God sent his son Jesus Christ as Savior, especially for unclean people.

Luke 2:1-20 Shepherds were on the lowest rung of society. They commanded little respect and had no wealth or prestige. But in their tasks, they exemplified how the Savior of the world would treat his people.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/t/people-of-nativity.html>

2. Faith Gateway

Is your small group or Sunday school class looking for a Christmas Bible Study? The Advent season is a time to get ready and prepare our hearts for the celebration of the birth of Christ. Doing a Christmas Bible Study is a chance to build up in anticipation of the grand event, and to dive deeper into the Scriptures and the Christmas story all month long. These three Christmas Bible Studies by Rick Warren, Ray VanderLaan, Rick McKinley, Chris Seay, and Greg Holder will help you put a focus on the birth of Christ and the Christmas message.

Time and time again in Scripture we are called to remember all that God has done for us and to not forget. One way we can slow down and do that is to continue to meet together in small group settings and center ourselves in Scripture. These Christmas Bible Studies you could plug-and-play with your small group — or even as a family — and reflect on what Christmas is and Who it is all about. Each study is relatively short, either three or four sessions each, and could be done on consecutive Sundays in December or as a family in the days leading up to Christmas.

Christmas Bible Study #1: The Purpose of Christmas by Rick Warren

3. ***The Purpose of Christmas DVD Study*** for groups and families features three sessions taught by Rick Warren on why we celebrate Christmas and how it can change your life forever. At the very first Christmas – the birth of Jesus – an angel announced three things in which we find the three purposes of Christmas: it's a time for celebration, for salvation, and for reconciliation. <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/purpose-of-christmas-rick-warren/1100364352?ean=9781416559009>

4. **Christmas Bible Study #2:** The True Christmas Story by Ray VanderLaan

In this three-session DVD, travel with teacher and historian Ray Vander Laan to the land of Israel to discover the fascinating truths about the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. ***The True Christmas Story*** is strikingly relevant, packed with faith-building truths, and sure to speak to your heart well beyond the Christmas season.

5. **Christmas Bible Study #3:** Advent Conspiracy

The Advent Conspiracy by Rick McKinley, Chris Seay, and Greg Holder is a movement designed to help us all slow down and experience a Christmas worth remembering. But doing this means doing things a little differently. A little creatively. Through this engaging, four-session DVD you can substitute compassion for consumption by practicing four simple but powerful, countercultural concepts:

- **Worship Fully** – because Christmas begins and ends with Jesus!
- **Spend Less** – and free up resources for things that truly matter.
- **Give More** – presence: helping hands, healing words, humble hearts.
- **Love All** – the poor, the forgotten, the marginalized, the sick, in ways that make a difference.

<http://www.faithgateway.com/3-bible-studies-for-christmas/#.Vfd72jZRHcs>