

SERMON BASED CURRICULUM

**Date & Sermon Series:**

December 10/11, 2016; Hark

Speakers:

Pastor Heather Zempel

Scripture Focus: Matthew 1:18-25

Note To Leaders:

This weekend we discussed Joseph's role in the Christmas story. These questions provide a framework to prompt or foster discussion in your small group. Don't feel you have to use all or any of these questions and you don't have to make it to the end! Use the questions that best fit your group and let discussion flow.

Icebreaker Suggestions:

What Christmas traditions did you have growing up?

Sermon Series Questions:

1. What thoughts are still resonating with you from the sermon?
2. What was most encouraging or challenging about this weekend's message?
3. In what ways does Matthew 1:18-25 speak to you?

Specific Questions:

1. Are there any "Ghosts of Christmas Past" you're anticipating this Christmas season? What can you do to help prepare yourself for these?
2. What are some questions you struggle to answer when reuniting with those you do not often see? Why are they a struggle? If you do not feel this way, how might you support those who do?
3. Pastor Heather introduced Joseph's role in the Christmas story as typically being the one "hanging out in the back" when all of the excitement was happening around him. Have you ever felt like you've been relegated to the "back" when exciting things were happening around you? How did you respond?
4. Has there ever been a time where you found yourself having to decide between preserving your honor or face being misunderstood to do what you knew to be right?

5. When speaking about knowing Jesus, Pastor Heather stated, "His peace doesn't mean the absence of chaos; it means His presence in the midst of it." What is your response to this? Have you experienced this before? If so, how did He bring peace?
6. Jesus is called Emmanuel, which means "God with us." Read Romans 8:38-39. How do these verses build on His name?
7. How might you engage scripture differently to look more for the character of God than application for yourself? What are some possible benefits of this?

Read, Pray, Act:

Read Matthew 1:18-25, imagining yourself in Joseph's shoes, taking into account the cultural background Pastor Heather provided this weekend. How would you have responded? If you were Joseph's best friend, how would you have advised him to respond? How does your response differ from Joseph's?

Pray for God to give you the righteousness of Joseph. Ask God to reveal areas in your life where you should be responding differently than you are.

When reading scripture this week, write down the examples of God's character, and look for opportunities to display those. As an extra "act," look for examples of God's revealed character displayed in others.