

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What do we learn about Joseph in (Luke 1:27)? How is Mary described? Why do you think this might be significant?

How does the angel encourage Mary in verses 28-31? Have you ever experienced God's grace or favor in an unusual way? Talk about it. How did it feel? How did you respond?

In (Luke 1:32) Gabriel says that Jesus will be "great." Then he describes four things that Jesus will be or have or do. What are they? What is important about these descriptors?

Our concept of kingship these days is pretty shallow, mostly centering around the foibles of the British royal family. What power did kings have in the ancient world? What would it mean to have a king whose kingdom would never end?

What does it mean for us today that Jesus is a king, an eternal king, whose kingdom will never end? Where do you think his kingdom is today? How might this change or enlarge your concept of Jesus? How does it honestly make you feel about him?

What progression do you see in Mary's responses in (Luke 1:29, 34, 38)? How does Gabriel answer her question about how this could happen (v. 35-37)? Have you ever experienced going from confusion to questioning to faith? What was the situation?

What do you think the angel's statement in (Luke 1:37) meant for Mary? What could it mean for you today?

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

☀ *What can you do to alleviate the frenzied pace of the Christmas season?*

☀ *There has always been a sense of anticipation around Christmas. The first Christmas was no different. What promises or hopes are you currently waiting for God to fulfill?*

☀ *What should we teach our children to wait for? Opening presents? How can children be taught to wait for the birth of our Lord with the same eagerness?*

☀ *Your child walks into the store and the cashier asks him "So are you ready for Santa Clause?" Your child isn't sure what to say. The cashier continues, "Well have you been a good boy this year? You're not on the naughty list are you?" In terms of the idea of grace versus merit – how is the story of Jesus better than the story of Santa at Christmas?*

☀ *See if you are willing to try some extra "Christmas ministry" and report on the results. Be on the watch for harried clerks or people who seem distraught. Offer a few kind words: "It's all right, I'm not in a hurry." "Thank goodness this chaos isn't all there is to Christmas!" "At least it will be peaceful in church on Sunday!" See how people respond. What kind of holiday ministry can we think about or pray for?*