

Scandal: God was Born Discussion Questions  
12.10.17

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

**Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.**

1. Tell about your family history. What is a story that captures a bit of the character of your family history?
2. What is a favorite Christmas memory?

Background

This week our focus shifts to Mary and Joseph and the family Jesus was born into. From other telling of the story of Jesus's birth we know that Joseph was a carpenter and he was engaged to Mary. The words most often used to describe the relationship are betrothed/pledged because in the first century being engaged was significantly more serious than how we think of it today. There would also have been a large age gap between Joseph and Mary. Traditionally, men would be well established in their careers and able to provide for a family before getting married so Joseph may have been as much as 20 years older than Mary. Mary was very likely in her early to mid-teens when she was set to be married to Joseph. In addition, this would have been an arranged marriage and we have no indication of what the relationship actually was like for either of them. However, we know their character. We know that God chose these two to be the earthly parents for his only Son. We also know that Joseph believed the angel and chose not to divorce Mary.

Read Luke 2:1 – 7; Mark 3:21 – 22; Acts 1:13

Questions

**Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.**

1. Why were Mary and Joseph headed to Bethlehem?
2. Whose line does Joseph belong to that caused him to need to go to Bethlehem?
3. At the birth of Jesus, what all can we say about the family dynamics around Joseph and Mary at this point?
4. What surprises you about Jesus relationship with his family?

**Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.**

1. What difference does it make that throughout the Bible God chooses to act through normal people and their families?
2. Tell about a time you have seen Jesus break into a family in a surprising way.
3. Why is it helpful to remember both that mess doesn't stop Jesus from arriving in a family and that Jesus doesn't leave families where he finds them?

**Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives?**

1. What challenges you about Jesus' relationship with his family?

2. What is good news for you when you think about Jesus' relationship with his family?
3. Mary and Joseph played their role in bringing Jesus into their family and through them into the world. How might your family do the same this Christmas?
4. What small step can you take this Christmas that will make more room for Jesus in your family so that those in your sphere of influence see Jesus more clearly?
5. How does your family (and your stories) fit into the story of Jesus coming to earth?
6. What does this make you want to pray for your family?

#### Closing

Stories and talk of family can be very difficult for some please be sensitive to those in your group who may struggle during this season. Take some time to wrap them up in love and prayer as you finish your time together. Also, pray for one another that we would all look for ways to make more room in our lives for Jesus so that he can continue to use us to spread the good news that he came as a baby, died on a cross and rose from the dead to set us free.

Reminder: This Christmas, may we step away from the mechanical sameness of tick-tock time and allow Advent to be punctuated by moments of sacred time.