

Scandal: God was Born Discussion Questions
12.17.17

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. What was the place like where you grew up?
2. What is one of the more meaningful places in your life?

Background

Joseph's family could trace their roots back to King David, the greatest of Israel's kings, and so when the census was commissioned he and his soon-to-be wife had to go to Bethlehem. Bethlehem is a small village not far from Jerusalem and was best known for being the city of David. The Hebrew word Bethlehem translates to House of Bread and gives us a little insight into the area. It is in the hill country of Judea and while it doesn't get a lot of rain, it isn't as barren as other parts of Israel. There was likely farming happening in and around Bethlehem as well as sheep and goats being raised. In fact, many of the sheep and goats that travelers would purchase to sacrifice at the Temple were raised in the Bethlehem area. This is the place Joseph and Mary go to and where Jesus was born.

Knowing it was a small village makes a bit more sense why when droves of people returned because of the census there was no room available for Mary at the local guest house.

Read Luke 2:1 – 7; 2:39 - 40

Questions

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

1. What do we know about the land around Bethlehem?
2. What do we know about the people who lived in Bethlehem?
3. What do we know about the history of Bethlehem?
4. What can we surmise about the house/stable where Jesus was born?
5. What do we know about the land around Nazareth?
6. What do we know about the people who live in Nazareth?
7. What do we know about the history of the area around Nazareth?
8. What can we guess about the kind of home Jesus grew up in?

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

1. What surprises you about Jesus being born and growing up in these places?
2. Why do these places seem like the perfect places for Jesus to be born in and grow up at?
3. God chose a relatively unimportant place for the birth of his Son. What impact does knowing that have on how you think of Bellingham, your neighborhood, school/workplace, and home and the place we have in his plan to reveal his love to all?
4. Why do you think God chose an unimportant place and people with no power to factor so keenly into the birth of Jesus?

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

1. What place is Jesus inviting you to call home?
2. What is challenging about that?
3. What is exciting about that?
4. Who has Jesus asked you to extend a sense of home to in the past?
5. Who might Jesus be asking you to extend a sense of home to now?
6. What practices help you cultivate this deep sense of home, connection to land, community, history?
7. What practices help you extend a sense of home to others?

Closing

God chose a small backwater village to be the birthplace of his only Son. It is not only the great and grand that matter to God, the everyday and ordinary are just as important. This should be a reminder to us all that God's agenda is not like ours. Spend a few minutes as you finish your time together to pray for wisdom to recognize how God desires to use your places and your willing heart of bring his message of love, forgiveness and joy to those around you this Christmas.