



WHITE (space)
CHRISTMAS

Life Group Studies

Introduction

How can we celebrate Christmas well, keeping the real spirit of the season? Advent (the month before Christmas) is the time when the Church remembers the 'coming' of Jesus, both his first coming 2000 years ago and the second coming that we are still waiting for. This is an opportunity to evaluate our habits and traditions in a time of the year when we are often dragged into a whirlwind of demands on our time and money.

These studies look at four areas where we can shape our Christmas celebrations to reflect the story of the coming of Jesus. This can help us to make more 'white space' around our Christmas celebrations; creating mental, emotional and spiritual space to remember why we celebrate.

- 1) Worship Fully
- 2) Spend Less
- 3) Give More
- 4) Love All

This series is based on the 'Advent Conspiracy' material, which can be found at www.adventconspiracy.org, along with extra resources for families, and ideas for practical ways to celebrate Christmas.

Week One: Worship Fully

Matthew 2:1-11

1. What are your traditions around celebrating Christmas? Discuss the reasons for your traditions.
2. What does it mean to 'worship'?
3. Why did the Magi want to worship Jesus?
4. What does the word 'Messiah' mean (v4)?
5. Why was Herod disturbed by what he heard from the Magi? What did he do about it?
6. What is the significance of the gifts of the Magi – gold, frankincense, and myrrh?
7. What obstacles are there at Christmas-time to remembering the coming of Jesus?
8. How might it change our experience of Christmas-time if we spent more time in worship?
9. What could you do to take time each day and each week to worship Christ this Advent?
10. Are there any new traditions that you should add to your Christmas celebrations?

Group Activity

Share ideas for how to prepare an Advent Calendar (if you need inspiration, see some ideas at www.adventconspiracy.org under 'Spend Less' in the 'Four Tenets') that could help you to remember each day what you are thankful for, or some blessing that you have experienced from God. If appropriate, make a calendar together or prepare a template for each group member to use in their own home.

Week Two: Spend Less

Luke 2:22-32

1. What are the things that you particularly spend money on at Christmas that you wouldn't buy at other times?
2. Why is consumption such a big part of the way we celebrate Christmas?
3. What was Simeon waiting for?
4. What did he prophesy that Jesus would do?
5. What did Mary and Joseph spend money on at the temple (v22-24)?
6. Read Leviticus 5:7. Why did Mary and Joseph not buy a lamb for their offering? What does this tell us about the family of Jesus?
7. What obligations to spend money at Christmas do you feel that you cannot avoid?
8. Are you happy with the amount that you spend on the Christmas season?
9. What could you save money on this Christmas? What would you spend it on instead?

Group Activity

Work together to write a prayer of thanks to say each time you receive anything this Advent – before meals, when receiving gifts, waking up to a new day. Email or copy the prayer for each group member to keep with them.

Week Three: Give More

Matthew 1:18-25

1. How many gifts would you give during the whole Christmas season? Who do you give gifts to?
2. What is the meaning of gift-giving for you, and for our society in general?
3. What is the significance of the name 'Immanuel' that was prophesied for Jesus (v22-23)?
4. What gifts has God given us through the birth of Jesus?
5. What would be the best gift that anyone could give you this Christmas?
6. What are some meaningful gifts that you could give this Christmas to people who are in genuine need?

Group Activity

Write the names of your group members on pieces of paper, put in a container and pick out one each. Think of gifts of time, service, or other things you can give to that person during Advent.

Week Four: Love All

Philippians 2:1-11

1. Whom do you celebrate with at Christmas?
2. During the time of Jesus's birth, shepherds were looked down upon by others, but in Luke 2 we see that God chose to give them the message of Jesus' birth before anyone else. Why would that have been the case?
3. What is the 'mindset' of Christ (v5)?
4. How do we show the mind of Christ in our relationships (vv1-4)?
5. Is there anyone that you could invite into your life and celebrations this Christmas?

Group Activity

Come up with a practical way that your group can help make Christmas a more joyful time for people that might struggle in this season. This could be supporting a local charity or Christian mission initiative, or organising your own act of hospitality and generosity.

Notes

