

Life Group Leader Handout

January 1, 2017

Message: “Out of the Manger”

Pastor Joe Garofalo

Scripture: Isaiah 9: 2, 6

2The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.
6For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Main Idea:

The child born will still be in the manger unless you receive the Son that was given— as Savior and Lord.

The pronouncement of the Savior’s birth by Isaiah was much like in our day, in that the light came out of the darkness— the same light that we proclaim to a dark world today.

But in order to experience the fullness of all Jesus is beyond Christmas—we need to make Him both Savior and Lord, as we yield our lives to Him.

Application:

- Of the four names of the Messiah, which resonates most with you?
- In what ways have you seen Jesus in His humanity relate to you in your life? Any specific circumstances or trials come to mind?
- Jesus is out of the manger and is now seated at the right hand of God. So now what? (What does that mean to you?)

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

By Cindy Compitiello

“Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

From The Small Group Leaders Toolkit:

“People gravitate towards those who see the best in them. Encouragement is oxygen to the soul! Encouragement creates relational collateral. The word encouragement speaks of “coming alongside of another to give them courage.” Living for God in a godless world can be a fearful challenge. Everyone needs a leader behind them saying “I believe in you. You can do it.” I challenge you to make a habit of encouraging others every time you visit with them. Point out their progress. Remind them of their past successes. Take notice of their present investments. Express belief in them for the future. Spur them to do the right things in their life and ministry. If you develop the heart of an encourager, you will find that people are excited to be around you and will readily follow you.”

Recently, due to the leader adding “Group Connect” to their Life Group email chain*, Pastor Mike and I were so blessed by said leader following up with the hosts of the previous night’s group meeting via email. In the note, they thanked the couple for their hospitality and delicious food. They sent it to their whole group, as a thank you from all of them. It really made an impression on us!

Would you consider doing the same in 2017? After each meeting, take 5 minutes to send an email to the host. Maybe you could tell them how they blessed the group (food, music, etc.), or tell them that hosting is not always easy and you appreciate them doing it? Maybe they need to hear that their recent home improvements are really beautiful, or that the chance to visit with their kids was special. Or something simple like “ You make the best onion dip!” (This would go far in my group!). I might add a reminder of how we are praying for them too.

If your group is like mine, you’ve been together a while, and the group might take each other a little for granted. How far would a word of encouragement go in your group?

*In the past, we’ve asked for all leaders to add “groupconnect@ichristianc.org” to their Life Group email chain, and if you haven’t done it, the New Year is the perfect time. As always, we promise not to respond to your group’s internal emails, or give advice, but it is a way for Pastor Mike and I to see when and where your group is meeting, and if special prayer needs come up between meetings, we become aware of that as well. We always pray for those we see in our inbox. Thank you! And HAPPY NEW YEAR!