

CONNECT GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Comfort My People #2

BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

Identify the things at Christmas that often take the place of Jesus. Why? There are some bad things and some good things that can take the place of Jesus at Christmas. As your group reflects, prompt them to consider things from both of these categories. (Bad things: Materialism, over-eating, Selfishness, etc. Good things: family, traditions, parties, etc.)



A LOOK AT THE WORD

Jesus, the LIGHT in a DARK world. This study from Isaiah focuses on the darkness of the world without Jesus and the light that He brings into the world. **A Look at the Word #1:** As your group talks about the darkness of our day, encourage them to not only discuss cultural and societal problems of “other people”, but to personally look at the darkness of our own lives and families that need the light of Jesus.

In Isaiah 9, in **A Look at the Word #2**, the blessings that come from the great light that Jesus brings point to a future, perfect reign of Jesus that will be universal after his second coming. We do experience those blessings personally now. You may need to help people wrestle with the *“Now and Not Yet”* nature of the blessings that are ours because of how great Jesus is. The full experience of those blessings will be experienced in his future perfect reign.

Make sure your group takes some time to personally apply this in the *TODAY* section.

MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

At Christ Community, we value purposeful responsiveness. We want to be doers of the word and not just hearers of the word. Set the example for your group and encourage them to reflect on the life change that has happened in them because of a relationship with Jesus and then to be prepared to share that story with the group, with their family, and with friends, co-workers, and neighbors.

Christ Community Church - Announcements

Christmas ERP Outreach | Help people in need right here in Ames! "Adopt" a family and provide a Christmas gift for each member. Donate gift certificates from Wal-Mart, Aldi's or money towards Hansen Sinclair gas cards. Or donate winter coats, boots, hats and gloves. For more details contact: Debbie and Tom Johnson, tdjohnson@mchsi.com, 515 296 2041.

Blinks Volunteers Needed | for the upcoming Upward Basketball season. Barista training is available. Contact Marilyn Rohlf to find out more information [jammr@isunet.net or 515-203-1018]

Congo Christmas | Bring joy to children in Congo while meeting their basic needs. Purchase an animal, a household item - even a machete - to be delivered to children in your name or in the name of a friend or family member. Gifts range in price from as little as \$. You can also become a monthly sponsor for orphans in Congo through Reach Global. Information and donation cards are available in the atrium.

The Perfect Gift | Help us reach thousands in our community, Saturday DEC 10. Sign up on the church app, at www.ccames.org, or stop by the table in the atrium with questions.

Perfect Gift Donations | One of the highlights of The Perfect Gift is the gift room. We rely on your donations to provide this opportunity for children. Drop off small gifts [\$5 or less] and wrapping supplies at the atrium table.

Perfect Gift Tea Room | Do you like to bake? Our Tea Room needs cookies and cupcakes of all kinds. bring a dozen or 10 dozen. We also need donated costumes so kids are able to dress up during their tea. Go to www.ccames.org for details and to sign up.

CONNECT GROUP STUDY

Comfort My People #2 – Isaiah 7,9,11,61

BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

When they announced the Christmas play at a school in Memphis, TN, it read like this: *All of the cast will be played by students in the eighth grade, except the baby Jesus, who will be played by a concealed 40-watt light bulb in the manger.* Each Christmas, many of us realize that Jesus is often replaced by things which shine less brightly than He truly is. We need the Light of the World, but often people settle for something less. This week's study focuses on the personal greatness of the Savior God sent. Before we open the word, take a few moments and identify the things at Christmas that often take the place of our incomparable Savior. Then ask...why does this happen?

A LOOK AT THE WORD

Today's teaching featured what Isaiah had revealed to him, and what the prophet revealed to God's Old Testament people about the kind of Savior God would send. Let's **head back to Isaiah 9** for just a moment, and ask two questions:

#1 When the LIGHT of God's Messiah comes into a person's life, **what are the "darknesses" which are chased away?**

- a) **Read** Isaiah 9:2-3
 - What was the condition of the people *before* the Light came? How would you describe today what Isaiah is talking about? Offer some examples
 - How does Isaiah describe the impact of the Light? What are the word-pictures he uses? (vs.3)
- b) **Read** Isaiah 9:4-5
 - How do these verses describe the reasons for the joy? What are some of the "yokes, staffs, and rods" that are beating up peoples' lives today? What "battles" (vs. 5) are people facing?
 - Whom does Isaiah identify as the one who can cause these things to be taken away? [By the way, look at what happened "on the day of Midian" in Judges 7:19-23. Who provided Gideon's victory?]

#2 When the LIGHT of God's Messiah was given, **what blessings come from the greatness of who He is?**

- a) **Read** **Isaiah 9:6-7**
 - In these verses, the word "government" is twice used. When the Messiah comes again, what will happen in His reign, and how will he be described because of the joy of what is happening? (see also Isaiah 2:2-4 for a description of how Jesus will reign)
 - How do we know this "day" will actually happen? (cf. **Isaiah 6:7**)
- b) **Read** Isaiah 11:6-9 What are the "enmities" to be eliminated in the coming age of the Messiah? [Remarkable, eh?]

TODAY...the blessings of knowing the Messiah, Jesus, the Great Light, are individually experienced. Someday, the world will experience these blessings. **SHARE** with your group the biggest change the Light of Jesus has made in your life.

MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

MY LIFE – David wrote, "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1). *Are there any darknesses that need the light of Jesus in your life right now? Any fears you need to surrender to His rescuing?* Have the honesty to admit these to the Lord. Let Him save!

YOUR FAMILY – If you identified a Light-of-Jesus change (see TODAY above) in your life, *share this with your family around the dinner table.* Perhaps your spouse, or your kids, also can identify a change Jesus' light has made in their lives. Share them! Praise the Lord together for them!!

OUR MISSION - Christ Community Church seeks to express the value (in our church family environment) of **purposeful responsiveness** to the Lord and to one another. Jesus said to us who follow Him, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), "A city set on a hill that cannot be hidden." If the light of Jesus has made a difference in us, let's pray for opportunities to offer His Light to others in our lives yet walking in darkness. Pray! Pray!!