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**Connection Group (Small Group)**  
**Week 1: The Birth of Jesus Foretold**  
**Luke 1:26-38**



**WELCOME**

*[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same.]*

**OPENING PRAYER**

**PURPOSE/VISION CASTING** *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

**REVIEW GROUP GUIDELINES** *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

**PREPARING OUR HEARTS** *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them – we share our hearts out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, not to please someone else]*

**TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE** *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

**During this small group time we'll be using the book of Luke. Luke was a gentile who wrote the story of Jesus for other Gentiles. Luke writes very carefully, as he indicates in the prologue, his aim is to produce "an orderly account" which is exactly what he does.**

**Luke's gospel is extraordinarily joyful, why? He is overwhelmed with the thought that Jesus is the Savior of the whole world. He is astonished that Jesus came to seek and to save not just the Jews, but all people regardless of race, age, or culture. Luke's gospel tell a rare and unforgettable story.**

**TELL THE STORY** *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, ie. your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

**Luke 1:26-38 The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

**REBUILD THE STORY** *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]*

**READ THE STORY ALOUD** *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

**<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And**

the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.”

<sup>38</sup> And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

**DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS** *[Questions marked \* are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to “teach” them something.]*

1. What do we learn about Jesus Christ from the angel’s announcement?
2. \*What do we learn about man/us from this passage? (
3. Why do you think the angel Gabriel told Mary about Elizabeth’s condition?
4. How did you come to an understanding of who Jesus is?
5. How would you explain your relationship with Jesus now?
6. \*What is God leading you to do? Sum up your “take-away” in a word or short sentence.
7. \*Who will you tell this week what God has shown you in His Word today?

**ASSIGN NEXT WEEK’S PASSAGE** **Luke 1:39-56** *[Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]*

**PRAYER REQUESTS** *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don’t have to have something to share every week.]*

**HUDDLE** *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

- 1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...
- 2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...
- 3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it’s ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]



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## Connection Group (Small Group)

### Week 2: Mary Visits Elizabeth

Luke 1:39-56



#### WELCOME

*[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same.]*

#### OPENING PRAYER

**Ice Breaker Question:** Whom do you call first when you have good news to share? How do you make visitors welcome in your home?

**PURPOSE/VISION CASTING** *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

**REVIEW GROUP GUIDELINES** *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

**PREPARING OUR HEARTS** *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them – we share our hearts out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, not to please someone else]*

**TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE** *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

**Our Bible reference is Luke 1:39-56 – prior to this passage we see two very different births foretold, that of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. The angel Gabriel came to Zechariah and told him of the birth of his son to be called John. The same angel, Gabriel, also came to Mary with the most amazing birth of all, the birth of the Son of the Most High. Mary was amazed and frightened, asking the angel "How can this be since I am a virgin."**

**We have learned that Mary and Zechariah's wife Elizabeth are related making Jesus and John the Baptist cousins. John will be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth and will make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**

**TELL THE STORY** *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, ie. your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

**Luke 1:29-56 Mary Visits Elizabeth**

**REBUILD THE STORY** *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]*

**READ THE STORY ALOUD** *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

**Luke 1:29-56** <sup>39</sup> In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when

the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.  
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
<sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
<sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;  
<sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;  
<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
<sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

**DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS** *[Questions marked \* are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to “teach” them something.]*

- 1. What did we learn about God from this story/passage?**
- 2. What did we learn about man/us from this story/passage?**
- 3. Who do you relate to most in the story/passage, and why? Does this passage relate/resonate with you in any way, and if so...How?**
- 4. How do you apply this story in your own life?**
- 5. What is God asking you to do?**
- 6. If you were asked to sum up in a word or short sentence one ‘take-away’ from this story/passage, what would it be?**

**ASSIGN NEXT WEEK’S PASSAGE Luke 2:1-20** *[Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]*

**PRAYER REQUESTS** *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don’t have to have something to share every week.]*

**HUDDLE** *[As members are leaving gather your team and...]*

*1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...*

*2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...*

*3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]*



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## Connection Group (Small Group)

### Week 3: The Birth of Jesus

#### Luke 2:1-20



#### WELCOME

*[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed. Co-facilitator do the same.]*

#### OPENING PRAYER

**Ice Breaker Question:** What is one way your hometown is different now than when you grew up? Is it still home? Why or why not?

**PURPOSE/VISION CASTING** *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

**REVIEW GROUP GUIDELINES** *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

**PREPARING OUR HEARTS** *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them – we share our hearts out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, not to please someone else]*

**TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE** *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

**Our Bible reference is Luke 2:1-20 – From Genesis to Micah we see prophecy of the birth of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The fact that God becomes man is the miracle of all miracles. He doesn't come as a powerful, invincible warrior as the Jewish people had expected, but as a little baby boy crying in a stable.**

**We have learned of Mary, who serves as a wonderful example to us as she gives God the glory in the midst of what must have been a difficult situation. Elizabeth as she rejoices in the coming of her Lord and the birth of her own child. John the Baptist as he comes into the story with leaps of joy at the sound of Mary's voice. The angel Gabriel as he brings the news of a baby born of a virgin. Now we learn of the most important One of all, Jesus.**

**TELL THE STORY** *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, ie. your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

#### Luke 2:1-20 The Birth of Jesus

**REBUILD THE STORY** *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]*

**READ THE STORY ALOUD** *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

**Luke 2** In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came

for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

<sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

<sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

<sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS** *[Questions marked \* are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to "teach" them something.]*

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3. **Who do you relate to most in the story/passage, and why? Does this passage relate/resonate with you in any way, and if so...How?**
4. **What is God asking you to do?**
5. **If you were asked to sum up in a word or short sentence one 'take-away' from this story/passage, what would it be?**

**PRAYER REQUESTS** *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.]*

**HUDDLE** *[As members are leaving gather your team and...]*

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## Group Guidelines

Safe Group

Listen

Silence

Sharing

Don't Rescue

Use "I" Statements

Conflict

Confidentiality

Pause

No "Cross Talk"

Don't Fix

Be Self-Aware

Personal Application