

SHINE! SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK 1

DECEMBER 4, 2011

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL
WORSHIP WITH YOUR LIFE:

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW GOD BETTER, GIVE BACK TO HIM



JESUS: HIS BIRTH

You might think you know everything there is to know about Jesus' birth (you know, Mary riding on a donkey, the manger, the wise men), but today we're going to take a fresh look at this familiar story. Jesus wasn't born just to give us a cool holiday to celebrate - He came to change our lives forever and give us an avenue to connect with God in ways never before possible.

THINGS TO TALK ABOUT...

* READ LUKE 2:1-20 TOGETHER.

* ARE YOU WORRYING OR WORSHIPING? (LUKE 2:10)

- when's the last time you were afraid or really worried?
- what are some of the differences between worrying and worshiping? Are there any similarities?
- what do you think is the root cause of fear and worry?

* ARE YOU SHOWING AND TELLING?

- Have you ever done "show and tell"? Any memorable stories?
- Luke 2:10 says that the "good news" is for "all people." If you're a follower of Jesus, what have you done to SHOW others that your life is different? what have you done to TELL others about what it means to be a Jesus-follower?
- Have any of your friends heard the "good news" but don't care? How should we handle that situation and how should it affect our relationships with those friends?

* ARE YOU HIDING OR SEEKING? (LUKE 2:11)

- Luke 2:11 proclaims the announcement of the birth of Jesus! when's the last time you heard amazing news, and how did you respond?
- why might some people run away from God's and His forgiveness?
- If not, why? what's holding you back?

* TAKING IT HOME.

- what are some everyday ways that you can worship God - things you can do in normal life to honor, please, and enjoy God?
- who is one friend who might benefit from a conversation about God or an invitation to SHINE? what could you do to extend that invitation or begin that conversation this week?
- what is one way you could celebrate Christmas differently this year, in a way that helps you and others see Jesus and His birth a little differently? How can the way you celebrate Christmas be an act of worship to God?

MEMORIZE: "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased" (Luke 2:14).

DECEMBER'S FAITH SKILL

#5 WORSHIP WITH YOUR LIFE

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW GOD BETTER,
GIVE BACK TO HIM

WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING TO KNOW GOD BETTER, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT EVERY JESUS-FOLLOWER NEEDS TO KNOW. WE CALL THEM **THE 5 FAITH SKILLS**, AND EVERY MONTH IN SHINE! YOUR SMALL GROUP LEADER IS GOING TO HELP YOU BETTER DEVELOP ONE OF THESE SKILLS. WE CAME UP WITH A FEW IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOU GROW IN THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL, BUT YOU CAN COME UP WITH YOUR OWN TOO...

#1 WORSHIP GOD TOGETHER FOR WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR YOU

worshiping God isn't difficult or complicated. It should be easy and even natural for a follower of Jesus, because worship is simply our response to everything God is and everything He has done for us! As a small group or on your own, spend time writing down what God has done in your life personally, and who He is. Then talk to Him - thank and praise Him for who He is and what He's done.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS: we've got blank paper and stuff to write with at the Small Group supply station.

#2 GIVE TO GOD BY GIVING TO OTHERS THIS CHRISTMAS

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells us that every time we love, help, or serve someone in need with the heart of Jesus, it's as if we did it for God Himself. This Christmas, there are many people in need both around the world and in our own communities. This month, either as a small group or with your family, give to God by giving to others.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS: Pick up a guide to helping your students find ways to serve and give to others this Christmas. They're at the Small Group supply station!

#3 SPEND 3 WEEKS IN YOUR QUIET TIME LEARNING HOW TO WORSHIP GOD BETTER

If you want to better understand what it means to worship God in your everyday life, check out this 3-week quiet time plan that you can either do on your own, or with your small group. This reading plan will walk you through what God's word says about worshiping God with our talents, worshiping through a heart of thankfulness, and praising Him for what He's done for us.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS: This reading plan is at the Small Group Supply station, and is also accessible on youversion.com or on the "Bible" mobile phone app (it's actually 3 plans combined: "Stewardship," "Thankfulness," and "God's Promises").