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ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE

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# JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

THE GREATEST STORY EVER  
COMES ALIVE!

ONLY IN CINEMAS FROM NOVEMBER 30

ADULT/TEEN DISCUSSION GUIDE





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## DAY ONE: WHO IS JESUS? WHO AM I?

How about a quick game of word association? For each of the following, write the very first word that comes to mind:

**Christmas** \_\_\_\_\_

**Family** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faith** \_\_\_\_\_

**Jesus** \_\_\_\_\_

Now do the same exercise, writing the first thought that comes to mind to complete the sentence below:

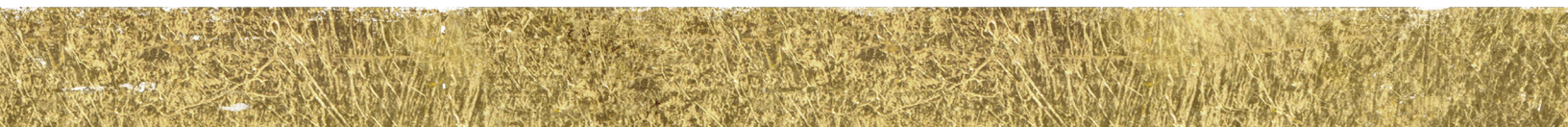
**I am God's** \_\_\_\_\_.

We come to the Christmas season with different circumstances, attitudes, and expectations. That's absolutely normal. In fact, we saw it reflected in JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM—Mary, Joseph, their parents, the wise men, and Herod all came to the news of Jesus's birth differently.

At the same time, our circumstances shouldn't form our understanding of the meaning of Christmas and who we are in relationship to God. Understanding who Jesus is helps us understand who we are. Misunderstanding who Jesus is makes us misunderstand ourselves.

Consider the way in the Bible Mary finished that sentence when the angel came to tell her she was chosen to carry God's Son, the Messiah.

*"See, I am the Lord's servant," said Mary. "May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. -Luke 1:36*





Mary understood who she was because she understood who God is. So, her service to God wasn't reluctant. It wasn't a have to; it was a get to. The same was true for James, John, Peter, Paul, and a long list of others we find in Scripture who lived their lives by the same hope Mary so boldly expressed: "May it happen to me as you have said."

Check out these passages and note who the writers understood themselves to be.

- James 1:1
- Revelation 1:1,9
- Philippians 1:1
- 2 Corinthians 5:20
- Jude 1:1

These bold declarations of identity confront us with another important truth—our understanding of who we are has a direct correlation to what we do and how we live. In other words, your perceived identity determines the reality of your obedience to God's call on your life.

When we see ourselves as God's servants, we're compelled to obey His commands. When we identify as ambassadors for Christ and partners in His tribulation, kingdom, and endurance, we look for ways to share His gospel every day.

- So, it's important to ask: Who do I understand myself to be? Am I operating under an identity that aligns under God's authority, or do I assign authority to myself?
- Be completely honest about your answers to those questions with God in prayer. Ask Him to help you better understand who Jesus is so that you can better understand who you are and live for Him.







## DAY TWO: I HAVE QUESTIONS

- What is one question you'd like to ask God?
- What are some questions you noticed characters had about God in Journey to Bethlehem?

Life can be confusing. It's normal to have questions about how God works in the world. It's normal to have questions about Jesus too. If you have a few, you're not alone. The events surrounding Jesus's birth came unexpectedly to many people—and it caused them to have some questions.

### Read Zechariah's story in Luke 1:13-14, 18-20:

<sup>13</sup> *But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. <sup>14</sup> There will be joy and delight for you, and many will rejoice at his birth."*

<sup>18</sup> *"How can I know this?" Zechariah asked the angel. "For I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years." <sup>19</sup> The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and tell you this good news. <sup>20</sup> Now listen. You will become silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."*

- What happened when Zechariah questioned the angel?

When Mary questioned Gabriel, she got answers (Luke 1:34-35). When Zechariah did the same thing (Luke 1:5-24), he lost the ability to speak because of his unbelief. What was the difference?



Zechariah was skeptical and wanted proof. He got that proof too—he lost his ability to speak! Mary, though, wanted understanding. She knew the angel’s words meant a virgin birth, and she wondered how it would be accomplished.

- What is the difference between asking God questions and questioning God?

**Read James 1:5-6:**

*<sup>5</sup> Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith without doubting. For the doubter is like the surging sea, driven and tossed by the wind.*

- What should you do when you are confused about who God is, what He has done, or what He is doing in your life or in the world?
- Where can you find God’s answers to many of your questions?

It’s okay to have questions! Your questions don’t necessarily offend God or signal a lack of faith. In fact, seeking answers to our questions can actually be a sign of faith. God welcomes our doubts and questions if we are honest and open to hearing the truth. Your questions represent one way you can grow spiritually. As you study the Scriptures and seek God in prayer, He will reveal His wisdom and give you assurance.







## DAY THREE: JESUS ANSWERS EVERYTHING

- What are some inaccurate ideas people have about who God is and what He is like?
- In the movie, what were some inaccurate ideas people had about Jesus?

Sometimes when we have questions about God, we fill in the blanks with answers that make sense to us. As Jews in the Holy Land waited for God's promised Messiah, no one really knew what He would be like. Most people expected a military king who would free them from Rome's power and restore them to a place of prominence in the world. In God's chosen time, He acted. But He acted in a way nobody expected.

### Read Luke 2:1-7:

*<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

- What does Jesus's birth reveal about who God is and what He is like?

The birth of Jesus, the Son of God—distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. In many religions, you find stories of gods coming down to earth in some form but never taking the humble form of man in the way Jesus does. In some other religions, mankind is promised deity, but in Christianity, God puts on humanity.



- What is surprising to you about the way Jesus came to earth?
- Why do you think God chose to come in such an unexpected way?
- Long before Jesus came to earth, Isaiah prophesied that those who have walked in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:2). How is that true for you this Christmas season?
- What is the difference between asking God questions and questioning God?

Thank Jesus for coming to earth as a baby, fully human like you, to experience and understand your struggles and questions. Thank Him that, at the very same time, He is your Savior and Lord. Ask Him to help you live in light of who He is.

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