

Good News -of- Great Joy

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 4 December 24, 2023

“Good News of Great Joy” (Christmas Eve)

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for coming to earth to be with us and for the gift of your son on Christmas. Let us be thankful in this time for the many ways you have blessed us. We pray this in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Jeremiah 31:2-4 (NIV)

² *This is what the Lord says:*

*“The people who survive the sword
will find favor in the wilderness;
I will come to give rest to Israel.”*

³ *The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying:*

*“I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.*

⁴ *I will build you up again,
and you, Virgin Israel, will be rebuilt.
Again you will take up your timbrels
and go out to dance with the joyful.*

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 4 December 24, 2023
“Good News of Great Joy” (Christmas Eve)

INTRODUCTION

Emmanuel: God with us.

The Good News of Christmas is found in the hope that the angels sang of and that Mary delivered when Jesus was born: that God, our Savior, has come to rescue us. Beyond temporary feelings of happiness we find in the warm glow of Christmas lights, or wrapped tightly in colorful wrapping paper, or soaring on the melodies of our favorite Christmas carols, the Good News of Christmas is that joy - a deep, lasting feeling of great pleasure and hope - can be found in the baby born so many years ago, our *Emmanuel*.

QUESTIONS

1. What are some of your favorite things that have happened this Christmas season?
2. What's something that's given you joy at Christmastime (either this year or in the past)?
3. What does God's promise to Israel in Jeremiah 31:2-4 (on page 1) mean for you - that there is hope enough to express joy even in times of sorrow?
4. Place yourself in the shoes of a few of the people in the Christmas story. What might the shepherds have felt after that initial fear upon the arrival of the angels? How harrowing must the logistics of this journey have been for Mary and Joseph? What would it have been like to stand before the manger of Jesus?
5. Mary is said to have “treasured up all these things” that happened surrounding the birth of Jesus “and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19, NIV). What are some things that happened this Christmas season that you can treasure and reflect on?

FINAL APPLICATION

Take time to give thanks for the joys you experienced this holiday season; and take time to consider how you'll carry that joy throughout the year. Merry Christmas!