



# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

## MESSY CHRISTMAS / WEEK ONE

### BEFORE GROUP

#### BOTTOM LINE

You're not alone when life gets messy.

#### SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:6-14, 16-20 NIV

#### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to find joy in God's presence with them this Christmas no matter what their holiday season looks like.

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

This week's conversation encourages students to find joy in Jesus this Christmas. Be sure to remind students that joy isn't the same as happiness. Happiness is a feeling often related to our circumstances while joy is a contentment we can find regardless of our circumstances. Choosing joy isn't easy, especially when living in the tension of unmet expectations. Be careful not to gloss over the challenges or difficulties your students may be facing this season. Instead, listen with empathy while pointing them toward the joy they can find in Jesus even in the midst of trials or hardship.

*Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.*

### DURING GROUP

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think about Christmas?
2. What expectations do you have for the holiday season?
3. How does it feel when the reality of your Christmas doesn't meet those expectations?
4. **UPPERCLASSMAN QUESTION:** What makes living in the tension between our expectations and our reality difficult?
5. Think back to the birth of Jesus we talked about today. What made that first Christmas seem messy?
6. Even though there were a lot of messy parts of that first Christmas, the angels said that Jesus brings us joy. How did the birth of Jesus bring joy to the world? How does it bring joy to *your* world?
7. What would it look like for you to choose joy this Christmas?

#### TRY THIS

Leaders, this week, challenge students to notice a moment when they experience joy related to the Christmas season. This could be seeing decorations, attending a Christmas party, or welcoming family. Encourage them to write down the moment that sparked joy and keep it as a reminder to choose joy.