

# **CBC YOUTH MINISTRY GUIDE**

MARCH 2016 ISSUE

# Shalom!

Let me officially welcome you to the inaugural issue of CBC Youth's Ministry Guide!

Yeah, the name of this piece of literature may change, but our desire for your growth and involvement will not. The goal of the guide is to give you a resource that you can use to better engage with our ministry, whether you're a student, leader, or parent.

Each month's guide will cover some of the topics from Youth Praise, our monthly all-youth gathering. We'll revisit the topics and provide opportunities for you to reflect on what God's been teaching you and opportunities for you to dive deeper. It may have activities you can do as a community group, as a family, or maybe with your mentor/mentee. There are sections for each stage of life, but if you're a middle schooler, don't be afraid to dive into the parent section! And that goes likewise for any adults looking for more ways of engaging and relating with the youth. These are great reflection questions to discuss together!

This issue of the Ministry Guide will be a bit different, since we're now entering the season of Advent. The content is based loosely on an advent guide from The Village Church - if you're interested, look it up online, it's a fantastic resource (although, about 40 pages lengthier than our guide).

So what is advent? The word advent simply means 'coming'. The season of Advent is a time that we remember the anticipation, the preparation, and the fulfillment of our coming Savior, Jesus Christ.

We hope this guide will help draw you towards Christ as we get closer and closer to the celebration of His birth!

## Week 1 - "The Promise"

(November 27 - December 3)

### **Read**

Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 9:1-7

The Advent story actually doesn't start in Bethlehem, it starts in Genesis. Scholars refer to Genesis 3:15 as the *proto evangelion*, or 'first gospel'. It begins with man and woman living

in harmony with God, with everything as it should be according to God's perfect design. But in an instant, sin entered the world. Chaos, shame, and brokenness afflicted the world and man's perfect fellowship with God was shattered, separating man and woman from their creator and perfect Father. And yet, in that time of utter despair, God whispers a promise to his children. A Savior will come. Help is coming.

Throughout the Old Testament, the promise is consistent. God reminds the Israelites that a deliverer would come and rescue them. And God's people waited. And waited. At last, the Redeemer arrived. We'll talk about how He arrived next week.

### **Middle School**

Think about a time that you had to wait a long time for something. Days, weeks, maybe even months! How did you feel while you were waiting? Did you ever doubt that it would happen? How did you deal with the doubt or discouragement? How do you think the Israelites felt waiting for the Messiah?

### **High School**

What are some ways in the Old Testament where God rescues or redeems the Israelites? Jesus is the greater Redeemer because he rescues us from the bondage of sin, something no one else can do. What are some sins that still have you enslaved? How can we be delivered from sin and why is that important?

### **Parent/College**

Sometimes, God puts us in seasons of waiting in our lives. Reflect on a time that you had to wait on God to move or for God to answer a prayer. What did God teach you during that time and how was your faith transformed? Share your experience and what you learned to a youth in your family or in your Community Group.

### **Pray**

Acknowledge the brokenness of the world and your own sin, separating yourself from God. Confess your need for a Savior and a Redeemer. Thank God for sending a Savior to rescue you from the sting of death and from the darkness we lived in.

### **Grow**

Spend 20 minutes this week in silent meditation, focused on confession and repentance from sin since we are free from the bondage of sin because of Jesus Christ.

# Week 2 - "The Fulfillment"

(December 4 - December 10)

## Read

Micah 5:2, Luke 2:1-7

The Old Testament is littered with prophecies foretelling the arrival of the Messiah. They predicted the place, that His mother would be a virgin, and that He would be from the line of David. And the Israelites waited for their rescue to come. For thousands of years, they waited. Some expected the Savior of the world to appear as a king, a ruler of nations and government. Others envisioned a warrior. And yet, even with the many prophecies of the Old Testament, no one imagined the actual way that Jesus would arrive in this world.

A baby in a manger, born in a stable. Mary and Joseph forced to journey to Bethlehem by a mandatory census. And in that small, unassuming stable, the Son of God and Savior of the World came into this world, God becoming flesh. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies, arriving in just the right time and just the right way, just as God had foretold through his prophets.

## Middle School

Last week you remembered a time when you had to wait for something. Now remember what it felt like when you finally got it or when it finally happened. What emotions did you feel and how did you react when the wait was finally over?

## High School

God reveals much about His nature and character through the arrival of Jesus, His Son. What are some of these attributes God reveals through the Advent story? Remind one of the younger members in your CG of one of the characteristics of God that sticks out to you and why it's important.

## Parent/College

God's way of doing things is often times much, much different than the way that we would do things. Jesus' birth is one example of that. What is one way that God has worked in your life that didn't line up with your plans or expectations? In what way has that affected your spiritual life? Share this experience and your thoughts with a youth in your family or Community Group.

## Pray

Thank God for his faithfulness in sending His Son to rescue us, just as He promised. Thank Him for His goodness in sending a Savior and ask for increased trust, belief, and hope in God and His promises to us.

## Grow

Research the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled and the New Testament fulfillments. Here's a few to get you started:

Genesis 3:15 // Romans 5:6-8; Galatians 4:4-7; Colossians 2:13-15

Isaiah 9:2 // Matthew 4:12-17; John 1:4-5, 12:46

Isaiah 53:10-11 // Romans 5:1-2

Isaiah 53:4 // Matthew 8:14-17

Isaiah 61:1-4 // Luke 4:16-21

## Week 3 - "The Good News"

(December 11 - December 17)

## Read

Luke 2:8-20, Romans 10:14-15

Don't you love getting good news? Getting good news just feels...well, good! Even better is when you're one of the first to hear and straight from the source. Hearing the news on Facebook or through Instagram just isn't the same as a personal phone call or conversation, right?

When we get good news, one of our first reactions is "who can I share this good news with?" We excitedly call up our closest friends and give them the big news, sharing our joy with them. And God does something similar with the good news of His Son's birth. In an explosion of light and extravagance, God's heavenly host proclaims the good news of God's Son entering the world as a baby to...a bunch of shepherds.

If shepherds in a field tending their flocks seems like a strange group of people for God to share his good news with, you're not wrong. In fact, they were the first people that God decided to proclaim this news to! It wasn't the rulers of the world or even the religious leaders, it was a group of simple shepherds. And it wasn't by their own deeds or merit that God shared this good news with them, it was only by God's grace and unconditional love that this gospel reached the shepherds.

Now imagine you are the shepherds, minding your own business. When suddenly, the skies are filled with a heavenly host, proclaiming the greatest news in the history of all creation to you! The shepherds did the one thing they could do in a situation like this: they left their posts and went to see this wondrous thing that had happened. And when they had seen and believed, they responded to this joy by sharing and spreading the news of this astonishing event.

Just as the shepherds were recipients of great news, we too have heard a “good news,” or gospel. Instead of the good news of Christ’s birth, however, we are heralds of Christ’s death and resurrection, an event no less amazing or worthy of sharing! So let us respond in the same way as the shepherds did those many years ago: in amazement, belief, and action.

### **Middle School**

God didn’t *need* the shepherds to spread the good news of Jesus’ birth. He could have had the angels proclaim their praise to the entire world! Why do you think He chose shepherds to do it? Why do you think God has commanded us to share the good news?

### **High School**

Good news is meant to be shared! What keeps you from proclaiming the gospel to those around you in exuberance, just like the shepherds did? The shepherds sharing the news of Jesus’ birth was out of sheer joy - why is that we often don’t feel or respond the same way? What might help you consistently view the gospel as a joyful calling to share the good news?

### **Parent/College**

God paints the skies with His glory when proclaiming the good news to the shepherds. What instances do you remember receiving a glimpse of God’s glory? Do you remember the first time you sensed the magnitude of the beauty of His glory? How can we remind ourselves of that beauty daily?

### **Pray**

Thank God for sharing the Gospel with you, specifically, despite your sin. Praise Him for loving the weak, the lowly, and the despised and for sharing His glory with us. Ask God for boldness in stepping out of fear and sharing the gospel with others.

### **Grow**

Write a letter to someone who shared the good news with you and helped you to come to faith. Tell them how the Lord used them to proclaim the good news and display God’s glory.

# Week 4 - "The Star"

(December 18 - December 24)

## Read

Matthew 2:1-12

Last week we took a look at the shepherds as heralds of God's glory and good news. But that wasn't the only way that God shared His good news. No, He placed a star, signifying the coming of the Messiah, in the sky. This astrological wonder was seen by the Magi, who interpreted the meaning and immediately went to see the Messiah with their own eyes and to worship Him.

What's interesting about the Magi is that they were definitely not Jews. In fact, they were likely Persian in origin. God didn't limit the good news of Jesus' birth to the Jewish community. No, He allowed the Gentiles to hear it as well! That star was placed strategically and specifically to reach those Magi so that they too may hear and experience the joy of the good news.

God wants His good news shared with men and women of every nation, tribe, and tongue. Just like the star, we too have been placed strategically and specifically. There are people in our lives that have been placed in our lives so that we can share the good news with. Sometimes, the way that we're placed is obvious. Most of the time, it's not. But each one of us is different and influences different people. Some of us may be called to be a star in a foreign land, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in a literal sense. For others, the 'nations' may just be next door! From international students to refugees, America has many opportunities to reach the nations.

Remember, the gospel is not an American idea! Because the gospel has been proclaimed to us and has reached us, we cannot take and hide it. We have to display it, shining God's glory to those around us, drawing men, women, and children from all nations to His Son.

## Middle School

Do you ever think about people across the world? How are these people different from you, and how are they the same? Read Matthew 28:19. What does Jesus command us to do, and how can you do it as a middle schooler?

## High School

What are some reasons that Christians give for not spreading the Gospel to the nations? Are any of those reasons valid? Read Psalm 86:9. What encouragement does this verse give us about spreading the Gospel? How can this verse challenge us in our daily life? What are some ways that you can actively get involved in taking the Gospel to all nations this upcoming year? Think of some specific ideas.

## Parent/College

Who are some people who you think God has strategically and specifically placed in your life so that you can share the gospel with them? How do you think God has called you to reach the nations? Have you been obedient to that calling? How can you try and reach those around you and those far away from you in the short term and in the long term? Make some actual plans or strategies.

## Pray

Pray for missionaries in foreign lands, especially those that we know personally. Pray that God will enable us to reach the nations in our daily lives.

## Grow

Read Ephesians 2:11-17 and reflect on how this affects the way we share the gospel. Search for ministries (there are some at CBC!) that reach the nations and find out ways you can get involved and pray for them.

*Thanks for reading!*

As we look forward to Christmas, a lot of people will be singing Christmas songs and doing Christmas-y things, but as Christians, we look forward to another advent or coming. We live on this earth, full of the knowledge and hope that our Savior will come once again.

We're so glad that you dedicated your time this week to growing deeper into God's word. It's our hope and prayer that this was somehow beneficial to you and that you were encouraged and blessed by it. If you liked it, let us know what helped you! And if you didn't, your constructive feedback is greatly appreciated. God bless.