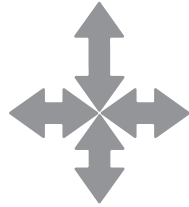




## GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of December 9th

This study is designed to help your community group grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. There are three dimensions to following Jesus.



**UP:** growing in relationship with God

**IN:** growing in relationship with other followers of Jesus

**OUT:** growing in relationship with the world around us as we join God in God's mission



**Out: : Connect with the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)**

Throughout the fall, our groups named people in our lives to whom we wanted to intentionally and faithfully represent Christ. (If you didn't do this earlier in the fall, take some time now to go around the circle and name such a person) Check in on these relationships. Have you had any meaningful conversations with these people in the last few weeks/months?

### **Getting Started:**

Is there a person in your life that you trust absolutely? What is your trust based upon?



**UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word**

Read aloud the passage for the week: Luke 1:39-50. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note any words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. Elizabeth's baby is aware of Jesus's presence, even while in the womb! Think back on this past week. Were there moments when you noticed Christ's presence in your life? Were there any conversations, interactions, etc. where God was evident? Describe these moments.

2. Re-read verse 45. Elizabeth declares that Mary is blessed because of her faith in the Lord's promise. When has it been easy or challenging for you to believe the Lord's promises to you?

3. Have everyone pull out their Bibles and assign people to read these verses aloud in succession: Luke 11:9-13, Hebrews 13:5, Joshua 1:9, Matthew 6:31-33, Romans 10:9-10, Proverbs 3:5-6, Philippians 4:6-7, Malachi 3:10, Psalm 9:9-10.

These are some of God's promises to his people throughout the Bible (there are many more). Which of these are easier and which are more difficult for you to believe? Why?

4. Read John 3:16-18. God has given us a promise in Jesus. God offers life to those who put their hope in Christ. How would believing this fully influence your day-to-day life? Are there changes you would make in your life?

5. Advent is a season of waiting and anticipation. However, it is not just anticipation for this Christmas, but for a future joy, when Christ's kingdom will be fully realized. Moving forward in this season, what can you do to actively seek joy in the promises of God?



### **IN: Connect with Each Other**

Take time to thank God for the faithful witness of Christians in ages past who believed God's promises and acted on that belief in ways which have influenced our faith today.

As you wrap up, discuss whether your group would like to host a Christmas party. Consider meeting in a home, doing a "white elephant" gift exchange, singing a few carols, etc. Consider inviting other friends or neighbors who may potentially join your group in the future.