

**BIG IDEA**

Jesus came to show us how much we are loved.

**SCRIPTURE**

Malachi 1:1-2, Malachi 3:1-4, Mark 1:2b-4, John 1:29-31, Romans 5:6-8,

**ICEBREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT**

1. What makes you feel loved by your friends or family?
2. We often face disappointment in life, and that disappointment can make us question ourselves and our relationships with others. One definition of disappointment is “sadness or displeasure caused by the nonfulfillment of one’s hopes or expectations.” How does this definition strike you? In what ways have you experienced disappointment lately? How can disappointment impact the way you see yourself and your relationship with others?

**BIBLE DISCUSSION**

3. Read Malachi 1:1-2a, and 3:1-4. These passages speak to the disappointment of Israel in God. Have you ever been disappointed with God? What was your experience?
4. These verses also foretell John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Messiah. The same theme is picked up in Mark 1:2-4, read the passage. Why would it be valuable for someone to prepare the way for the Lord?
5. Read Romans 5:8. How would you put this passage in your own words? What does it say about God that he takes the first step toward bringing us to him? How might that speak to us in our disappointment?

**LIFE APPLICATION**

6. The Christmas story can become familiar to those who have heard it so frequently, so read the Max Lucado quotation below, and discuss it. Why is it significant that God came as a humble baby boy?

*“God was given eyebrows, elbows, two kidneys, and a spleen. He came not as a flash of light or an unapproachable conqueror, but as one whose first cries were heard by a peasant girl and a sleepy carpenter. The hands that first held him were unmanicured, calloused, and dirty. No silk. No ivory. No hype. No party. No hoopla. Angels watched as Mary changed God’s diaper.”*

7. We are always finding our way back to God. Sometimes we come to God for the first time. Some days we wander away and need to reorient our lives around God once again. In what ways do you need to come back to God?
8. Who do you know who may be sad or bitter from disappointment? How could you show God’s love to them this season?