

# **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**SERIES - HOPE FOR EVERYONE**

**WEEK 3 - HOPE IN DISTRESS**

## **MESSAGE BIG IDEA**

God is with us wherever we go, so we do not need to be afraid in any situation or circumstance.

## **SCRIPTURE**

Matthew 1:18-25

## **ICEBREAKER AND OPENING THOUGHT**

1. Do you have any phobias or things that freak you out (i.e., spiders, heights, crowds)?
2. Not everything that freaks us out is a phobia. A phobia is an intense fear of something which isn't likely to cause any harm. Have you ever been so debilitated by fear that it interfered with your ability to reason?

## **BIBLE DISCUSSION**

3. Read Matthew 1:18-25. What do you notice in this passage about Joseph?
4. What do you think about the choices he makes when he finds out about Mary's pregnancy?
5. The angel says, "Do not fear." Why do you think that is such a frequent command in Scripture?

## **LIFE APPLICATION**

6. There's nothing wrong with realistically acknowledging concerns in life. To ignore danger, for example, can be foolish. Where it becomes unhealthy is when we become immobilized by excessive worry or act irrationally out of panic. How do you tell the difference between a realistic concern and unwarranted fear and worry?
7. No matter what scary situations are around us, Christmas reminds us of the most incredible event in the course of human existence: Jesus broke through! He broke through into our world, into our mess, our distress, our hopelessness, and our fear, and he brought hope. Hope for everyone! What fears or situations do you need to hand over to God this season?

## **CHALLENGE: FACING YOUR FEARS**

Just like Joseph, we can face our fears by anchoring ourselves in the truth that God is with us. Immanuel has come. You are not alone. And how can we learn to anchor ourselves in this truth? How can we begin to face our fears and live a faith-filled life? We can reflect on Scripture and be reminded that God is with us. We can also rely on our community by being open and honest about what fears we are facing. It's in community that we will find the courage to face our fears.

Close the group by praying for the group to find the courage to face their individual and collective fears.