

Second Week of Advent

WELCOME (15 minutes)

- **Ice Breaker:** What is something you do to prepare for Christmas?

WORSHIP (10 minutes)

- Have someone read aloud **Isaiah 11:1-5** and proclaim together, ***“Like Israel – We PREPARE to celebrate the coming of the Messiah!”***
- Then sing #1, 2, & 14, from the **Small Group CHRISTMAS Worship CD**. (*Sing these carols worshipfully – not simply traditionally!*)

WIN (15 minutes)

- **PRAY** for people you know and love who are not prepared for eternity! Ask that the reality of who Jesus truly is will become known to them.

WORD (25 minutes)

Have everyone open their Bibles to the book of Exodus.

Read: Genesis ends with God’s people moving peacefully to Egypt to be cared for by Joseph. There they prosper and multiply, but the book of Exodus begins with a radical change in their circumstances. Have someone read aloud Exodus 1:6-11. Now oppressed and enslaved, God’s people need to be delivered!

Point #1 – God responds by listening to the prayers of the oppressed – Have someone read Ex 2:23 – 3:10.

Discuss: God’s people can cry out to their God and trust that He hears them and cares about their situation. God’s purpose of redemption and mission given to Abraham in the book of Genesis continues in the exodus story. God cares about His people. How does it comfort you to know God hears, sees, and takes notice of every sinful deed done against us?

Discuss: God spoke to Moses and called him to take his sandals off as an act of reverence (3:5). The Scripture says Moses “hid his face” in response (3:6). Why? Because Moses was in the presence of the Holy One! What is the difference between being “terrified” by God and being “awed” by God?

Read: In vs. 7-10, this holy God responds to the cries of the oppressed by revealing His plan to Moses. God was going to save them FROM something (slavery) FOR something

(worship and witness). That's exactly what has happened to us through Christ's work on our behalf! Have someone read aloud Ephesians 2:1-10.

Point #2 – God responds by revealing His character – Have someone read Ex. 3:11-15.

Discuss: Moses wasn't eager to go on mission! He made several excuses for not obeying God's call. If you feel as though God is sending you to do something beyond yourself, the key is to take your eyes off of your failures and weaknesses. Get a vision of God. Moses too had to recognize that God is enough. What are some areas in which you feel unqualified or unable to do what God has called you to do? How does God's presence and His promise enable you to go on?

Discuss: God told Moses His name: "God is". He has no beginning. He causes everything to be. He alone is God. God told Moses that the most important thing about his mission was God Himself! God is self-existent and self-sufficient. He doesn't need us, but we need Him! When we feel inadequate to obey God's call, what are some ways we can move our eyes from the magnitude of the task to the majesty of God Himself?

Point #3 – God responds by promising redemption – Have someone read Ex 3:16-22.

Discuss: In this striking promise, Moses was learning what it means to be a prophet: to declare God's message and to trust in God to work in people's hearts. Israel wasn't just enslaved physically, but they were enslaved spiritually too. They needed to be freed in order to worship. God told Moses that in response to Pharaoh's refusal, He would intervene with His "strong hand" performing wonders (3:19-20). God is looking for reporters, not orators. We do not have to make fine speeches; we just give the news. Moses had to learn, like us, that "it's not about you!" It's about the I AM. What are the fears that most hinder you from speaking on God's behalf? How can we overcome those excuses with faith in God's promised redemption?

Discuss: Christopher Wright says, "Exodus-shaped redemption demands exodus-shaped mission. And that means that our commitment to mission must demonstrate the same broad totality of concern for human need that God demonstrated in what He did for Israel... Our mission must be derived from God's mission." How can we make sure our ears are open to injustice and oppression in our world so we can respond with good works in Jesus' name?

Read: God offers redemption to us as well! Jesus, the great I AM and the good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep in order to lead us out of slavery into freedom – from the kingdom of darkness into His kingdom of light.

For next time encourage your people to read Exodus 4-10

WORKS (25 minutes)

- Break into smaller groups of **2 or 3's of the same gender** to pray for each other!