

UNCONVENTIONAL STUDY GUIDE

A Master Becomes A Friend

December 6 & 7, 2014

OPENING QUESTION

Many people spend Christmas each year in much the same way. Can you recount a Christmas from your past that differed from how you normally celebrate? What was it about that Christmas that was unique?

READ TOGETHER

Matthew 1:18-2:23 (have different group members read different sections)

BIG IDEA

Christmas is unconventional because through it a Master became a Friend.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As you read through Matthew 1 and 2, what did you find unconventional (unexpected, miraculous, out of the ordinary) about the stories?
2. **The Major Question this week:** Have various group members read the verses below. With each set of verses, try to identify the specific characteristic that would mark the Messiah upon His coming to earth. Genesis 3:14-15; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Deuteronomy 18:14-18; Isaiah 53:3-10; Isaiah 53:12.
3. Can you think of ways in which Jesus fulfilled those prophecies about who the Messiah would be?
4. In a word or a phrase, how would you describe who this Messiah is?
5. If you made your choices on how to live this Christmas solely based on what you know of the Christmas stories told in Matthew 1 & 2 and Luke 1 & 2, what do you think your Christmas would look like this year?

CHALLENGE

This week, commit to incorporating 2 or 3 habits into your life that are unconventional practices for the Christmas season. For example, we think about all the folks in Bethlehem who had no idea that Jesus the Messiah was born among them on that very first Christmas Eve. How about if you chose to take a walk on your block each evening this week and prayed for your neighbours to come to know the Messiah and asked the Holy Spirit to show you how that might happen through you.

PRAYER

Ask each group member to choose one person for whom they are praying that they would come to know Jesus – family member, friend, neighbour, co-worker – and pray specifically for them. And then ask someone to close with prayer that each person in the group would be able to live into an unconventional Christmas this week.

NEXT STEP

This is a great time of the year to read Lee Stobel's excellent book - *The Case for Christmas: A Journalist Investigates the Identity of the Child in the Manger*. Inside its covers, you will discover answers to the question of who it was who was in the manger and whether this person was divine, human or both.

