

Lower Story: scandalous beginnings

Upper Story: God's solution to our scandalous beginnings

God come down to bring us back to himself

The fulfillment of many prophecies

Discussion questions:

1. Do you remember the first few words of the first chapter of The Story? If not, turn back to Genesis 1 and read them. Next read the first words of this chapter of The Story (John 1). The Jews in Jesus' day had read and heard the story over and over through their lives. What would have come to their minds when the story of Jesus (the solution to all our problems) began with the same words that started The Story, back before there was any sin in the world?
2. Various titles and descriptions of Jesus are included in his story (John 1:1-14). Pick one of the following and explain what you think it means and how you have experienced this to be true of Jesus:
 

Jesus: The Word	Jesus: The Light	Jesus: Is God
Jesus: The one and only Son	Jesus: The Maker of all things	Jesus: The Life
Jesus: The one who brings grace and truth		
3. God spoke to both Mary and Joseph through angels (Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:19-24). What was the angel's message and how did Mary and Joseph respond to this heavenly messenger?
4. Mary and Joseph were real people living in a real small town. How might Joseph's family and the townspeople have responded when Mary turned up pregnant before the wedding day? How might they have reacted to the "An angel told me that God would make me pregnant, but Joseph and I are still virgins" story?
5. Jesus was born of a virgin and was conceived without sin. Why does this matter?
6. In the Lower Story, Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to be counted in the census; it was a hard 3 day journey for someone nine months pregnant. In the Upper Story, God was getting them to Bethlehem because that is where the Messiah was to be born. Recall an event in your life that seemed inconvenient and unnecessary, only to later look back and realize God was doing something greater than you knew at the time.
7. After Jesus was born, the shepherds hurried off and told everyone what they had seen and heard. Share a brief testimony about a time you really saw or heard Jesus move in your life. How might you share this story (and others like it) outside this group...with people who are not yet followers of Jesus?
8. Jesus is Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). As you walk with Jesus your Savior, how does it help you to know that he is God and that he is with you...all the time? In what situation do you need to be reminded that God is with you?

Homework: At the end of the DVD segment, Randy talked about how Jesus wants to do 3 distinct things in and through us. In the coming week pray about and then identify one action you can take to grow in each of these areas: 1) Jesus wants to come in you (invite Him to dwell fully in you by his Spirit); 2) He wants to grow in you (Pray that you will go deeper and deeper in faith); and 3) He wants to come out of you (Ask Jesus to let his light shine through you and touch the lives of others).

For next week, please read Chapter 23 of The Story (Matthew 3-4, 11; Mark 1-3; Luke 8; John 1-4).