**1. Motivate**

When has someone’s presence been the ultimate present for you?

* parent came to a game/concert/drama/award presentation I was involved in
* got to meet someone famous
* picture with Mickey/Donald/Minnie/Stitch at Disney World
* toured the Capitol building with our senator/representative
* got to visit elderly parent in assisted living when isolation for covid was lifted
* got to be with my son/daughter when they graduated
* got to be with parent/grandparent when they turned 100

**2. Transition**

We enjoy and appreciate the presence of someone meaningful in our lives.

* Today we study the very presence of the Son of God coming to earth as a human.
* Jesus is Immanuel—God with us.

**3. Bible Study**

A video introduction is available. View at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_pyni6f56> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/pyf2jvfc>

3.1 Virgin Birth Foretold

Listen for a prediction.

Isaiah 7:10-14 (NIV) Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, 11 "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." 13 Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

King Ahaz was facing an invasion. What did God invite Ahaz to do in order to be reassured?

* ask for a sign
* could be high or low, big or small, obvious or personal
* God would do something special just to show Ahaz He would protect/save the nation

How did Ahaz respond to the invitation to ask God for a sign?

* refused to ask
* didn’t want to “put God to the test”

Why do you think Ahaz might not want to have a sign from God?

* didn’t want to impose on God
* maybe didn’t want to admit his need for God’s intervention
* didn’t want to “owe” God for helping him
* he had not been a godly king, was possibly afraid the message would include bad news of judgment

What sign was promised by God, even though Ahaz had not asked?

* a virgin would be with child
* would give birth to a son
* the son’s name would be “Immanuel”

What do you think was the intent of the sign?

* God wanted to be the one to demonstrate His power and protection to rescue
* God didn’t want Ahaz to put faith in, to go to other kings/nations for help
* trust God, not men

What is the meaning and message behind calling the child Immanuel?

* Immanuel ⬄ “God with us”
* the miraculous child’s name would remind people of the promise of God’s presence
* then when God did deliver the nation, the presence of the child with that name would repeatedly remind them that God was the one who accomplished the miracle

Note: the truth that God is with us impacts you personally.

* the person of Jesus who *also* fulfilled the promise – as noted in our Matthew 1 passage for this study

lecture

* God’s human presence in time and space came to rescue us from the curse of sin
* God’s *daily presence in our lives* in the person of the Holy Spirit of God
* God wants us to depend on Him for daily needs – big and small

What are some ways God invites us to trust in Immanuel, *God with Us*?

* personal salvation – eternal life, eternal union with God
* God’s provision – daily, big things, little things
* guidance, wisdom,
* God produces the Fruit of the Spirit within/through our lives
* protection
* healing

3.2 God’s Promise Fulfilled

Listen for how God fulfilled the prophecy.

Matthew 1:18-19 (NIV) This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

What plans did Joseph and Mary have in place that they had to be willing to adjust to conform to God’s plan?

* engaged to be married
* God’s Spirit worked a physical miracle in Mary’s body
* she was “found to be with child”
* when Joseph learned of this, he thought the obvious … she had been unfaithful

What fears do you think Joseph initially had, hearing this news about his bride-to-be?

* he thought she had been unfaithful and had relations with another man
* he figured other people might accuse him (Joseph) of having relations with her before they were actually married.
* feared embarrassment for himself, for Mary, for her family
* he decided to end their engagement
* he thought to do it quietly so as not to make a public spectacle of her and her family
* he was probably hurt, maybe still loved her and didn’t want to disgrace her

In their culture, what options did Joseph have for dealing with this situation with Mary?

* marry her and live with the rumors and talk
* make a big deal of it and make sure to let people know it ‘WAS NOT ME”
* quietly end things without a big stink

What positive character qualities did Joseph demonstrate?

* said to be a righteous man
* he made “right” choices, decisions
* didn’t want to embarrass, disgrace Mary or her family
* he decided to end their engagement
* he thought to do it quietly so as not to make a public spectacle of her and her family
* he was probably hurt, maybe still loved her and didn’t want to disgrace her

Why do you think God chose this sequence of events surrounding the birth of the Messiah? Why not wait until Mary and Joseph were married – much less embarrassing?

* everyone would conclude that the son was the result of normal marital relations
* it would not be so obvious that the Messiah was not a normal human
* this way proves that God alone was the “father” of the Messiah – it was a miraculous conception
* other people might doubt Mary’s purity, but she *knew* *for certain* that the child was *not* the son of Joseph … it was the Son of God.

3.3 Our Faith Grounded in *God With Us*

Listen for how Joseph demonstrated faith.

Matthew 1:20-25 (NIV) But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us." 24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

What facts in the angel’s message indicated the child to be born to Mary was extraordinary?

* what is conceived in her is from God’s Holy Spirit
* this was not a deity having sex with a human
* this was a physical miracle accomplished by God
* Mary had not been unfaithful to Joseph

What benefits would humankind receive through the birth of this child?

* Jesus would save people from sin
* He will be both human and God
* He will be God among us as a human

How did Joseph respond to his dream?

* he did what the angel had commanded
* he ceased the divorce proceedings
* he took Mary as his wife
* he named the baby Jesus

What do these verses teach us about Joseph?

* teachable
* obedient
* a man of faith

Joseph responded positively to the angel’s declarations … why do we sometimes fear God working through us in unique or unexpected ways?

* sometimes God’s working in and through us can cause some inconvenience
* it might require work
* it’s not the way we are used to
* we don’t think “outside the box”
* we tend to limit God – we think He should do it the way *we* envision
* we may have a misconception of God’s power, authority, creativity

What do we know about the rest of the story that Joseph did *not* know of the future?

* the difficulty of traveling to Bethlehem with a pregnant wife.
* the threat to the baby’s life by King Herod
* a forced and extended trip of escape to Egypt
* how much people would whisper about and mistreat Mary and Jesus in the future

How might God’s Christmas plan influence *your* plans all year long?

* submission to His will
* involvement in ministries of God’s Kingdom
* service to Him

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

* consistent walk with Jesus
* trusting Him daily for victorious Christian living

Application

Sing to Him.

* Look up the lyrics to “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.”
* As you listen to the song, consider how Jesus’ presence makes all the difference.

Sit with Him.

* Set aside time each day this week to enjoy God’s presence.
* Turn off your phone and find a quiet spot to contemplate the depths of God’s love for you.

Share about Him.

* The virgin birth seems impossible and unbelievable to many people today.
* Look for opportunities to discuss the wonder of the virgin birth with others who might not know Christ.
* Emphasize that this points to the unbelievably wonderful truth of our reconciliation with God, which is impossible without Christ.

Clueless Crossword

Aiee Cucaracha! Someone lost the clues. And there’s no numbers either, but you do have the words. Maybe if you figured out the word length, that would help to get the words in the right squares. If you’re stuck, go to <https://tinyurl.com/pyf2jvfc> And yes, you can find the regular crossword there also.

