

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- You can watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

Welcome: *Icebreaker – Who is the most famous person you have ever interacted with?*

Study Tip: As we approach Christmas this week, we would like to offer you this Bible Project video to put all of the characters who encountered God into one grand narrative that proverbially “flips the script” on what you would traditionally expect for the birth of a royal king!



What's Going on This Week

This week, Pastor Randy Odom brought us into week three of our Advent series titled *Encountering God*. This week, Randy brought our attention to *Luke 2:8-20* to talk about how the Lord chose to reveal the birth of the royal messiah to the outcast shepherds. As you engage with this study guide, challenge your group to identify all the ways they may feel on the outside of the gospel message of Jesus just like the shepherds. Then, spend time rejoicing that Jesus chose to reveal himself to the outsiders and the outcasts as part of His glorious will to shame the wise and bring further glory to His name.

“The shepherds did not have a religious pedigree to hold up and be proud of. However, God chose the shepherds to show that no matter who you are, no matter your social or economic status, He loves you and sent His son for you.”
– Pastor Randy Odom

GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)

Worship (10 – 15 minutes)

Take time with your group and prepare your hearts as you enter into the presence of God for this meeting.

Option 1: Christmas Music Have someone share their favorite CHRISTMAS song. Find it online, play it, and sing along! Have them explain why the lyrics have impacted them!	Option 2: Scripture Meditation Spend time reflecting on your own encounter with Jesus. Meditate on your adopted status in Jesus (Ephesians 1:5) and your overall life transformation (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)	Option 3: <u>Advent Book</u> This year's advent booklet walks through the Bible's description of various encounters with the Lord. Challenge your group to follow along and openly discuss the readings!
--	--	--

Word #1: Expose areas of self-discrimination (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Luke 2:8-14 – In Luke's account of the gospel, the proclamation of Jesus' birth is intentionally given to shepherds who were out in the field watching over their flock at night. This is significant because in 1st century Israel, shepherds were in many ways considered to be the social, economic, and religious outcasts of society. The scene signifies the universal reach of the gospel message. **What are some of the social, economic, or religious barriers (e.g. lies from the enemy, misguided thoughts, misconceptions about yourself) that make you feel like "a shepherd" and have traditionally prevented you from receiving the truth of the gospel message? What stands out to you about the specific wording of the Angels proclamation to these shepherds considering their reputation of being outcasts?**

Host Tip: This may be a tough question to answer for most people. In order to lead the conversation well, do not be afraid to offer your answer first as an example. In addition, listen closely for any common lies that the enemy may be attacking your group with and be prepared to call it out. Finally, if someone offers a strong answer, ask if any of the other group members "can resonate with..." to prompt further discussion!

Word #2: Share the story that the Lord has given you (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Luke 2:15-20 – After the shepherds encounter Jesus at his birth, they proactively express the message that they had been given to all who would hear! They spend the rest of their time glorifying and praising God for everything that had taken place. **What would you say is the most significant "encountering Jesus" moment you have ever experienced in your life? Is there someone on your heart who needs to hear your story and what are some the challenges you face when you try and share your story with someone?**

Host Tip: Sharing your story of encountering Jesus can be challenging for some. Pay attention to any areas of life in which the enemy may have a stronghold when it comes to evangelism.

Witness (20 – 25 minutes)

- Pray that we would arm ourselves with the truth of scripture as we solidify our identity in Jesus Christ!
- Pray for the Spirit of courage as we unashamedly share our story of encountering Jesus!
- Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group.
- **Pray for the entire group and how they may be able to participate in future group meetings.**
- **Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!**
- **Pray for God's hand in the multiplication and revival of your group!**

Throughout the Week

-Christmas With 3Crosses: We would love to share with your group some AMAZING volunteer opportunities coming this Christmas. Find out more at [Christmaswith3crosses.com](https://christmaswith3crosses.com)

-Stay up to date with Ministry Opportunities: If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

-Join relief efforts locally and around the world: Looking to contribute to what is going on both locally and around the world? Visit our website and join one of the [relief efforts](#) being made available through our church partners or sponsor an [indigenous missionary](#)!

-Life Groups 2022: For more information about joining a group, hosting a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org