

The background is a vibrant red with diagonal stripes. A white, torn paper effect runs horizontally across the middle, separating the top and bottom sections. The top section is a solid red with small, repeating icons of crowns, gift boxes, and stars. The bottom section is also red with the same diagonal stripes and repeating icons.

UNEXPECTED *Christmas*

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Conversation Starter

- When you were a child, what did you appreciate most about your grandparents? Do you know anything about your genealogy?

Digging Deeper

- What stood out to you the most from this past weekend service?

**Together, open your Bibles and read from Matthew 1:1-17,
then watch Session 1.**

- Who are the significant people in your spiritual upbringing?

Matthew begins his Gospel, his account of the Good News with a genealogy, which at first glance might be something we skip over. However, Matthew's genealogy gives us insight into the history of the Israelites and includes many great people including Abraham, David, and of course Jesus himself. Matthew introduces us to Jesus, the promised King, our Savior, the Messiah, the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham. Matthew's work can be seen as a continuation of the Old Testament story of God's gracious redemption.

- Why does Matthew begin his Gospel by providing us with the names of Jesus' descendants? What's the point? Why was Jesus' family tree important to the Jews? (*Read Isaiah 9:6-7*)

Life wasn't easy for the people in Jesus' genealogy due to poverty and sin, however God would establish His eternal kingdom through a lineage of the broken.

- Which person in Jesus' genealogy do you most resonate with most? Why?
- What does it mean that God's promises are trustworthy throughout the generations?
- Why is it significant that Jesus' genealogy included moral outcasts and a diverse group of people? Why is that good news for all of us?

The genealogy of Jesus shows us that no one is beyond hope, that no one is beyond redemption! If God can use such a messed up family tree, he can surely use us! There is hope and grace for us all.

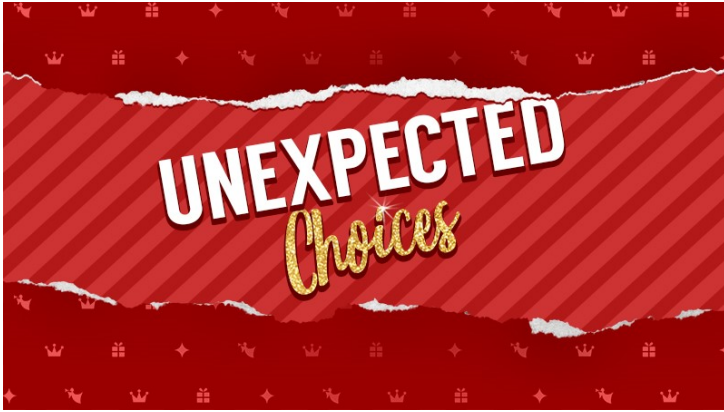
- What will you do this Christmas season to celebrate God's love and grace?

Live it Out

Think about someone whom you can demonstrate God's love and grace to this Christmas season.

Praise & Prayer Points

Spend some time praying and share what God is doing in your life.



Conversation Starter

- Do you know how your parents picked your name? What does your name mean?

Digging Deeper

- What stood out to you the most from this past weekend service?

Together, open your Bibles and read from Matthew 1:18-25, then watch Session 2.

Matthew 1:18-25 captures the birth of Jesus Christ. We also get a glimpse into the challenges that Joseph was facing with his wife to be. Have you ever taken a moment and thought about what life must have been like for Mary and Joseph? It's important to remember that Jewish couples were forbidden to have sexual relations during their engagement. The full extent of the Jewish law would mean Mary was punishable by death. Joseph, the good man that he was, chose to quietly divorce her that is until an angel showed up!

- What are your initial thoughts and reflections about Matthew 1:18-25?
- What challenges and pressures do you think Joseph and Mary may have faced in order to remain faithful to God?

Picture yourself as Joseph ...

- What emotions or feelings come to mind? What are you thinking about? How do you relate to Joseph’s experience?
- How would you feel if you were in Joseph’s place? What would you say to your family and friends?
- What does this passage tell us about Joseph’s character?
- Can you recall a time that God has called you to do something that truly challenged your faith? What was that experience like? How did you respond?

Read Matthew 1:21 several times, stopping after each word or phrase.

- Which words or phrases stand out most prominently to you? How does this verse shape the way you read the rest of this Gospel?

Let’s be a people of faith, a people that trust God, that rely on him even when the circumstances around us seem outrageous and out of our control.

- When did you last take a leap of faith like Joseph? When did you make that choice to trust God?

Live it Out

How has God invited you to be a part of what He is doing in the world? This week, share you story with someone.

Praise & Prayer Points

Spend some time praying and share what God is doing in your life.



Conversation Starter

- What is one of your favourite Christmas traditions?

Digging Deeper

- What stood out to you the most from this past weekend service?

**Together, open your Bibles and read from Matthew 2:1-12,
then watch Session 3.**

The Magi who came to worship Jesus were men of power and influence, they were pagan astrologers. God reached down into their world and invited them to be a part of His amazing story. Jesus is born, the King of the Jews, to bless God's people for the sake of all peoples. Everyone is welcome to be a part of His story.

- What made you fall in love with Jesus? Have you had to leave anything to follow Him?
- In your journey with God, would you say that you searching or following? Why?
- How are you like the Magi? Unlike them? How should our response to Jesus look like the Magi's response?
- How does Matthew point to Jesus' kingship in this passage?

The Magi remind us that there is only one God, the Creator of the universe and He desires all people to worship Him. God met the Magi

in their own context and communicated with them in a way they could understand. For the Magi, meeting Jesus would forever change their lives for He is one worthy of their gifts and worship.

- What does the Magi’s response to Jesus teach us about His significance?
- What is the “gold and frankincense and myrrh” in your life? Is there anything you want to offer Jesus now?
- When have you witnessed or experienced something that changed you forever?

God directs all history and nature to point to His Son’s birth. Like the Magi, we are invited to come and see the Christ and worship Him. God sends us, the church, to go be His witnesses to the world. Jesus, born the King of Jews is reaching into every nation and people group and He’s reaching out to you.

Live it Out

Be generous this Christmas season. Ask God to give you the name of someone in need and reach out to them with a helpful gift.

Praise & Prayer Points

Spend some time praying and share what God is doing in your life.



Conversation Starter

- In what city were you born? Would you ever move back? Why or why not?

Digging Deeper

- What stood out to you the most from this past weekend service?

Together, open your Bibles and read from Matthew 2:13-18, then watch Session 4.

The name of Jesus evokes a variety of responses, emotions, and feelings. We get different responses from King Herod, to the Magi, the religious leaders, and even his parents. Even today, people have many opinions on who Jesus is and what His purpose was here on earth.

- When did you first hear about Jesus? What was your initial response?

Matthew 2:13-18 begins with Joseph fleeing to Egypt, to keep his family safe from King Herod. Sometimes our lives don't go the way we want them too, however even in the midst of all the pain and suffering, remember that God is in control.

- What can we learn about faith and obedience from Joseph in this passage? How long would it take you to say "yes" if God ask you to move?

Picture yourself as Joseph ...

- What emotions or feelings come to mind? What are you thinking about? How do you relate to Joseph?
- In your journey with God, how are you like Joseph? Unlike him?

Picture yourself as King Herod ...

- What emotions or feelings come to mind? What are you thinking about? How do you relate to King Herod?
- In your journey with God, how are you like King Herod? Unlike him?
- Why is Herod troubled by the birth of Jesus? How does he react? Why are some people today still angered by Jesus?
- Can you sometimes identify with any of the reasons King Herod feared and hated Jesus?
- King Herod had his kingdom, what would you describe as your “kingdom”? Like Herod, why does it scare us so much to surrender control of our “kingdoms”?

The arrival of Jesus changed the world. Jesus established a new kingdom, a new way of life. We no longer have to be separated from God. Jesus is here, he has arrived. So what’s your response to Jesus?

Live it Out

Find someone with a different perspective of who Jesus is. Spend time with them for the purpose of understanding their perspective and hopefully make a friend.

Praise & Prayer Points

Spend some time praying and share what God is doing in your life.

