

Group Discussion Guide: With Jesus at the Beginning | December 12, 2021

Begin with prayer (10 minutes).

As you begin, read **Luke 1:26-56**. Once finished, pray to open your time together.

Split into three to four mini-groups for Scripture reading and reflection (25 minutes).

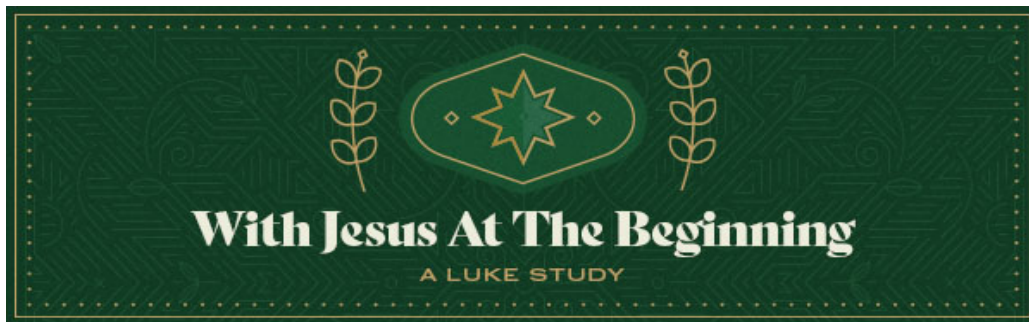
In this sermon, Dan shared with us about Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Jesus' annunciation from **Luke 1**. For the next few moments, take some time to prayerfully read through that text again as a smaller group. As you do, pay careful attention to any words or phrases that the Holy Spirit may be impressing upon your heart.

- **Re-read Luke 1:26-38.** What words or phrases from these verses stand out to you? What do you believe the Holy Spirit is leading you to believe or do as a result of these words or phrases?
- **Re-read Luke 1:46-56.** What words or phrases from *these* verses stand out to you? What do you believe the Holy Spirit is leading you to believe or do after reading these words or phrases?

After your allotted mini-group time is finished, have everyone circle back up in one big group to share their insights.

Go over the sermon, sharing your thoughts and insights (30 minutes).

- How did your mini-group discussions go? What topics rose to the surface from those conversations?
- How did this sermon about Mary challenge you? What resonated with you?
- What aspects of Mary's life and character do you find admirable? What's one thing in her life that you could emulate in your own life?
- In this sermon, Dan talked about how the story of Mary shows us that God is near, God is knowable, and that God understands what we're going through. Of those three points, which do you find yourself struggling to hold onto and relate to in this season? Why?
- Why do you think it was important for Jesus to come in the first place? Why do you think it was important that he come in human flesh with a real body?
- Towards the end of his sermon, Dan talked through several application points from this portion of Luke 1. He mentioned how, like with Mary, God wants to form Christ in us.



- What does “forming Christ in you” mean to you? Would you say that this is a priority of yours? Why or why not?
- Dan also mentioned how Mary was a humble, willing servant of the Lord. What was going on in her life that, for anyone else, may have made it difficult to be obedient and humble? What barriers do you face in saying to God, “I am your servant, let it be to me as you have said”?
- What practical ways do you feel challenged to grow in obedience or in your relationship with God from this text?

Split into gendered accountability groups (15 minutes).

Throughout this series, we’ll create space each week to have accountability with one another. This will provide each person a more intimate and hopefully safer space to share where they might struggle. Here are a few questions to guide this time after you split from one another:

- In what ways have you, unlike Mary, been disobedient to the Lord? What things would be good for you to confess right now?
- What has your time in Scripture and prayer been like recently?
- How is your relationship with God these days?
- How can this group pray for you right now?

Finish by praying over and for one another.

Come back as a large group and finish with intercessory prayer (10 minutes).

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone’s prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close in prayer.