



PROMISED CHRISTMAS



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GUIDES TO GROUP DISCUSSIONS

For thousands of years, God’s people longed for a priest to represent them to God, for a prophet to guide them, and a king to lead them—but all fell short. Join us for our new series, *Promised Christmas*, as we see how Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s promise—our perfect Priest, Prophet, and King who is everything we long for and need.

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Remember that you aren’t in this alone! God will help you prepare and lead your group discussion. Make it your goal to keep in step with the Holy Spirit!

Pray and read the passage a few times on your own. Take a few minutes to identify what makes an impression on you and how the passage might impact your group.

Once you’ve taken some time to read the passage on your own, read through the entire Discussion Guide. Make sure you understand the Main Point. Identify which questions you want to use in your group time and rewrite them in your own words.

Once your group time is over, take a few minutes to evaluate the discussion. What went well? What could have been different? If you had a “bad night,” DON’T GIVE UP! Everyone has tough nights. There were times when even the disciples didn’t get what Jesus was talking about!

**FREE
RESOURCES**

To equip you as a leader, we provide resources each series to help you and members of your group understand and respond to the biblical truths we're studying as a church. Don't forget about the Mariners Annual Read and the [Gospel Every Day](#) podcast discussing each devotional.

The CSB Study Bible is an excellent resource if you'd prefer a physical copy of the translation used by Mariners Church. It is available for purchase online and in the [bookstore](#) at Irvine.

All Scripture references in this guide are CSB unless otherwise noted.

HOW TO USE THE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

MAIN POINT

Discussions often take on a life of their own, but they typically lack power when they lack focus. The Discussion Leader ought to use the Main Point to keep everyone on the same page. To do this, you might say something like, "That is very interesting and a good topic for another discussion, but today's study is about..." and ask a question that brings people back to the topic of discussion. There will be times when it makes sense to ignore the Main Point—for example, when someone in your group experiences a significant crisis. If you decide to move away from the lesson's Main Point, you want to do so on purpose and not by accident.

RHYTHM REMINDERS

A prompt will be provided when one of the 7 Rhythms of Rooted has a natural point of emphasis. We want to help everyone continue to grow holistically in their spiritual journeys. Obviously, some rhythms always exist, like prayer, but occasionally it will be helpful to draw fresh attention to or spend additional time in one of the rhythms.

LEADER NOTES

Where needed, each lesson may have several Leader Notes. This material will provide insight on how to steer the conversation and care for your people. Additionally, these notes will provide greater context to help you understand a difficult word, phrase, or verse.

**LEAN IN
BREAK THE ICE**

These questions will help kick-start your discussion time. The main goal for this time is to get everyone talking and prepare them for the more focused conversation to follow.

**LOOK DOWN
LOOK AT GOD'S
WORD**

The goal for this section is to let the passage speak for itself and stand on its own. This isn't easy! During this time, you will read the passage out loud (twice) and answer questions focused on the details of the biblical text.

**LOOK OUT
IDENTIFY THE
RELEVANCE OF GOD'S
WORD IN THE WORLD**

Jesus calls us to love others, just as He loved us. Based on your understanding of the text and how God is transforming your heart, how will you treat others? How will you apply this teaching to all of your relationships and to everyone you will see this week and beyond?

**LOOK IN
APPLY GOD'S WORD**

Transformation comes from renewing your mind (Romans 12:2). The goal for this section is to look inward to allow God's Word to change you from the inside out. Use this time to discuss how your thoughts and feelings are affirmed and/or challenged.

Be sure to close your time together in prayer. You can take requests from the group, invite others to lead, and bring God the needs that stood out to you in your group time.

WEEK 1: THE PROMISED PRIEST

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



PREPARE

Listen and subscribe to the Mariners Life Group Leader Podcast.

If you missed the weekend message or want to review specific points, you can always watch, listen, and find bulletin notes online at marinerschurch.org/messages.

MAIN POINT

We all long for someone to confess our struggles to, someone to apply grace to our hearts, someone to represent us to God and God to us. We want a priest. For centuries, priests were the imperfect mediator between God and man. And then Christmas... At Christmas, the Perfect Mediator, the Perfect Priest arrived. Other priests wore special clothes to set themselves apart and show they were anointed, but this Priest was anointed by the Spirit before He entered our world. He is your priest, the Perfect One to go to in our weaknesses. He is your Priest, the Perfect One who did not bring a sacrifice but offered Himself as your sacrifice.

LEAN IN BREAK THE ICE

When you're having a rough day, what do you do to decompress or relax?

LOOK DOWN LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read Luke 1:35

35 The angel replied to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Read Hebrews 4:14-16

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

How does viewing Jesus as our great High Priest, impact the way we relate to and understand God?

LOOK OUT
IDENTIFY THE
RELEVANCE IF GOD'S
WORD IN THE WORLD

What are some common “high priests” of our culture today that may claim to comfort us in our suffering, but don’t actually help us at all? These could be people or rituals or vices we seek out.

These Scriptures make it clear that God wants to be near to us, but why does it sometimes feel like God is so far away?

In the message, Eric highlighted five areas where our longings are met in Jesus, our great High Priest. Which one do you need to hold onto today and why?

- **When you carry guilt and shame for missing your own expectations and much more God's expectations, you want a priest who goes to God for you for your forgiveness.**
- **When you wonder if you are really forgiven, you want a priest who pronounces over you that your sin has been taken away.**
- **When you feel alone and thought no one understands what you are going through and God feels so distant, you want a priest who is near.**
- **When you are in deep pain, grief, or suffering, you want a priest who understands you and can be with you in your pain.**
- **When you are overwhelmed with this world, you want a priest who cares for you and gives you insight.**