



WARM UP QUESTION

What's the biggest disruption you've ever faced in your life?

- 1** **Read Luke 2:1-5.** Describe the setting surrounding the birth of Jesus in verses 1-4. What do you learn about both Mary and Joseph in these verses? Being pregnant and not married would have been cause for a lot of shame and was even punishable by death in Mary's day. What is the difference between guilt and shame? Do you tend to experience one more than the other?
- 2** **Read Luke 2:6-11.** While a barn or stable is never explicitly mentioned, what words in verse 7 hint at the location of Jesus' birth? Who does the angel say is excluded from the good news of the birth of Jesus? Has shame ever caused you to automatically exclude yourself from something, including something you feel God wants you to do?
- 3** **Read Matthew 1:18-25.** What does Matthew's account of the Christmas story teach you about Joseph? Despite the incredulity of the message from the angel, how does Joseph respond to it? Why do you think Matthew quotes the Old Testament prophet Isaiah? Do you think knowing this verse helped Joseph respond in obedience to this major disruption?
- 4** **Read Matthew 1:1-17.** How many women are mentioned in this genealogy and what do you know about each? What do you know about any of the men? What does the knowledge that Jesus was born from sinners for sinners mean to you personally?
- 5** **Read Psalms 34:1-7.** Compare Mary's response to the angel's news that she would bear the Messiah to things you see in this Psalm (for fun, you could also look up any cross-references you may have in your Bibles to see all of the Old Testament allusions in Mary's song). How do you think having God's Word hidden in her heart kept Mary from feeling shame?

RESPOND

What have you learned about God from His Word? How is He asking you to apply it to your life? When will you apply it?

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