



## **REFLECTION / DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*Pick a few questions from below and reflect this week, or choose 4-5 to discuss in your home group.*

- **What are some Christmas Traditions you or your family have? Do you have any weird ones you can share? 😊**
- **Are you and/or your family following advent this season? If so, what resource is guiding you in that?**
- **How does it affect you to know that God moves toward you? (Romans 5:8) Have you ever acknowledged Christ in a committed way?**
- **Do you think Christians should move toward sinners? Why or why not? In what ways can the church move toward sinners? How can you move toward sinners in a way that makes the “Kingdom of God near?”**

**Why do you think the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus day did not recognize him as Messiah?**



### THINK ABOUT IT & LEADER'S GUIDE

#### Christmas Traditions: Expectancy

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##### OVERVIEW

ad-vent *noun*: the arrival of a notable person, thing or event. The first season of the Christian church year, (First Advent) characterized by expectant waiting leading up to Christmas, and including the four preceding Sundays. Advent is also used to describe the second coming of Christ. (Second Advent)

With origins in both the Catholic and Protestant church, the advent season is characterized by expectant waiting, anticipation and preparation. The practice celebrates the coming of the Messiah, the “good news of great joy for all the people.” (as described by Luke – 2:10) It is symbolic of anyone who waits for deliverance from oppression, like the children of Israel in Egypt, or those who hope for justice. Advent practices can enhance the Christmas season for any Christian, creating spiritual pathways for a deeper understanding of Christ’s coming.

For more on the history, symbolism and practice of advent, go to:

[www.cresourcei.org/cyadvent.html](http://www.cresourcei.org/cyadvent.html).

##### INTERPRETIVE & THEOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS

The idea of God taking on human form is a difficult one to wrap our brains around, and has been greatly debated over the centuries. The principle debate is over the meaning and purpose of Jesus’ humanity. How could Jesus be God and man? When the Apostle Paul writes that Jesus “made himself nothing,” (Philippians 2:7) the Greek word used is *kenosis*, and is more accurately translated “emptied himself.” Kenosis is the theological word used to describe the doctrine of Christ’s self-emptying. The kenosis was a self-renunciation by Jesus on our behalf that in no way required him to give up his deity, but was for our ultimate salvation’s sake. For more on the kenosis, go to: <http://www.jesus.org/is-jesus-god/christophany-and-incarnation/whats-the-point-of-the-incarnation.html>.



## SERMON OUTLINE & REFERENCES

### 1. Biblical examples of expectant waiting for Jesus:

**Mary:** Luke 1:28-34

**Isaiah:** Isaiah 7:14

**Joseph:** Matthew 1:17-20; Luke 2:4

**Simeon:** Luke 2:24-32

**Shepherds:** Luke 2:8-17

**Anna:** Luke 2:36-38

**Magi:** Matthew 2:1-11

**Heavenly Host:** Luke 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:12

**Herod:** Matthew 2:1-4

**Zechariah & Elizabeth:** Luke 1:17

**Chief Priests & Teachers:** Matthew 2:4-5

**John the Baptist:** Luke 1:41; 7:19

**2. God moves toward sinners, not away.** Genesis 3:8-10, 21; Matthew 1:23; Luke 2:10-14; 10:9; 15:20; John 1:14; Romans 5:8.