



## Discussion Guide Away In a Manger — Part 2 LEADER GUIDE

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Hey leaders! We are overjoyed to continue our Christmas series, "[Away In a Manger](#)"! Throughout this series, we'll take a closer look at the simple, unexpected place where God's greatest gift was born. We'll see how the manger is **a sign, a challenge, and an invitation** to trust God's plan. Even when life feels far from perfect, there is joy, hope, and peace waiting when we choose humility and let Jesus lead the way.

*Our Christmas Eve services are almost here! We hope you and your loved ones will join us on December 24th as we come together to celebrate the birth of our Savior and share in His joy as a church family. Start praying NOW for who you will invite to sit with you for a special time of singing, reflection, and celebration. Find your campus's service times and invitational tools [HERE](#)!*

**Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!**

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?  
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or [discipleship@rockbridge.cc](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)

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**"When you can see God in small things, you'll see God in all things."**

[Donald L. Hicks]

**LEADER RESOURCES** || **Leader Note** We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the [underlined title](#) and share them with your group!

- **SPECIAL NOTE**

- Although we're reading the same passage as last week, there is a different emphasis for our small group conversation. Last week, we focused on the humility of our hearts, while this week we're focusing on how God moves through the small, unexpected moments. These are deeply connected! If you feel that it's necessary to share this with your group before you gather to prepare them, please do that.

- **[Luke 2 Commentary](#) & [God Loves to Use Small Things](#)**

- Use this commentary and short article for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.

- **[Do Not Despise the Day of Small Things](#)**

- This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

**ENGAGE & CONNECT** || **Leader Note** The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.

What is one of your favorite "small" things? (i.e. animal, gift, encouraging words received, food)

**BEGIN WITH PRAYER** || **Leader Note** Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*"I reflect at night on who you are, O Lord; therefore, I obey your instructions.  
This is how I spend my life: obeying your commandments."  
[Psalm 119:55-56]*

**BIG IDEA || Leader Note** Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.

God often chooses the small and overlooked to accomplish His purposes.

**PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note** Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage multiple people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

Have a couple of people read aloud portions of Luke 2:1-20. ALTERNATIVELY, you can listen to the passage read aloud using one of these links (or from a Bible reading app) ... [Option 1](#) or [Option 2](#)

1. What details in this passage (particularly v. 1-7) reveal the humble circumstances of Jesus' birth? Why do you think God chose such a setting for the Savior of the world? *The text describes a journey to Bethlehem, no available guest rooms, and Jesus being placed in a manger. This humble setting emphasizes God's identification with the lowly and His desire to reveal glory through simplicity.*
2. Why were the shepherds chosen to receive the angelic announcement? What does their reaction teach us about faith? *Shepherds, considered lowly in society, reflect God's inclusion of the marginalized. Their immediate response to the angelic message demonstrates faith and eagerness to encounter God.*
3. Mary's and Joseph's faithfulness in small acts played a critical role in God's plan. How can you embrace faithfulness in your everyday tasks? What is a specific example of that? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
4. The shepherds left their work to seek Jesus and returned glorifying God. How can you prioritize seeking God amid the busyness of life and return to everyday tasks with a renewed perspective?
5. How can the truth that "God works through humble beginnings" shape the way you view your role in serving our church and your community? *Answers will vary: you can focus on serving faithfully in small ways and trusting that God multiplies their efforts. This perspective fosters humility and a Kingdom-centered approach to service.*
6. Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds responded faithfully to God's call despite humble circumstances. What is one area in your life where you are being called to trust God's plan, even if it seems small or insignificant? *Responses might include relationships, work responsibilities, or spiritual growth. Trusting God in these areas involves embracing His timing and purposes.*
7. The shepherds' encounter with the angels led to immediate action. How can you cultivate a similar readiness to respond to God's leading in your life? *Readiness can be developed through prayer, seeking accountability in community, and staying attentive to God's Word and Spirit.*
8. Joseph's role in the Christmas story was one of quiet obedience. What are some ways you can embrace supporting roles in your family, church, or community? *This might include serving behind the scenes, encouraging others, or fulfilling unnoticed yet essential tasks with joy and faithfulness.*

9. The shepherds returned to their work glorifying God. How can you incorporate praise and worship into your daily routines, even during mundane activities? *Answers will vary: ideas include listening to worship music, praying during daily tasks, or reflecting on God's presence in small moments.*
10. *Read aloud Zechariah 4:10a ... "For who despises the day of small things."* How does the idea of God rejoicing in small beginnings encourage you in a specific challenge or season of waiting you are currently in? *Trusting God's perspective helps believers find peace and purpose in the process, knowing He values their faithfulness and is working for their good.*

**STEP OF OBEDIENCE** || **Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Zechariah 4:10a says, *"For who despises the day of small things."* This reminds us not to look down on small beginnings because God sees their value! Based on the Holy Spirit's guidance, what is a step of obedience you can take this week? Let's consider how we can be more like ...

- Mary? Her quiet **YES** led to the birth of the Savior!
- Joseph? His small acts of **FAITHFULNESS** were part of God's grand plan!
- The shepherds? Their everyday **WORK** became the stage for God's revelation!

**Remember ... God often chooses the small and overlooked to accomplish His purposes!**

*Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.*

**PRAYER FOCUS** || **Leader Note** *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5-10 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompts below!*

### **God's Power in the Small and Overlooked**

- As we pause to pray, let's reflect on how God often chooses the small, humble, and overlooked to accomplish His great purposes. From a shepherd boy named David to a baby in a manger, God's power is made perfect not in grandeur, but in faith and obedience.
- Let's thank God for the ways He uses the ordinary to do the extraordinary. Let's also ask Him to help us see our own lives and circumstances through His eyes, trusting that He can work through us, no matter how small or insignificant we may feel.

**VISIO DIVINA** || **Leader Note** *Each week during this series we will share an image for your members to prayerfully meditate on AFTER you meet. Visio Divina means "divine seeing" and is a form of prayer that involves meditating on visual art or imagery to encounter God.*

Sometime in the week AFTER your group meets, we invite you to try a spiritual practice known as Visio Divina. It is a Latin word that means "divine seeing" and is *a form of prayer that involves meditating on visual art or imagery to encounter God.* This practice engages your senses and imagination, and it can help you reflect more deeply on God's love and leading in your life.

First, take a few moments to prayerfully reflect on the image and Scripture below, welcoming God's presence with you.



Taddeo Gaddi, Annunciation to the Shepherds, 1328

*“Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord’s angel stood before them, the Lord’s glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.”*

[Luke 2:9-12]

Now, come to God in prayer and share what you hope for, knowing He is with you and hears you!