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## Reflection Guide

— CHRISTMAS 2023 —

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE  
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## HOW TO USE THIS REFLECTION GUIDE:

In our culture, the holidays present a regular temptation to shift from having a “full” to a “busy” heart and life. This guide has no intention of contributing to that temptation.

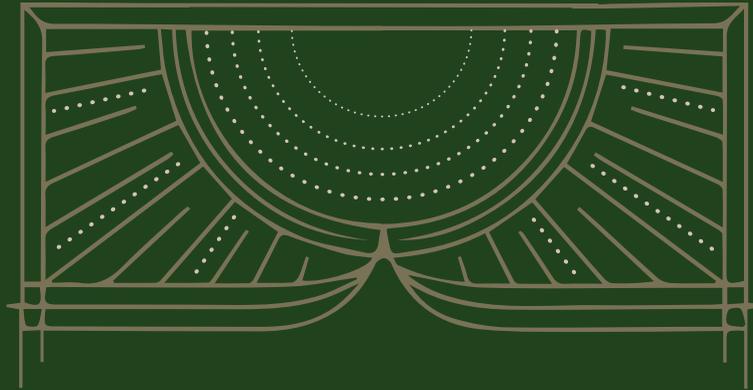
This season, as a church family we’ll be looking at how the larger story of God—creation, fall, and redemption—presents the context within which the birth of Jesus sits. Christmas has a past, present, and future context, and we rob ourselves of the ability to experience its true power when we ignore that reality.

To help us reflect upon that context more intentionally, this guide was created to engage the senses—seeing, hearing, speaking, touching, tasting—in simple ways these next few weeks.

The guide provides the option to take part in an exercise daily, but also has a repetitive weekly flow that builds upon itself and is not likely to feel burdensome. However, any reflection exercise can stand on its own. So, do one all month, or one per week, or every single one—whatever best assists in your reflection. Similarly, the exercises can be approached individually with family, friends, or Life Groups.

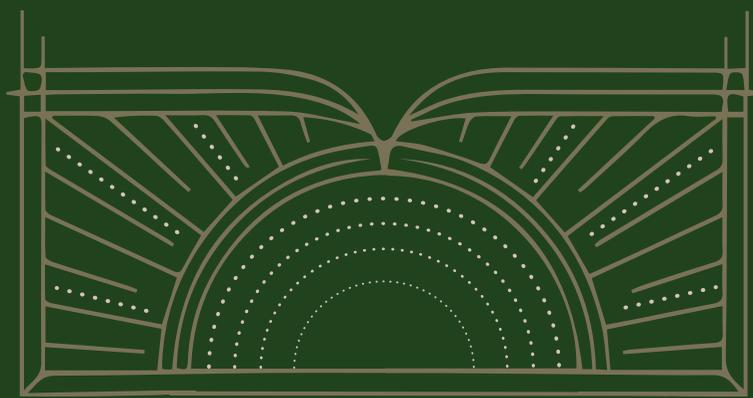
Each adult or older child who will be attending worship services this season is encouraged to take their own copy of the guide. If there are younger children in your household who might do the exercises along with you, consider using paper or materials from home rather than grabbing more guides. The Kids team has also prepared an Advent Challenge for that age group as well.





# PROLOGUE

November 29 - December 1



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## Wednesday, Nov 29

Write a letter to God sharing the state of your heart and life going into the Christmas season.

Are you anxious or content? Joyful? Frustrated? Sad?  
Distracted? Feeling healthy and full, or burdened and busy?  
Connected to him and his people, or isolated and alone?  
Obedient? Trusting? Selfish? Prideful? Energized by purpose,  
or just barely making it through each day?

Give yourself the time and space to sit and take stock. Turn off your phone and anything else that will break the silence.

When you're finished, put the letter in an unsealed envelope and stow it away someplace safe for now.



## Thursday, November 30

Either below or on a separate canvas of some sort, artistically represent your favorite Christmas memory.

Keep it simple. Grab your favorite medium—markers, pencils, crayons, paint, images cut from magazines or printed off your phone or social media accounts and glued to the page—whatever. Even give yourself a time limit so you don't feel the need to overthink it.

When you're done, share the story behind your creation with family, a friend, or your Life Group.



## Friday, December 1

Read this passage for the upcoming weekend service and note any of your initial insights or questions. Then, bring this guide with you to the weekend service and see how your notes connect with the message.

*Psalm 8:6*

*“You have him rule over the works of Your hands;  
You have put everything under his feet...”*

**Insights or questions:**





# PART ONE

December 2 - December 8



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WEEKEND SERVICES

**Saturday, December 2 +  
Sunday, December 3**

**Notes about the environment, music, or message:**



## Monday, December 4

Find a place to be alone and quiet. Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and meditate on this truth:

***God, you are the Good Creator, and I am your good creation.***

Anytime something distracts you from that truth—whether it’s a lie about his goodness as a creator, your goodness as his creation, or just a distracting unrelated thought—confess it and return to the original truth.

Try to maintain this for 15 minutes. If you are able to go longer, great! If you’re only able to go 5 minutes, that’s great, too. Nothing is wasted.

After you are finished, write about your experience below. Was it easy to remain focused? If so, how did meditating on that truth feel? If not, was there a theme to what thoughts or feelings distracted you the most?



## Tuesday, December 5

Either below or on a separate canvas of some sort, artistically represent your main takeaway from your notes on the service from the December 2/3 weekend.

Again, keep it simple and give yourself a time limit so you don't feel the need to overthink it.

When you're done, share the story behind your creation with family, a friend, or your Life Group.



## Wednesday, December 6

Part of our calling as God's people is to care for creation.  
What is a small, life-giving way you can care for creation today?

Take some time to reflect, and then act today.

If doing this exercise with family, friends, or a Life Group, consider writing down what each of you come up with below, and praying over each proposed action.



## Thursday, December 7

Part of our calling as those made in the image of the Creator is to be creators ourselves. What is a small way you can create or contribute to the flourishing of your neighborhood, town, or world today?

Take some time to reflect, and then act today.

If doing this exercise with family, friends, or a Life Group, consider writing down what each of you come up with below, and praying over each proposed action.



## Friday, December 8

Read this passage for the upcoming weekend service and note any of your initial insights or questions. Then, bring this guide with you to the weekend service and see how your notes connect with the message.

*Romans 1:25*

*“For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”*

**Insights or questions:**





## PART TWO

December 9 - December 15



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WEEKEND SERVICES

**Saturday, December 9 +  
Sunday, December 10**

**Notes about the environment, music, or message:**



## Monday, December 11

Find a place to be alone and quiet. Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and meditate on this truth:

***God, you are holy and perfect, and worthy of our unconditional trust and obedience.***

Anytime something distracts you from that truth—whether it’s a lie about his holiness and perfection, or his worthiness of our trust and obedience no matter what our circumstances, or just a distracting unrelated thought—confess it and return to the original truth.

Try to maintain this for 15 minutes. If you are able to go longer, great! If you’re only able to go 5 minutes, that’s great, too. Nothing is wasted.

After you are finished, write about your experience below. Was it easy to remain focused? If so, how did meditating on that truth feel? If not, was there a theme to what thoughts or feelings distracted you the most?



## Tuesday, December 12

Either below or on a separate canvas of some sort, artistically represent your main takeaway from your notes on the service from the December 9/10 weekend.

Again, keep it simple and give yourself a time limit so you don't feel the need to overthink it.

When you're done, share the story behind your creation with family, a friend, or your Life Group.



## Wednesday, December 13

Part of our calling as God's people is to find ways to bring healing to others and our world. What is a small way you could help repair something that is broken today?

Take some time to reflect, and then act today.

If doing this exercise with family, friends, or a Life Group, consider writing down what each of you come up with below, and praying over each proposed action.



## Thursday, December 14

Part of our calling as God's people is to find ways to pursue healing in our own hearts and minds. What is a small way you could surrender to Jesus today?

Take some time to reflect, and then act today.

If doing this exercise with family, friends, or a Life Group, consider writing down what each of you come up with below, and praying over each proposed action.



## Friday, December 15

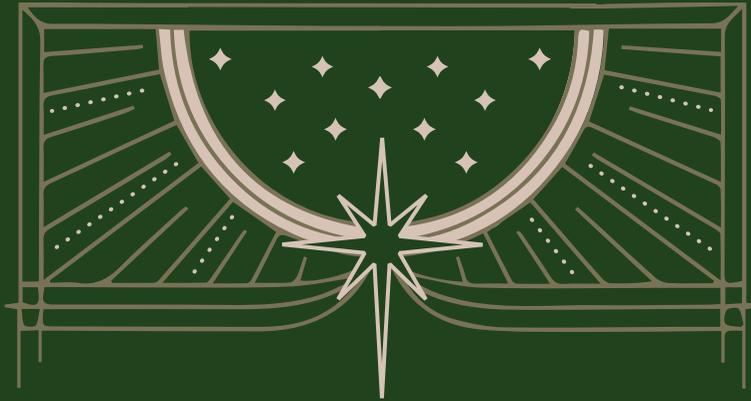
Read this passage for the upcoming weekend service and note any of your initial insights or questions. Then, bring this guide with you to the weekend service and see how your notes connect with the message.

*Ephesians 2:8*

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith;  
and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God...”*

**Insights or questions:**





## PART THREE

December 16 - December 22



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WEEKEND SERVICES (COMMUNION)

**Saturday, December 16 +  
Sunday, December 17**

**Notes about the environment, music, or message:**



## Monday, December 18

Find a place to be alone and quiet. Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and meditate on this truth:

***God, you willingly became a person out of love for your creation, and your desire to defeat sin and death.***

Anytime something distracts you from that truth—whether it’s a lie about the foundational nature of his love, or his victory over sin and death, or just a distracting unrelated thought—confess it and return to the original truth.

Try to maintain this for 15 minutes. If you are able to go longer, great! If you’re only able to go 5 minutes, that’s great, too. Nothing is wasted.

After you are finished, write about your experience below. Was it easy to remain focused? If so, how did meditating on that truth feel? If not, was there a theme to what thoughts or feelings distracted you the most?



## Tuesday, December 19

Either below or on a separate canvas of some sort, artistically represent your main takeaway from your notes on the service from the December 16/17 weekend.

Again, keep it simple and give yourself a time limit so you don't feel the need to overthink it.

When you're done, share the story behind your creation with family, a friend, or your Life Group.



## Wednesday, December 20

Part of our calling as God's people is to share the good news of our Savior, Jesus, with others. What is a small way you can do that in the context of relationship today?

Take some time to reflect, and then act today.

If doing this exercise with family, friends, or a Life Group, consider writing down what each of you come up with below, and praying over each proposed action.



## Thursday, December 21

Part of our calling as God's people is to remember the good news of our Savior, Jesus, in our own lives. What is a small way you can preach the gospel to yourself today?

Take some time to reflect, and then act today.

If doing this exercise with family, friends, or a Life Group, consider writing down what each of you come up with below, and praying over each proposed action.



## Friday, December 22

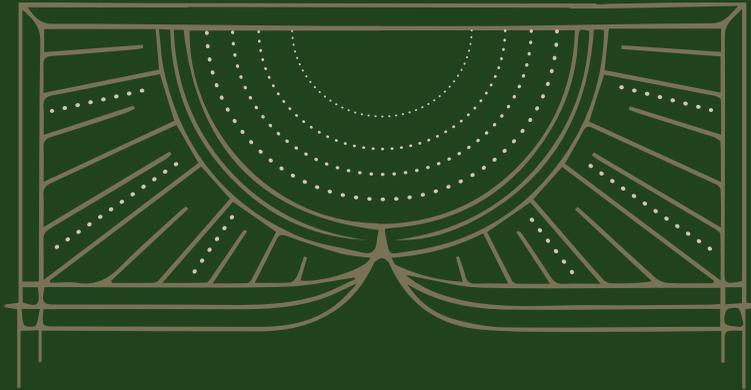
Read this passage for the upcoming weekend service and note any of your initial insights or questions. Then, bring this guide with you to the weekend service and see how your notes connect with the message.

*John 1: 14*

*“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

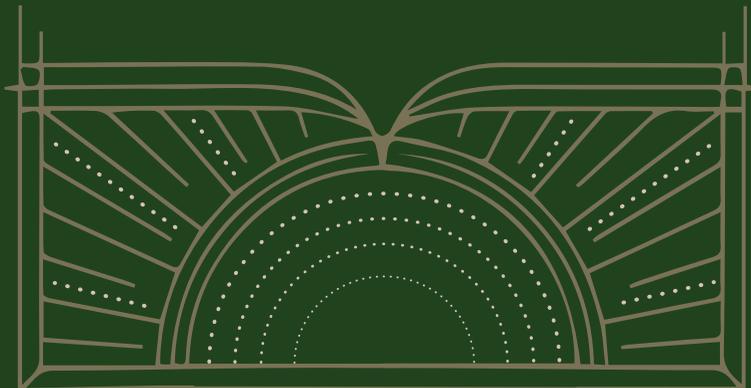
**Insights or questions:**





# EPILOGUE

December 23 - December 26



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NOTE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, NO SERVICES

**Sunday, December 24, CHRISTMAS EVE**  
**SERVICES: 11AM • 2PM • 4PM**

**Notes about the environment, music, or message:**



## Monday, December 25

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Find a place to be alone and quiet. Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and meditate on this truth:

*God, your story is so big. You are the main character, and only you are capable of holding it all together. Thank you for letting me be part of it.*

Enjoy this day with family and friends, in the light of God's grace, as a reflection of his love!



## Tuesday, December 26

Pull out the letter you wrote to God at the beginning of the season. Read it and reflect on where your heart and life were as you wrote it. What has changed? What remains the same?

Again, as best you can, give yourself the time and space to sit and take stock. Turn off your phone and anything else that will break the silence.

Write a second letter to God sharing the current state of your heart/life—thanking him, confessing to him, and asking him questions where appropriate.

Place both letters in your envelope and then seal it. Then, stow it away to reflect on at Christmastime next year.







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