

The Unique Opportunity Of Christmas



One by One

As we go through this lesson, think about one person you can invite to Christmas Eve or Christmas Day worship this year. If you already have that person in mind, write down that individual's name.

Answers will vary

Christmas Culture

As a group, come up with as many examples of Christian themes still very much a part of Christmas culture in our nation.

Gift giving – Jesus was the ultimate gift

Christmas Lights – “You are the light of the world”

Talk of “Peace on earth” – original message of the angels

Kindness and love are a focus – spiritual fruits

Singing Christmas carols – many “favorites” still point to Christ

Attending church at this time of year is “acceptable” and portrayed in movies

Focus on family and relationships – Jesus restored our relationship with God

Christmas movies – Charlie Brown Christmas recites Luke 2

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

What conclusions can you make about the human heart? (hint: focus on Ecc. 3:11)

God has put eternity in our hearts and all humans have a longing for peace and eternal rest. Earthly seasons will happen, but a simple change in season cannot satisfy the longings of our hearts. The season of Christmas with its warm and fuzzy nostalgic feelings can't provide what the heart is truly longing for.

As a group, list all the ways you see people seeking peace and rest during the Christmas season. See how long of a list you can come up with!

Consider This

As you listen to the song "Grown up Christmas List" do you notice any connections to the themes from Ecclesiastes 3? (hint: What is the narrator longing for? What does Christmas have to say to the person longing for these things?)

Do you remember me
I sat upon your knee
I wrote to you with childhood fantasies
Well I'm all grown up now
And still need help somehow
I'm not a child but my heart still can
dream

So here's my lifelong wish
My grown up Christmas list
Not for myself but for a world in need

No more lives torn apart
That wars would never start
And time would heal all hearts
And everyone would have a friend
And right would always win
And love would never end, no
This is my grown up Christmas list

As children we believe
The grandest sight to see
Was something lovely wrapped beneath
the tree

But Heaven only knows
That packages and bows
Can never heal a hurting human soul

No more lives torn apart
That wars would never start
And time would heal all hearts
And everyone would have a friend
And right would always win
And love would never end, no
This is my grown up Christmas list

What is this illusion called the innocence
of youth? Maybe only in our blind belief
can we ever find the truth

No more lives torn apart
That wars would never start
And time would heal all hearts
And everyone would have a friend
And right would always win
And love would never end, no
This is my grown up Christmas list
This is my only lifelong wish
This is my grown up Christmas list

For discussion: In what ways does this song help us better understand the longings of a human heart living in this world of sin and death?

As you consider the true meaning of Christmas, what does the good news of Christmas have to say to the heart that longs for things mentioned in this song?

Hark the Herald Angel's Sing – Frank Sinatra

As you listen to the familiar lyrics of the hymn "Hark the Herald Angel's Sing," write down the most impactful lyrics below. (hint: Ask yourself, which lyrics most clearly communicate the Gospel?)

Now, imagine you're at a Christmas party and this song is being played in the background. In what ways might you take advantage of that opportunity to point out the message being sung?

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen – Bing Crosby

As you listen to the lyrics of the hymn "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" write down the most impactful lyrics below. (hint: Ask yourself, which lyrics most clearly communicate the Gospel?)

Read Isaiah 60: 1-7

In John chapter 1 we hear that Jesus is the Light which shines in the darkness. Here, WE (the Church) are being told to Arise! To Shine! Why? Our Light has come and the glory of the LORD rises upon us!! This is the celebration of Christmas in a nutshell. We go into the world and the Light of Christ reflects off of us in our words and in our actions. This light attracts those in the dark! "Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn!"

Be optimistic! You have the Gospel! You know who Jesus is! As Christians, you are lights in this world darkened by sin and death. The people you know, who are currently stumbling around in the darkness, need what you have. The Light is powerful enough to illuminate their life!

In what ways does this portion of Scripture encourage you to share the Light of Christ this Christmas?

Application = Use

Consider why the person you're thinking of needs the Light of Christ. Share the name of the person you're thinking about, and discuss why that individual needs the Light of Christ.

Read **Psalm 16:5-11** as a group and take a minute to rest in those truths.

Close with encouraging prayer.

Homework:

1. Invite that person to Christmas worship or another service (save them a seat, wait outside, make it as comfortable as possible for them to come)
2. Pray for your brothers and sisters that God would give them boldness to invite others to worship and pray that God would work in the hearts of all the people who are being invited that they may come to learn about God's peace.