

Christmas

at THE CREEK

Group Discussion Guide: A Thrill of Hope | December 18, 2022

Open with prayer and initial reflection questions (5 minutes).

Take a few minutes to acknowledge God's presence as you begin your group time. Ask Him to help your group have a good discussion and to help you internalize the Scriptures.

Then, ask: "How have you experienced the Advent season so far? How does this year's experience compare to years past?"

Read Scripture and debrief the sermon (30 minutes).

Select a few of these questions to help you discuss the sermon. You may even come up with a few questions that would be good for your specific group to discuss.

- In his sermon this weekend, Dan talked about how there is a thrill of hope that we can have in the midst of life's darkness due to the coming of Jesus. What was your main takeaway from this message?
- **Read Isaiah 40.** What verses from this chapter stand out or resonate with you the most? Why?
- What do you learn about God and His character from this chapter in Isaiah?
- When life is dark, does that ever affect how you view God and His character? If yes, how so?
- How does the hope of "God with us" (**Matthew 1:23**) impact how you walk through the darkness?
- **Read Psalm 23.** What does this Psalm say God does as we walk through the shadow of death? What promise is there for you, personally, in this Psalm?
- Another aspect of hope that Dan mentioned is the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Dan mentioned how Israel had to atone for its own sins originally, but that we live on the other side of grace – which means that our sins have personally been paid for by Jesus. **Read Isaiah 40:2, Psalm 103:8-12, Matthew 1:21, and Ephesians 2:1-10.** How does the reality of forgiveness impact your sense of hope, gratitude, and joy?
- **Read Isaiah 40:31.** What does this passage say will happen to the one who "hopes in the Lord?" What would this look like for you practically?
- What is God inviting you to after this conversation?



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Break into gendered groups for deeper conversation (30 minutes).

In this time, share vulnerably where you sense darkness in your life – it may be something going on inside of you, something happening to you, or something happening around you.

- Where are you needing God to say, “comfort, comfort” to you? Explain.
- In what ways is the lack of “comfort” in your life affecting your relationships – with God and with others?
- What would it look like for God to bring healing and hope to your life?

Once you’ve finished, spend time praying for one another.

Finish with intercessory prayer (10 minutes).

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone’s prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.