Introduction: Begin by stimulating thought among your group members.

After four hundred years of silence, God sends His Son. Think about a time when you felt that God wasn’t present in your life but then realized that He was, just not on your timetable.

Read the following quote aloud to your group: “God proves Himself to be more generous to us than our highest hopes. The darkness of our doubt is burned away in the light of His presence.”

Then allow time for 2-3 group members to comment on this quote.

[Source: Jim Thomas, Streetwise Spirituality (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2001), 156.]

Point 1: Help your group understand the major theme.

All of us have a name. Sometimes it reflects our true character; sometimes it does not. Ask for 2-3 volunteers to give their name and its meaning. Then ask the following questions: “Does your name accurately describe your character? Why or why not?”

Point 2: Check for understanding using “Think-Pair-Share” technique.

The main precept we focus on in this section is God’s faithful provision of the Messiah; He is the God who keeps His promises.

Think-Pair-Share: Present the following questions to your group: “Think about an incident in your life where someone was unfaithful to their word. How did that make you feel? What was your response? How are God’s promises different than ours?” Then say, “Now I want you to discuss this in pairs with a person on your left or right who is not your spouse.” (Pause for 60 seconds.) Call on 3-4 pairs to share one idea.
Point 3: Share insights from an article about praise.

Plan for yourself or a volunteer to read the article “What Does Praising God Mean?” sometime before your group meets. During the group meeting, allow some time for yourself or the volunteers to read or summarize the article and share some highlights.

Then, in light of what was presented from the article, raise the following questions for discussion:

- Did anything presented from the article change the way you think about giving God praise? If so, how?
- What does it mean for us to praise the Lord?

Allow time for 3-4 responses.


Conclusion: Challenge group members to live the session.

Put something like the following into your own words: “Examine your heart in light of the session. Are you a true believer in Christ? If not, why not? If so, are you living your life in light of eternity? Are you praising Him for His faithfulness and provision of salvation?”

Give your group members a few minutes to think about these things. If any members make it known to you that they are not yet Christians, be sure to explain gospel with them and how they should respond to it in repentance and faith.

Teaching Tip of the Week

One of the ways to help participants understand new material or challenging concepts is to provide them with one or more analogies/word pictures that help them make the connection between something they are familiar with to something with which they are not familiar.
Examine the following passages to get a glimpse of how the Jesus, the master teacher, did something similar: Matthew 4:19; 9:9-17; John 10:1-10. In your teaching, look for comparisons and examples from daily life to really help your group members “get” the material. In this session, for instance, we examined a couple of songs to aid in that endeavor.