

# THE CHRISTMAS STORY

talk it  
*over*

## KEY SCRIPTURE

*Matthew 1.18-25*

## PURSUE GOD

**This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.**

**But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the Name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."**

**All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").**

**When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.**

In the ancient world stories of gods impregnating a woman, even in a miraculous virgin birth, were not new stories to tell, and often resulted in the idea of a savior being born. For example, when the Roman god Mars and the woman Rhea Silvia conceived Romulus and Remes, twin brothers whose legacy tells the founding of Rome. Or the better known story of Hercules, whose father was Zeus, and mother was the mortal woman, Aclmene. Or how many in the ancient world believed the Alexander the Great and the Caesars were not only born of virgins, but were also gods themselves sent to save the world. And still the story of Jesus remains set apart from these. These gods were immoral and the storytellers end was to entertain. But the story of Jesus is different. It's starts with humble in beginnings, it's not full of pomp or parades. It's dirty, messy, and in direct contrast to the stories told of Caesars and heroes in Greek mythology. The story of Jesus is full of mystery, that also brings you a peace and understanding. His birth. His life. His influence. His teachings. His divinity. It's all a profound mystery that makes perfect sense.

## LOVE LIFE

Do you stay where you are, in the present, in the battle, in the uncertainty to ensure we are present for the birth of the promises of God? Or do you run when things get tough?

## Life Group Discussion

Reflect on how deeply you believe Jesus is Immanuel, God with us?