

INTRO

- What is a favourite Christmas tradition of you're looking forward to this year?

READ

John 1:1-9

REFLECT & RESPOND

Our culture says that Christmas is about bright lights, family and holiday cheer, but Scripture shows that Christmas is about light breaking into darkness (Is 9:2). The importance of God's light is more obvious in the darkness.

DARKNESS

The winter time can be a challenge for many who experience seasonal affective disorder (form of sadness and depression by changes in levels of sunlight), often referred to as the 'winter blues.'

Qu: have you or do you struggle from the winter blues? What are helpful ways to remedy it?

Scripture points to a deeper root to our darkness personally and cosmically. Biblical darkness refers to both evil and ignorance, life alienated from God. Despite the age of advancement we live in, our world remains dark. We can't seem to overcome the darkness of evil and suffering our world faces. A big part of the Christmas message is, things are *really* this dark. But there is another part to the Christmas message.

THE LIGHT SHINES in the Darkness

Christmas lights are not just decorative; they're symbolic. In Scripture, light symbolizes life (Gen 1:1-4), truth and goodness. And John says that Jesus "the true light was coming into the world." Jesus comes to bring us life, reveal the truth of who God is, and overcome our spiritual darkness. Christmas is the celebration of this profound mystery of God coming into the world.

Qu: As you think about Jesus stepping into your darkness, what encourages and challenges you about that truth?

RESPONDING to the Light

We have a threefold response to this Light:

- **Receive** the true Light (Jn 1:10-13)
- **Live** in the Light of his presence (Ps 56:13)
- **Witness** to the Light in our dark world

Qu: Personally & practically, what does it look like to receive the Light, live in the Light, and witness to the Light?

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for anyone struggling at this time with the winter blues.
- Pray together that Jesus' Light would pour into the spaces/relationships you are in this season.