

THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

1. Before Christmas we...

a. Were all lost in darkness

For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. Colossians 1:13-14 NLT

DISCUSSION: Look back on a time in your life when you were lived in open rebellion towards God. What happened and what brought you to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Share your testimony with your group.

b. Did not know what God was really like

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Colossians 1:15-17 NLT

DISCUSSION: Take a few moments to reflect on the character of Jesus Christ. What about Him stands out to you? What part of His character do you most want to emulate? In what part of your life do you need to yield in order to embody that character?

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c. Did not know God's plan to save us

Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. But you must continue to believe this

truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News... Colossians 1:18-23 NLT

DISCUSSION: In what way do you resist God's transforming power, choosing instead to give-in to your own desires? In what areas of your life are you struggling to make Jesus your King?

2. End the nightmare by...

- a. confessing your rebellious sin before your Maker
- b. inviting Jesus to take His rightful place as the King of your life
- c. living a life of obedience, and telling others about your King

Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. 1 Timothy 6:6-8 NLT

But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 NLT

But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:11-12 NLT

PRAYER PROJECT: Take 7-10 minutes to be alone with God. Imagine you are a soldier and are getting ready to go into battle. Imagine you are before Jesus, your King, and He is sitting on His throne. Now imagine that you are kneeling before him ready to be commissioned for battle. Yet as He begins to speak, He wants to talk to you about a part of your life you have yet to yield to Him. What does he say?

After you conclude your prayer time, pair up with another person in your group. Take time to confess to them your thoughts from your prayer time. Ask one another to specifically talk about how those actions, revealed by Jesus during your prayer time, lead you away from a relationship with God.

Conclude your time by praying specifically for one another and offering forgiveness of their sin.