

Friday

Many of us struggle to make conversation at Christmas gatherings, whether church events, work-related parties, neighborhood drop-ins, or annual family occasions. Sometimes our difficulty lies in having to chat with people we rarely see or have never met. At other times, we simply don't know what to say to those with whom we feel little in common.

As followers of Jesus Christ we want to take advantage of the special opportunities provided by the Christmas season to share our faith, but are often unsure how to begin. Below is a list of ten questions designed not only to kindle a conversation in almost any Christmas situation, but also to take the dialogue gradually to a deeper level. The questions can be used in a private conversation or as a group exercise, with believers or unbelievers, with strangers or with family members.

1. What's the best thing that's happened to you since last Christmas?
2. What was your best Christmas ever? Why?
3. What's the most meaningful Christmas gift you've ever received?
4. What was the most appreciated Christmas gift you've ever given?
5. What was your favorite Christmas tradition as a child?
6. What is your favorite Christmas tradition now?
7. What do you do to try to keep Christ in Christmas?
8. Why do you think people started celebrating the birth of Jesus?
9. Do you think the birth of Jesus deserves such a nearly worldwide celebration?
10. Why do you think Jesus came to earth?

Of course, remember to pray before your Christmas gatherings.

Ask the Lord to grant you "divine appointments," to guide your conversations, and to open doors for the Good News of Jesus Christ (Colossians 4:3; John 6:44). May he use you to bring glory to Christ this Christmas!

Saturday - Christmas Eve

Please read John 1:1-18 to be ready for tomorrow—Christmas Day!

Please pray for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and our Christmas service.



First Covenant Church of Eureka
2526 J Street Eureka, CA 95501
707-442-6774
Church email: fceureka@sbcglobal.net
Pastor Rick's email: rickm@fceureka.org
Church Web Site: www.fceureka.org

Simply Christmas

The Simple & True Story of the Incarnation

Message by Rick McRostie on Sunday, December 18, 2016

What Time is Christmas?

"But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children." Galatians 4:4-5 (NLT)

Christmas is a...

1. Time to _____

"An angel of the Lord appeared to them... and they were terrified. But the angel said 'Do not be afraid...'"
Luke 2:9-10

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'" John 8:12

2. Time of _____

"The angel said, 'Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide..." Luke 2:10 (MSG)

3. Time to _____

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born for you; he is Christ the Lord!" Luke 2:11

(Jesus said) "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:16-17

4. Time to _____

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:14

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:1-3

Daily Meditations

Brief daily Bible studies and questions for reflection on today’s topic.

This week’s memory verse:

“But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.”

Galatians 4:4-5 (NLT)

Monday

Please read Psalm 27. Here are the notes on Psalm 27:1 from the Life Application Bible: “Fear is a dark shadow that envelops us and ultimately imprisons us within ourselves. Each of us has been a prisoner of fear at one time or another—fear of rejection, misunderstanding, uncertainty, sickness, or even death. But we can conquer fear by using the bright liberating light of the Lord who brings us salvation. If we want to dispel the darkness of fear, let us remember with the psalmist that “the LORD is my light and my salvation.” When you fear what lies ahead, remember that God will stay with you through difficult times and that he has promised you great blessings.

Thank God today for the promises he has given to you. Surrender your fears to him and ask him to strengthen your faith.

Tuesday

Please read Luke 1:46-56. How does giving thanks and praise to God help when facing an impossible situation? What characteristics of God does Mary sing about in verses 46-49? In verses 50-56?

In prayer today, pray Mary’s song—make it personal, thanking God specifically for great deeds he has done for you! Ask God to renew your faith in him.

Wednesday

Please read 1 John 1:9. Confession is to free us to enjoy full fellowship with Christ. But some followers of Jesus do not understand how it works. They feel so guilty that they confess the same sins over and over; then they wonder if they might have forgotten something. Others think that God forgives them when they confess, but if they died with unconfessed sins, they would be forever lost. We must understand that God *wants* to forgive us—he allowed his Son to die so he could offer us pardon. In view of the tremendous price he paid on the cross, it is arrogant to think that any of our sins are too great for him to cover. When we come to Christ, he forgives all the sins we have committed or will ever commit. We don’t need to confess the sins of the past all over again, and we don’t need to fear that God will reject us if we don’t keep our slate perfectly clean. Of course we should continue to confess our sins, but not because failure to do so will make us lose our salvation. Our relationship with Christ is secure. Instead, we should confess so that we can enjoy maximum fellowship and joy with him. True confession also involves a commitment not to continue in sin. We wouldn’t be genuinely confessing our sins to God if we planned to commit them again and just wanted temporary forgiveness. In admitting our sins and receiving Christ’s cleansing, we are: (1) agreeing with God that our sin truly is sin and that we are willing to turn from it, (2) ensuring that we don’t conceal our sins from him and consequently from ourselves, and (3) recognizing our tendency to sin and relying on his power to overcome it. Have you allowed God to forgive you?

Read Romans 4:7-8

Pray that you will experience God’s blessing because you know that you are forgiven.

Thursday

Please read Romans 12:17-21 and Ephesians 4:1-3. We are all painfully aware of our own shortcomings and we know that we will never be perfect here on this earth. But too often we do not allow for the faults of others. God calls us to accept and love others in spite of their faults. During this Christmas season you will most likely be in contact with someone whose actions, words, or personality “pushes your buttons.” Instead of dwelling on that person’s weaknesses or looking for more faults, why not pray for him or her? Then go a step further—purposely spend time together (remember James 1:19) and allow God’s love to flow through you to that person.

Ask God to show you which of your relationships needs to be restored.