



A Twist

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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. Matthew 1:18 (NIV)

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Luke 1:28 (NIV)

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." Luke 1:31–32a (NIV)

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35 (NIV)

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. Luke 1:38 (NIV)

Matthew 1:19-21, 24 (NIV)

Luke 2:1, 6-7 (NIV)

⇒ **What seems to us an _____ could actually be a part of God's redemptive plan.**

⇒ _____ **is always the best response to a divine revelation.**

⇒ **You don't have to completely understand the plan to _____ that God has a greater purpose.**

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2:19 (NIV)

ANSWER KEY: interruption, obedience, trust



Study & Discussion for Your Next Small Group

Theme: *Pre-Christmas Pressure*

Warm Up: Are you more of a planner when it comes to gift-giving or a last-minute shopper?

Read Together: Matthew 1:18-25

Discuss:

- What can you imagine were Joseph's initial thoughts and feelings when he heard the news that Mary was pregnant?
- How does the Bible describe Joseph's character and his initial intention to follow tradition and do the "right thing" by divorcing her? What cultural pressures do you think he faced?
- How can you relate with the pressure Joseph felt, contemplating the ramifications of a tough decision? Give an example and the results of this decision.
- What caused Joseph to choose to continue plans of marriage to Mary?
- The scripture does not speak of the response of others to Mary and Joseph, leading up to Jesus' birth. What would you speculate were the challenges and criticisms from others?
- What can we learn from Joseph's situation that will help us determine God's will, especially when we face a tough decision that forces us to choose between pleasing others, ourselves or God?
- How does God reward us when we choose to step out in faith even when it is unpopular?

Prayer: Share how God is answering prayer and also needs you have, to lift up this holiday season.