

## **In the Valleys | LEADER GUIDE**

This series is all built around Matthew 1|23. As we look to Christmas, this is a great chance to drive your small group to His name, “Immanuel.”

As Christians, it’s often easy to believe God on the mountain tops- especially when things seem to be going our way! It can be more difficult for all of us to believe when we find ourselves in a valley.

### **Things to Note:**

Be sure to have pens and paper or notecards for each person to write (in their own words) their version of Psalm 139|7-10 during the Small Group Interactive.

### **Ice Breaker/ Weekly Check-In:**

Have fun finding out everyone’s favorite Christmas presents that they’ve received over the years! (If it’s from their childhood, ask if they still have it!)

### **Scripture and Discussion Questions:**

The flow of this week lesson is:

- Matthew 1|18-25
  - Here we’re looking to simply make each person aware that God is present with us. Today. And EVERY day! Ask questions and guide your group to think practical and deeply on where they can notice God’s presence in their daily lives.
  - The Name Immanuel has SUCH significance for Christ-followers. Ask the group if they know why their parents chose the name given to them. Were they named after someone? Why?
- Psalm 139|7-10
  - The great truth of this passage can be a great reminder of “Immanuel” - but sometimes when we find ourselves in our own valley we may not have confidence.

### **Small Group Interactive:**

Pass out pens and paper to each person and spend 5-10 minutes individually creating your own Psalm 139. Help facilitate your group putting this into their own words as a way to bolster their own confidence when their thinking gets off or their life seems out of control.

Ask for a few members of your group to share what they wrote. Affirm great language and descriptive words to help others who may get stuck writing theirs! Encourage everyone to keep their paper or note cards and use it as an affirmation about God’s presence in their own life.

### **Next Steps:**

Challenge your Small Group to be intentional about praying this week. They can use the following questions to help them begin each day with prayer:

- How did you see God being with you in a situation or circumstance yesterday? Praise Him!
- What is something on your agenda today that you know you’ll need to lean on God for? Ask Him!
- Who do you know that has a “valley” to go through this week? Pray for them!

**Extra Challenge:** Text individuals in your Small Group throughout the week to hear how they’ve been starting their day in prayer.



# 242 small groups

## Week of December 5 | God With Us in the Valleys

Ice Breaker Question:

**What is your favorite Christmas present you've ever received? Share why!**

Weekly Check In

**How have you seen God at work in your life this week?**

**This Week's Big Idea:** We may enjoy God on the mountain tops, but we get to know Him *intimately* in the valleys.

***What is something that God has been speaking to you about lately?***

Scripture and Discussion Questions:

### **Matthew 1|18-25**

1. Are you named after someone? Do you know why your parents chose your name?
2. Immanuel means, "God with us." How do you notice God's presence with you when you are having a great day?
3. We often have opportunities to grow closer to God when we're experiencing more of a valley in our lives. What advice would you give on how to cling to God when finding yourself in a challenging circumstance?

### **Psalms 139|7-10**

4. How does the name Immanuel (and its meaning) bring comfort to you when maybe you're not in such a great situation?
5. Ask for someone to share a past difficult area in their life and how they learned to keep their mind fixed on God.

Small Group Interactive: (10-15 minutes)

Just like the writer of these verses in Psalm 139|7-10, we too can craft meaningful statements that remind us about God being with us always. Have each person write their own personal "Psalm 139|7-10" by putting it in their own words.

Have several people share what they wrote down.

## Next Steps:



### Daily Encounter: Prayer

Commit to praying before your day even gets going each morning this week. Some suggestions to get you started each day:

- How did you see God being with you in a situation or circumstance yesterday? Praise Him!
- What is something on your agenda today that you know you'll need to lean on God for? Ask Him!
- Who do you know that has a "valley" to go through this week? Pray for them!

Pray for God to give you opportunities to share your faith, meet a need, and live in a way that glorifies Him.