

**the story so far...**

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

# CONNECT

- In a book or movie you enjoy, what's a problem facing the characters that seems insurmountable?
- Why do you think there are friends that are really easy to talk to, even when you haven't talked to them in a while?
- When do you think it's permissible to set up Christmas decorations and start listening to Christmas music?

# RECAP

Here's an overview of the main ideas from the sermon.

## MAIN THEMES

***Big Idea:*** The story so far is the promise of presence and the problem of absence.

***Christ-Connect:*** Jesus embraced God's absence so that we could have God's presence.

***Application:*** We must relish the presence of God.

# READ & DISCUSS

## READ

Matthew 1:1-17 (There's a bunch of names that are hard to pronounce, so if you want, have everyone read it by themselves quietly.)

## DISCUSS

The promise God made to Abraham was centered on God's presence. Why is it really important to remember that God's presence is our greatest need, even above all his other blessings?

# READ & DISCUSS

## DISCUSS

There are some embarrassing moments included in the genealogy. Rather than hide them, however, Matthew shines a spotlight on them. Do you notice any names that go along with embarrassing or tragic stories? Why do you think Matthew reveals those moments so intentionally?

# READ & DISCUSS

## DISCUSS

Jesus came to fulfill the promise of God's presence. He is the newer, greater tabernacle and temple—the place where people find God's presence. Jesus also dealt with the problem of absence by allowing our sin to send him out of God's presence. What does Jesus's work on the cross tell you about God's presence?

# PRAYER

Israel's story mirrors the story of us all. We don't deserve God's presence, but by his grace he's given us a way in. Spend time relishing God's presence through prayer.

## DISCIPLESHIP CHECK-IN

- Have you read your Bible and prayed consistently the past week?
- Who is one lost person you're praying would come to faith?