

# Small Group Guide

Week of  
December 1,  
2024

## Christmas classics

Hope In the  
Mess



### Icebreaker



- If you could receive one "impossible" Christmas miracle, what would it be?
- If you were in a Christmas movie, what role would you play? The main character, a wise guide, the comic relief, or someone else?



### Discussion Questions



- Reflect on a time you felt like George Bailey – overwhelmed and at the end of your rope. How did you get through it?
- We focused on the imagery of a stump. What "stump" moments have you faced in life, and how has God brought hope out of them?
- Isaiah 11:1 talks about a "shoot" growing from the stump of Jesse. How does this idea of hope emerging from brokenness speak to you personally?
- What are some things in your life that you've put your hope in that ultimately didn't satisfy?
- When have you experienced "waiting" as a time of growth? How did God work beneath the surface even when you didn't see it?
- Romans 15:13 speaks of the "God of hope" filling us with joy and peace as we trust Him. How does trusting in God affect your outlook during difficult times?
- Who in your life might need encouragement or hope this season, and how can you reach out to them?
- What is one area in your life where you're still waiting for hope to take root? How can you invite God into that area this week?
- Hope is described as shining brightest in the darkest moments. How have you seen this truth play out in your own story or in the life of someone you know?



## Thought for the Group



The Christmas season can bring joy, but for many, it also highlights struggles and unmet expectations. We learned that hope isn't found in perfect circumstances but in God's faithfulness, even in the hardest seasons of life.

Isaiah 11:1 reminds us that even from a seemingly lifeless stump, new life can grow. This was true for Israel, and it's true for us. God works in our mess, bringing hope where we least expect it.

Jesus is the promised Messiah—the fulfillment of God's promise to bring life and redemption. When we place our hope in Him, we find peace and stability, even when life feels chaotic.

Romans 15:13 encourages us to trust the "God of hope" who fills us with joy and peace. This hope isn't based on circumstances but on the unchanging character of God.

What area of your life feels lifeless or hopeless? Trust that God is working beneath the surface. Reflect on where you've placed your hope—finances, relationships, or your own strength. Surrender these to Jesus, the only true source of lasting hope.

Like George Bailey's friends in *It's a Wonderful Life*, we're called to share hope with others. Who in your life needs encouragement this season? Hope shines brightest in the dark. No matter what you're facing, trust that God is not done with your story. He is the Root and the Branch, bringing new life and hope even in the mess.



## Next Steps



- Write down three things you tend to put your hope in besides Jesus (e.g., career, finances, people). For each one, reflect on why it feels secure and how it might fall short.
- Think of one person in your life who might be struggling or feeling hopeless. Reach out to them this week with a word of encouragement, an invitation to church, or even a small act of kindness. Let them see the hope of Jesus through you.