

## **“SERVICE Group” Interactive Discussion Guide**

**This Week’s Core Virtue: Joy, (John 15:11)**—I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**SERVICE Focus: International Missions**--We will support at least one IBCB international missions project through increased awareness, prayer, participation, and partnership.

[Log on to [www.ibcberlin.org](http://www.ibcberlin.org) and click “our missions” to find out about UPGs (Unreached People Groups), “10-40 Window,” India Project, Ghana Project, Indigenous Missionary Project (IMP)!]

### **Option 1— Joseph Listens and Obeys, Matthew 1:18-25**

(Plan 30 minutes for your “study time” by focusing on the \* questions and filling out your discussion with the other questions. Be sure to leave time for sharing personal requests and praying for one another.)

#### **Open It**

1. What are the tabloid headlines this week?
2. \*Why is our society so drawn to gossip and scandal?
3. How do people typically react when facing embarrassing situations?

#### **Explore It**

4. \*What happened to Mary while she and Joseph were engaged? ([1:18](#))
5. What do you think Joseph initially thought upon hearing this news about his bride-to-be? ([1:18-19](#))
6. \*What positive character qualities did Joseph possess? ([1:19](#))
7. How did Joseph plan to handle this delicate situation? ([1:19](#))
8. How was Joseph’s ancestry significant? ([1:20](#))
9. \*Why did Joseph change his plans to divorce Mary? ([1:20](#))
10. If Joseph wasn’t the actual father of Christ, who was? ([1:18](#), [20](#))
11. What did the angel command Joseph to name the child and why? ([1:21](#))
12. What significant mission in life would Mary’s child have? ([1:21](#))
13. Why is Mary’s virginal conception of Christ significant? ([1:22-23](#))
14. What does Immanuel mean? ([1:23](#))
15. How did Joseph respond to the angelic message? ([1:24](#))

#### **Get It**

16. \*How might you have responded in Mary’s situation?
17. What would have been your reaction had you been in Joseph’s situation?
18. How do you think a typical church might have handled Mary’s pre-marriage pregnancy?
19. How do you imagine the "grapevine" treated the Mary-Joseph situation?
20. How does it feel to be the victim of unsubstantiated rumors and gossip?
21. How does it feel to know that you are innocent and yet have people attacking your character and whispering behind your back?
22. \*How does our desire for approval or acceptance keep us from doing the right thing?

#### **Apply It**

23. What difficult, hard-to-swallow command of God do you need to obey today?
24. \*How will you respond the next time someone begins to tell you a juicy bit of gossip?

### **Option 2—Discussion of Sunday’s Sermon (slides posted on “Pastor’s Blog”)**

- What significance does the passage/message have for you today?
- What does the passage/message mean to you?
- What does the passage/message affect your life?
- What can we learn about God, Christ, ourselves, our responsibility, our relationship to others?
- How does it reinforce this week’s core commitment?
- What do you want to do in response?
- What do we want to do in response?
- What will you take away from the sermon? From our group?

### **Option 3—Relate Your Study to Our Core Commitments**

- What Core Commitment(s) does our study reinforce?
- What can we learn from this passage about this week’s Core Commitments?
- How can we live this passage individually? As a group?
- What do we agree to do in response to this passage?