

### **Connection**

What is one highlight of Christmas Day / Eve for you?

### **Content**

Among the many fascinating elements of the Nativity story, the presence of angels may just top the list. Scattered throughout the Christmas narrative, these strange but divine beings show up demonstrating a practical truth— that God is near, at work, and something big is happening.

**1.** Read Matthew 2:12. Jesus has just been born and before the wisemen are to return home, they are warned in a dream to not return to Herod. Although we are unsure if this dream is the work of an angel, we know it's from God.

The wisemen decide to heed the divine warning and return home by another route. How does this demonstrate their obedience to God? And what can we learn from their example about trusting God's guidance, even when it requires a change in our plans?

**2.** Read Matthew 2:13. What does Joseph's immediate obedience to the angel's warning teach us about trusting God's guidance in difficult or uncertain situations?

**3.** Read Exodus 23:20. There is a precedent throughout scripture of God guiding people and sending angels before them.

How can we apply the principle of trusting in God's guidance in our personal journey of faith?

**4.** Read Mathew 2:14-15. From what scholars note, there were multiple years that Joseph, Mary and Jesus lived in Egypt. Not much is said of their time there, however how would you imagine it to be?

**5.** Hebrews 11:8-9 reminds us of countless others who lived by faith and trusted in God's calling. When have you personally felt called to live by faith, even when perhaps it went against your first instincts?

**6.** Read Matthew 2:16-20. King Herod and the evil one attempted to end Jesus' life and ministry before it even began. However, God always prevails and evil will never win. How does this passage encourage you in times of uncertainty?

### **Commitment**

**7.** Read Matthew 2:21-23. One more time an angel spoke to Joseph in a dream and guided the family to not return to Bethlehem after their time in Egypt. They were to return to their home town of Nazareth instead. Although this was a further journey, they obeyed and scripture was fulfilled.

How can you live by faith this week and trust in God's calling for you in 2025?