

Note:

-Italics used for notes to the speaker

-Regular text for specific discussion points to be brought up in the session

-The option to ask students questions may not be available in larger settings, please feel free to adapt the talk as necessary, while retaining key points

### **Goal of the talk**

- I. That students would know the significance of Christ's Incarnation (God becoming man)
  - i. What He gave up in doing this
  - ii. Why He did it - God identifying with humanity and bringing His presence to us when we were separated from Him
- II. Infuse hope of a God who walks with us in our suffering

### **Outline**

- I. Connection point - Suffering
- II. How did it begin?
- III. How can we respond? – ASK
- IV. God's provision for suffering – The Story of the incarnation
- V. This provision brings hope

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### **God steps into our mess – Talk-sheet**

We are not alone in our suffering

*Key Points: Jesus gave up His throne, identified with humanity and our suffering*

### ***Recap of previous session***

In the previous session, we talked about how God gave Adam and Eve a choice. God gave them freedom to choose whether they would love God and obey Him or not, but they rejected God and by doing so they chose to no longer have a relationship with Him.

The choices we make determine our life story. Every choice has a consequence. Bad choices lead to messy lives. We reap as we sow.

### ***Activity:***

***Tell the students to imagine that their room is a mess... clothes strewn all over, books in random places, empty snack packets, pens, pencils all over the place. The room is in total disorder and cannot be used.***

The messy room represents the imperfection and suffering in our lives –our shortcomings and regrets, broken relationships, unhappy families, difficult situations, painful experiences -

everything we wish we could undo or somehow make magically disappear and yet is a huge part of who we are and our life story.

Suffering is the unhappy reality in which we all live. But where did it all begin?

Adam and Eve when they rejected God's love, lost the perfect life that was possible only because of their relationship with God, and instead hardship and pain entered their life. Their decision to go against God affected not just them but everything God had created.

**Romans 8:22a (NIV)** We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

This is the reality of the mess all of humanity is in and it includes us. It is a groaning that begins in our own souls and is echoed in all creation.

The pain of suffering is impossible to ignore. It eats away our joy and peace, brings us down, makes us exhausted all the time, causes us to drag our feet and want to run away and hide from everything and everyone. No amount of medication, alcohol, tv, video games, parties, social media, drugs or whatever else we try to do to drown it out will take away that pain. The only way to deal with it is to ASK:

1. **Admitting the truth** - If we cannot acknowledge the truth, we cannot ask for help. Even if the truth is ugly and shameful, being willing to admit it, even if only to ourselves, will help relieve a big burden we are carrying around and help us get a more true perspective of reality. Many times our own imaginations can build things up to make them seem worse than they actually are.
2. **Seek help** – Its important to go to the right people. Know who you can trust. Having someone who can just share your sorrows, even if they cannot help, will comfort you.
3. **Know there is hope** – While people can give you a shoulder to cry on and be a great support system to you. There is one who is much greater, who made you, who knows you and can comfort you like no one else can.
  - a. **God made you** – He loves you and created you with great purpose. When Adam and Eve by their choice brought suffering and pain into the world. God was not happy with this. He did not create humanity to ultimately be separated from Him. They were His friends, His family. Even before Adam and Eve were created, God, being God, knew they would disobey Him so He created a plan to rescue them and the whole universe from the consequences of their choice. God's love for them was so great much before they even existed! Such is the love of God for us! We may feel He is distant when we are in trouble but the actual truth is that His eyes are on us and He is with us through the pain and hardship.
  - b. **God in His great love for us**, does not leave us alone when we suffer, even when our suffering is caused by our own actions! God's love for us was displayed in this. Jesus, the one and only Son from God came to this world as a human being, just like you and me.

Imagine that the ant community is in trouble and you have the ability to become an ant to save them. So you become an ant. What happens? You would need to give up your power, your life style, your privileges and rights as

a human and adopt the weakness, life style, practices, abilities and even language of ants.

This is just a glimpse into what happened when God left His throne in heaven to be a human on earth (but infinite times more). God left His power, His all-knowing wisdom, His glory, His comfort and chose to limit Himself just to come down, walk with us and save us from our suffering. That is His great love for us.

(Phil 2:7-8a MSG) When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges.

100's of years before Jesus was born, His birth was foretold by a prophet. The prophet said that the baby born would be called Emmanuel, which is a Hebrew name meaning "God with us." Through Jesus' birth, God showed us that He is not far away from us at any time, especially not in our suffering. Instead He is willing to not only step into the midst of humanity's mess but also to save us from our mess.

What is the mess you're in? The mess that seems too overwhelming and has maybe even led you to the point of despair, and caused you to give up hope?

In the midst of our mess, God gives us hope:

- Hope that we will see better days because God cares enough to make our troubles His own,
- Hope that God will fight our battles for us and give us victory, because He is greater and more powerful than any work of evil.

Above all we have the hope that God is our Father, not some random stranger that we cannot relate to. And the truth is that this Father cares for us and loves us unconditionally, more than we can ever fathom. He has loved us with His everlasting love even before He created the earth and He will continue to love us the same through all of eternity.