



Small Group Study Guide for December 1

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: Our church decorations at Advent and Christmas tell the story of our Savior who came to be our Redeemer, and prepare us to joyfully celebrate His first coming as we await with anticipation His second coming. Jesus tells us to be prepared and to keep watch!

Getting Started:

1. What is the first Advent/Christmas decoration that you put out this time of year? Does it have any special meaning or significance?
2. There are a number of Christmas traditions and customs in our society that do *not* relate or connect to the birth of Christ whatsoever. What are the *explicitly Christian* customs and traditions that families still have that point to Jesus?

In the Word: Read Matthew 24:36-44

3. Advent is not just about Jesus' first coming at Christmas 2,000 years ago. It is also looking forward to His second coming in the future, on the Last Day. What does this passage tell us about Jesus' second coming? Like a detective or investigator, see how many details about the last day you can draw out from these verses.
4. There are many people who have tried to predict the second coming of Christ. What does verse 36 say about any and all attempts to know the day and the hour of Jesus' return?
5. What comparison does Jesus make with the Flood of Noah, as recorded in the book of Genesis, in verses 37-41?
6. Jesus tells his disciples to "Keep Watch!" especially because we do not know the day or the hour. Why might it not be a very good idea to know for certain that Jesus was coming on a particular day or hour in the future? How might people act if they knew he was coming for sure at a specific time?

Read Romans 13:8-14

7. What kind of debt is encouraged by the Apostle Paul in this passage?
8. Identify the 4 commandments listed by Paul in verse 9. How do we number them?
9. In verse 11, Paul says that we are to “wake up from our slumber” because “the hour of our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” This is a reference to Jesus’ second coming. How does this correspond to Jesus’ command in Matthew 24 to “keep watch”?
10. The night of the darkness of sin and death is almost gone, the Day of light and salvation is almost here. So Paul says that we are to live like tomorrow – that is to say – to live now as the saved and redeemed people of God. What specific things does Paul point out that are deeds of darkness, and deeds of light in verses 12-14?

Putting it All Together

11. What happens when we remember Jesus’ second coming in the midst of this world’s crazy concepts of Christmas?
12. How does Jesus’ and Paul’s warnings of watchfulness and decent living prepare us to celebrate the holidays with family and friends?
13. How has the Christmas season afforded you the opportunity to give witness to your Savior, Jesus, and share with others the difference He has made in your life?

Prayer: Ask for the Lord to keep us watchful, prepared, and ready for Jesus’ second coming, even as we prepare to celebrate His first coming 2,000 years ago. Pray that the Holy Spirit would guard our church, our members, our families from temptations and distractions, and that we can give a joyful witness to the greatest gift of all – the gift of God’s Son, born for us.

Next Week: Prepare – Our Homes. After talking about how our church prepares for Christmas, we focus on our homes and families, and how the light of Christ can shine brightly in them this season.