

**Focus passage: Matthew 1:18-25**

**18** This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. **19** Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

**20** But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

**22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23** "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

**24** When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. **25** But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

*What stands out to you from this passage?*

*How would you react to hearing that some local, unwed, young couple were pregnant--and that their story was that they didn't do anything wrong, rather that the Spirit had made the woman pregnant? What makes it believable when it is about Mary and Joseph?*

*What stopped Joseph from reacting the way he first intended to? How easy would have been for him to dismiss the dream once he woke up?*

*Being a parent can already be an overwhelming responsibility. How would you handle the promise that your child will save the people from their sins?*

*The baby is given the name "Jesus" but is also called Immanuel. How do we understand that Jesus is "God with us"? **Read and discuss John 1:1-5, 14-18.***

*Even as a child, Jesus Christ was still deserving of worship. **Read Matthew 2:1-11** to see the way in which the magi act when they see him.*

*God's Son was sent to save us from our sins (v.21), but what did that necessarily lead to? How great a sacrifice do we see in God to pay such a price for us?*

*How can you apply this Scripture to your life?*

