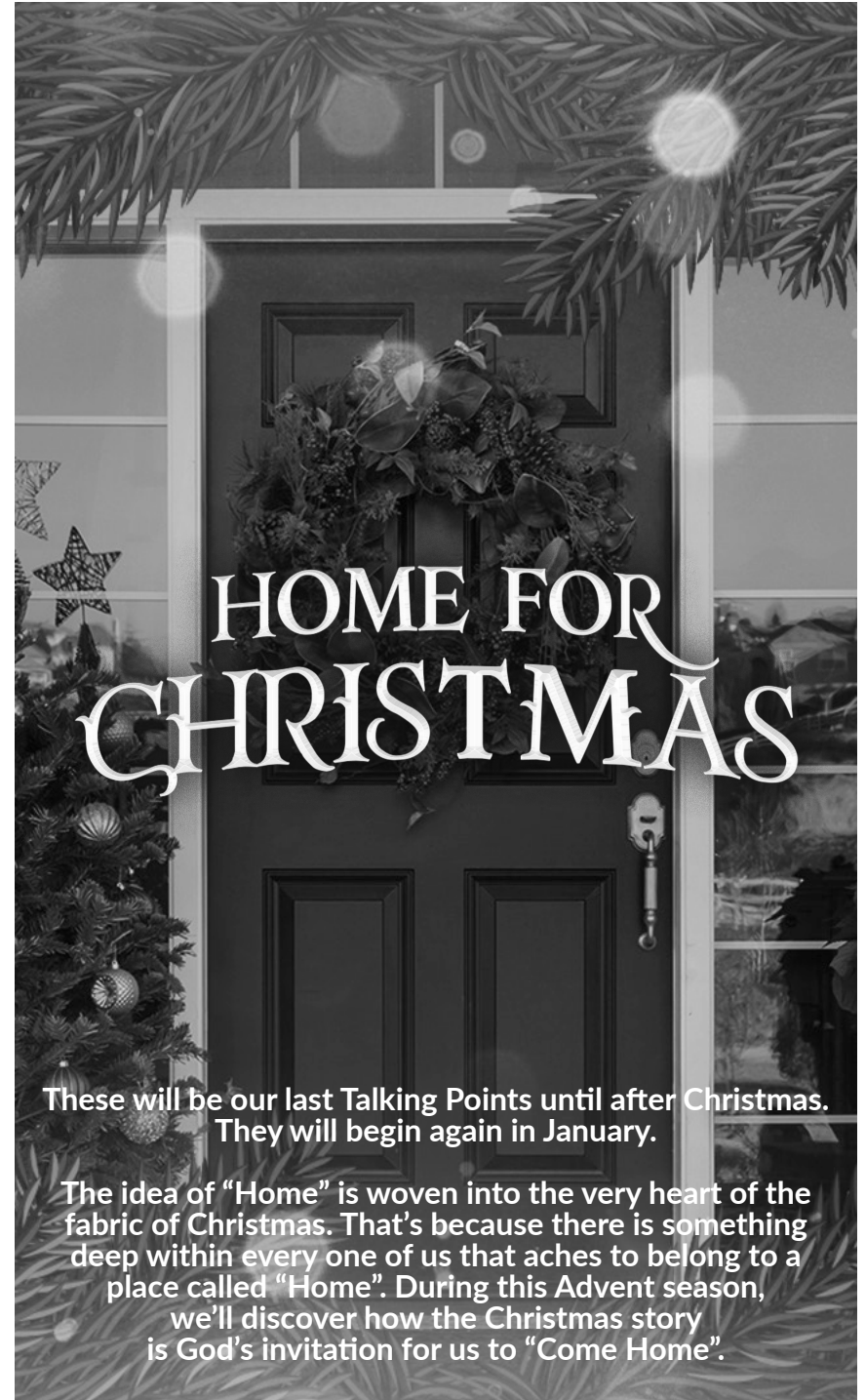


NOTES & QUOTES



These will be our last Talking Points until after Christmas.
They will begin again in January.

The idea of "Home" is woven into the very heart of the fabric of Christmas. That's because there is something deep within every one of us that aches to belong to a place called "Home". During this Advent season, we'll discover how the Christmas story is God's invitation for us to "Come Home".

CONNECT (BUILD RELATIONSHIPS)

1. How are your Christmas plans coming along? What are the negative and positive things you are facing due to this unique holiday season?
2. Christmas is a five senses experience! Name one element of Christmas that you love to experience with each sense: smell? sound? sight? taste? touch? (i.e. I love to smell pine trees, I love to hear Bing Crosby, I love to taste fruitcake.)
3. In the Christmas story there are a lot of people far from home. Mary and Joseph, the wise men, and most of all Jesus, who left his heavenly home. Have you ever spent a Christmas on the road or away from home? What was that experience like?
4. This Christmas at Compass we are celebrating the theme of "home." What words, memories, or characteristics would you use to describe the idea of "home" to someone?

THRIVE (EXPLORE BIBLICAL TRUTH)

5. Answer the following questions as you reflect on this week's teaching in the Home for Christmas series (use this as a reflection after every message):
 - Was there anything you heard for the first time?
 - What challenged or confused you?
 - What stands out to you as particularly helpful, or insightful?
 - What does this passage teach you about God? Yourself?
6. The candles on the Advent Wreath focus on the themes of Love, Peace, Joy and Hope. Read the following verses and discuss what a biblical definition would be for each term:
 - Love: John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and John 13:34-35.
 - Peace: John 16:33, Philippians 4:6 and Isaiah 26:3.
 - Joy: Galatians 5:22, Proverbs 17:22 and 1 Peter 1:8.
 - Hope: Hebrews 11:1, Romans 15:13 and Psalm 39:7.

How have you been challenged and/or encouraged to receive and live out each truth in your own life? How is each one intricately linked to the Incarnation (Jesus coming in the flesh)?
7. Read John 1:1-5, 14. Why does John start his gospel with, "In the beginning" rather than at Jesus' birth? What facts do we discover about "The Word"?

8. Take time this Advent to read the full Christmas story in Luke 1:26-2:40, Matthew 1:18-2:23, and John 1:1-5, 14. Ask God to speak to you in a fresh way as you read the familiar story. What aspects of the story stand out to you or linger in your thinking? Why do you think Mark skips the nativity altogether in his gospel?
9. In John 1:14 The Message paraphrases the Incarnation as "The Word becoming flesh and blood and moving into the neighborhood." What are implications of this truth in your life? How does this model a call to missional living?

COMMIT (BE ON MISSION)

10. "Home for the Holidays" should be more than a slogan, it should be our goal. When you think of your definition and experience of the word "home", how does it connect to where you see God working in your life? How much have you allowed Jesus to "dwell" with you?
11. Christmas is an opportunity to seek after God in a fresh way. Here are some ideas for meeting Christ during Advent. Pick a couple that are realistic for your life and will be an encouragement to you.
 - Spend some extended time (an hour) in silence rereading the Christmas narrative.
 - Emphasize Christmas decorations that remind you of Christ or of God's love.
 - Buy or make an Advent wreath and light the appropriate candle(s) at dinner each night.
 - Participate in an opportunity to give to someone in need. (i.e. You can help those in need in our community through a donation to the Christmas Finish Strong Challenge at Compass or you could purchase a gift in someone's name through a Christian relief agency.)
 - Light a candle and sit in silence for five minutes each day. Sit somewhere that allows you to enjoy your Christmas tree or a manger scene. Become aware of God's presence around and in you.
 - Don't open all your gifts on Christmas Day. Save some of your gift-giving for the twelve days that follow Christmas.
 - Ask God to demonstrate His love through you in a real way to one person every day.

PAUSE, PONDER & PRAY

"So, the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."
John 1:14