

CHURCH GUIDE



GOD WITH US

ENGAGEMP MINISTRY RESOURCE

God With Us Church Guide

Biblical lessons and practical ministry ideas

Use a shared movie experience to open Scripture,
talk honestly about faith, and help people take
a next step with Jesus.

Five ministry doorways

Kids • Students • Worship
Small Groups and Adults • Teaching

Scripture connections • Discussion questions
Ministry activities • Teaching outline
Outing and follow-up plan • Seven-day take-home guide

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START HERE

Using the film in your church

God With Us follows Mary Anne Thomas and Joseph “Junie” Love, childhood sweethearts facing a miraculous pregnancy and a profound test of faith. Written and directed by Jimmy Jenkins, the film places a Nativity-inspired story in a contemporary urban setting. Its published themes include grace, spiritual growth, and unconditional love.¹

For a church, these themes offer a starting point for conversations about trusting God when plans change, responding to people with compassion, and making faith visible through love. This guide helps leaders connect those conversations to Scripture and a specific next step.

Begin with one doorway

Choose the ministry that best fits the people you want to serve. Give that leader the corresponding page, arrange a theater outing where appropriate, and schedule the follow-up before you invite people.

Ministry doorway	Primary focus	Ready to use
Kids	God is near and we can care for others	30-minute Bible lesson • page 5
Students	Faith and compassion under pressure	45-minute gathering • page 6
Worship	Responding to the presence of Jesus	Service segment • page 7
Small Groups and Adults	Trust, grace, and practical love	60-minute discussion • page 8
Teaching	The biblical meaning of God with us	Message outline • page 9

Keep Scripture at the center

Treat the movie as a modern-day parable that opens a conversation. Read Matthew 1:18–25 and Luke 1:26–38 to study the biblical Nativity account, and distinguish the film’s creative choices from what Scripture says. Connect the name Immanuel to Jesus himself and the good news of his life, death, and resurrection.

Plan for your people

Leaders and parents should preview the film and review current content guidance before recommending it to children or students. The Kids lesson works without viewing the movie. Read the passages in the CSB or your church’s preferred translation; the teaching summaries here are paraphrases.

Also included: biblical themes on page 4, an outing and follow-up plan on page 10, and a reproducible take-home page on page 11.

BIBLICAL CONNECTIONS

Five lessons to explore

Use these biblical connections to discuss the film's premise and themes. After viewing, invite participants to describe moments they noticed, then examine those observations in light of Scripture.

1 God comes near in Jesus

The Nativity-inspired premise invites a fresh look at Immanuel. In Matthew, God's presence is embodied in Jesus, who comes to save his people from their sins. His presence gives us hope even when our circumstances remain difficult.

Read Matthew 1:18–25; John 1:14

Discuss How does knowing who Jesus is change the way you face an unresolved situation?

2 Trust can lead to a faithful next step

Mary Anne and Junie's situation opens a conversation about trust under pressure. In Luke, Mary asks a question and responds to God; in Matthew, Joseph acts on the direction he receives. We can bring honest questions to God while seeking wisdom and obeying Scripture.

Read Luke 1:26–38; Matthew 1:18–25; James 1:5

Discuss What faithful action is available to you before you know how everything will work out?

3 Grace changes how we see people

The film's theme of grace invites us to examine the assumptions we make about others. Ephesians grounds salvation in God's gift; James challenges favoritism. Receiving grace should shape how we welcome and listen to people whose lives are complicated.

Read Ephesians 2:8–10; James 2:1–9

Discuss Who might find it difficult to feel welcomed by our church, and what could we change?

4 Love becomes visible through action

A story about tested love can move discussion beyond good intentions. First John connects Jesus' sacrificial love to meeting real needs. Christian love listens, tells the truth with care, and follows through when helping someone requires time or effort.

Read 1 John 3:16–18; Galatians 6:2

Discuss What could practical love look like for one person this week?

5 Growth happens with patient support

The theme of growth offers a way to talk about faith in difficult seasons. Scripture calls believers to seek wisdom, persevere, and encourage one another. A church can offer steady companionship without demanding a quick resolution or a polished testimony.

Read James 1:2–5; Hebrews 10:23–25

Discuss Who helps you keep trusting God, and whom could you encourage?

DOORWAY 1 • KIDS

Help children recognize God's care

Children can explore God's presence and kindness through the biblical Christmas story. Use this lesson alongside the church's film emphasis, whether or not children attend the movie.

Plan Suggested setting: elementary ministry or a family gathering. Time: 30 minutes.

Main idea Because Jesus came, we can know God's love and show care to others.

Prepare Luke 2:1–20; Matthew 1:23. Supplies: paper, crayons, and a Bible.

A 30 minute lesson

Welcome • 5 minutes Ask, "Who helps you when something feels new or difficult?" Let children name a trusted adult or draw a picture. Explain that God gives us people who can care for us.

Open the Bible • 8 minutes Tell the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 2 in age-appropriate language. Read Matthew 1:23 and explain that Immanuel means God is with us. Help children see that Jesus' arrival is good news for ordinary people, including the shepherds.

Talk together • 7 minutes Ask the three questions below. Give children time to think, and welcome simple answers. A child can pass or draw an answer instead of speaking.

Make a care card • 7 minutes Have each child fold a paper in half. On one side, draw a place where they need help or encouragement. On the other, draw one kind action they can take for someone else. Help them name a trusted adult who can help them carry it out.

Pray • 3 minutes Thank Jesus for coming near. Invite children to ask for help and name someone they want to care for this week.

Questions for children

- What good news did the shepherds hear about Jesus?
- When you feel worried or alone, whom can you talk to?
- How could you help someone feel included at church or school?

Help parents continue at home

Invite families to read Luke 2:8–20 together, ask each person to share one thing they are thankful for, and choose a simple act of care. They could make an encouragement card, invite someone to sit with them, or help a neighbor with a parent's supervision.

Leader note Explain that God's presence does not mean nothing hard will happen. Children can pray, ask questions, and seek help from trusted adults. Keep the lesson focused on Jesus and the biblical story.

DOORWAY 2 • STUDENTS

Practice faith when life gets complicated

The film's young couple and tested relationship provide a starting point for discussing trust, peer pressure, reputation, and compassion. Help students connect what they believe to how they respond when someone's story is complicated.

Plan Suggested setting: middle or high school ministry after viewing, subject to leader and parent review. Time: 45 minutes.

Main idea We can seek God's wisdom, ask honest questions, and treat people with dignity under pressure.

Prepare Matthew 1:18–25; James 1:5, 19. Have leaders ready for private follow-up.

A 45 minute gathering

Connect • 5 minutes Ask, "What makes a person trustworthy?" Students can answer generally without sharing private experiences.

Reflect on the film • 8 minutes Ask which moment raised a question about trust or how people treat each other. Let students describe the moment before drawing a lesson from it.

Study Scripture • 10 minutes Read Matthew 1:18–25. Identify what Joseph knew, what he feared, what God revealed, and what Joseph did. Read James 1:5, 19 and discuss seeking wisdom and listening before reacting.

Practice compassion • 12 minutes Use the scenario below in groups of three or four. Each group names a helpful first response, a trusted adult to involve if needed, and one action to avoid.

Discuss and pray • 10 minutes Choose two discussion questions. End with a quiet moment to name one next step and pray for wisdom to take it.

A scenario to work through

A rumor about a classmate spreads in a group chat. People want you to share it, but you do not know the full story. How can you refuse to spread it, protect the person's dignity, and offer support without pretending to know what happened?

Discussion questions

- What pressures make it hard to do the right thing when others disagree?
- How is asking God for wisdom different from waiting for every uncertainty to disappear?
- What does compassion look like when you still have questions?
- Who is a trusted adult you can speak with when a situation feels too big to handle?

One action this week

Invite students to interrupt gossip, include someone who is isolated, or ask a trusted adult for wisdom. Check in at the next gathering. Never require students to disclose personal or family situations in front of the group.

DOORWAY 3 • WORSHIP

Respond together to the presence of Jesus

Use the film emphasis to help your congregation respond to the biblical truth of Immanuel through Scripture, prayer, singing, and practical care. This can fit into a regular Sunday or an Advent service.

Plan Suggested setting: a 12- to 15-minute segment within worship, in addition to the message.

Main idea Jesus comes near, and his love forms a people who draw near to others.

A service segment

Scripture • 3 minutes Read Matthew 1:18–25 or John 1:1–14. Briefly explain that the Christian hope of God with us is rooted in who Jesus is and what he came to do.

Congregational singing • 4 minutes Choose a familiar song about Christ's coming, faithfulness, or saving love. An Advent hymn such as "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" can connect naturally. Choose music that supports the passage and your congregation's voice.

A brief testimony • 3 minutes Invite a prepared speaker to share how someone in the church offered steady care during a difficult season. Keep the focus on God's faithfulness and concrete acts of love. A story need not have a neat ending to be meaningful.

Prayer and response • 3 minutes Leave a quiet moment for people to bring their questions to God. Pray for those facing uncertainty and invite the congregation to consider one person they can encourage this week.

A prayer a leader can use

Jesus, thank you for coming near to us. Meet us in the places where we are uncertain or weary. Teach us to trust your character, receive your grace, and notice the people around us. Give us wisdom to listen well and courage to love in practical ways. Help our church reflect your care this week. Amen.

Connect Sunday to the rest of the week

- Invite people who want prayer to speak with a pastor or trained prayer team member after the service.
- Give attendees the take-home page and a clear invitation to a small-group conversation.
- Ask an existing care ministry to offer one practical opportunity, such as delivering meals or writing encouragement notes.

For the worship team

Choose Scripture and music that make sense to guests who have not seen the movie. If you mention the film, briefly explain its premise. Secure permission from testimony participants in advance, including permission for any livestream or recording.

DOORWAY 4 • SMALL GROUPS AND ADULTS

Turn a shared experience into discipleship

A conversation after the movie can help adults explore trust, grace, and love in their own relationships. Use this session with small groups, men's or women's ministries, young adults, or parents.

Plan Time: 60 minutes after viewing. Meet somewhere people can hear one another.

Main idea Faith in Jesus shapes how we respond to uncertainty and how we care for people.

A 60 minute session

Welcome and reflection • 10 minutes Ask, "What stayed with you from the movie?" Invite a brief answer from each person, with permission to pass.

Read and observe • 10 minutes Read Matthew 1:18–25 and 1 John 3:16–18. Ask what each passage reveals about Jesus and what response it calls for. Keep observations about the Bible distinct from the film's creative retelling.

Discuss • 25 minutes Choose three or four of the questions below. Ask follow-up questions rather than trying to get through every item.

Choose a next step • 10 minutes Each person names one action for the next seven days. Invite a partner to check in, if desired.

Pray • 5 minutes Pray for wisdom, courage, and compassion. Offer a private conversation to anyone who wants additional support.

Discussion questions

- Which part of Mary Anne and Junie's situation helped you think about trust? What did you notice, rather than assume, about their responses?
- In Matthew 1, how does Joseph respond before and after the angel's message? What does the passage tell us about Jesus?
- Where are you tempted to interpret uncertainty as evidence that God is absent? What truth from Scripture can help you?
- When have someone's assumptions made it harder for you to feel understood? What would attentive listening have looked like?
- According to 1 John 3:16–18, what turns loving words into loving action?
- Who could our group support this week, and what help have they actually asked for?

Extend the conversation over three weeks

Week 1: Trust when plans change — Matthew 1:18–25. Week 2: Grace that reshapes our response — Ephesians 2:8–10 and James 2:1–9. Week 3: Love that follows through — 1 John 3:16–18 and Galatians 6:2. Begin each week by asking what happened with the previous week's action.

Facilitator care: welcome honest questions and allow people to pass. Avoid pressuring anyone to share sensitive details or accept a quick explanation for suffering. Offer pastoral follow-up when appropriate.

DOORWAY 5 • TEACHING

Teach the meaning of Immanuel

Use the film as an introduction to the questions people bring to the biblical Christmas story. This outline supports a stand-alone message or the start of an Advent emphasis, and works for people who have not seen the movie.

Suggested message title God With Us in Uncertain Times

Primary passage Matthew 1:18–25. Supporting texts: John 1:14; 1 John 3:16–18.

Main idea In Jesus, God comes near to save us and calls us to respond with trust and love.

Introduce the question

Ask, “When life changes in ways we did not choose, how do we know God is still at work?” Briefly mention that God With Us explores a young couple’s tested faith through a modern-day Nativity-inspired story. Then turn to Matthew’s account and let the passage guide the message.

1 God meets people in real uncertainty

Matthew 1:18–20 presents Joseph facing a situation he does not understand. Name the difference between our limited knowledge and God’s knowledge. Invite people to bring uncertainty into prayer and seek wise support. Do not equate faithful living with having every answer.

Application Where do you need wisdom for a faithful next step?

2 God comes near with a saving purpose

Matthew 1:21–23 connects Jesus’ name, his mission to save, and the promise of Immanuel. Explain that the incarnation is more than a general message of comfort. Jesus enters human life as Savior. Connect his birth to his death and resurrection and invite hearers to trust him.

Application Are you receiving Jesus only as an encouraging idea, or responding to him as Savior and Lord?

3 Trust expresses itself through obedience

Matthew 1:24–25 records Joseph acting on God’s direction. Connect trust to the next step Scripture makes clear. Then use 1 John 3:16–18 to show how Christ’s love moves his people toward practical care for others.

Application What act of obedience or care can you take this week?

Offer clear ways to respond

- Explore faith: invite questions and offer a conversation with a pastor or mature believer about following Jesus.
- Receive care: provide a way to request prayer or practical support.
- Practice love: name one opportunity to serve a person or household through an existing church ministry.

CHURCH ACTION PLAN

Plan the outing and the follow up

Choose one leader, one ministry doorway, and one follow-up gathering. Give people enough detail to make plans, and make the next conversation easy to attend.

Two to three weeks before

- Have ministry leaders preview the film when available and choose the audience and ministry goal.
- Confirm the theater, date, time, price, and ticket process. Arrange transportation or ticket assistance if your church can offer it.
- Book the follow-up location and choose a discussion leader. Put its date in the original invitation.

One week before

- Invite members to bring a friend, neighbor, or coworker who would welcome the experience.
- Send ticket and meeting details. Give parents the information they need to decide about attendance.
- Brief hosts, prepare the appropriate ministry page, and identify a contact for questions or prayer.

On the day and afterward

- Welcome guests personally. Let them know when and where the optional conversation will happen.
- Within 48 hours, thank attendees and share the take-home page. Invite further contact without adding people to an ongoing email list without their agreement.
- Within one week, hold the discussion and help people choose a next step. Check back the following week with those who requested support.

An invitation you can adapt

Join us to see God With Us, a modern-day Nativity-inspired story about faith, grace, and love. Bring a friend, and continue the conversation with us afterward as we explore what it means to trust God and care for others when life gets complicated. Ask our church for the outing and discussion details.

Movie information and group tickets

[Official movie website and trailer • GodWithUsMovie.com](https://GodWithUsMovie.com)

[Group ticket requests • GodWithUsMovie.com/group-sales](https://GodWithUsMovie.com/group-sales)

The announced theatrical opening is November 13, 2026.² Confirm local availability before promoting an outing. For a showing at church or the use of film clips, ask the film team about available arrangements and permissions.

Guide prepared by Engage Media Partners • EngageMP.org

Film references reviewed October 12, 2026: ¹ Official movie synopsis, GodWithUsMovie.com, and the First Baptist Church of Glenarden film page, fbcglenarden.org/godwithus. ² Official group sales page, GodWithUsMovie.com/group-sales. Ministry activities, questions, and teaching outlines are original suggestions from Engage Media Partners. Cover poster: official film website.

TAKE HOME PAGE

Continue the conversation this week

Use this page on your own, with a friend, or around the family table. Read one passage each day, answer the question, and choose a small action. You can participate even if you have not seen the movie.

Day 1 God comes near

Read Matthew 1:18–25. What do the names Jesus and Immanuel tell you about who he is? Thank God for coming near through Jesus.

Day 2 Bring your questions

Read Luke 1:26–38. What does Mary ask, and how does she respond? Bring one honest question to God in prayer.

Day 3 Ask for wisdom

Read James 1:5. Where do you need wisdom today? Pray about it and ask a trusted believer to help you think through a next step.

Day 4 Receive grace

Read Ephesians 2:8–10. How do grace, faith, and good works relate to one another? Thank God for his gift and consider how you can respond.

Day 5 Listen before you judge

Read James 1:19 and James 2:1–9. What assumption about someone do you need to reconsider? Make time to listen without rushing to a conclusion.

Day 6 Put love into practice

Read 1 John 3:16–18. Whose need have you noticed? Ask what would help, and offer one act of care you can follow through on.

Day 7 Encourage someone

Read Hebrews 10:23–25. Who helps you hold on to hope? Thank that person and make a plan to encourage someone else.

Three questions to discuss

- What did the movie or these passages make you think about differently?
- Where do you want to grow in trust, grace, or practical love?
- What support would help you take that next step?

My next step

This week I will _____

Someone I can ask for support _____

Our next conversation _____

If you would like prayer, help exploring faith in Jesus, or support with something these conversations raised, speak with your church's pastor or ministry leader.