

The Scandal of the Christmas Tree

Matthew 1

Ice Breaker: Give a 60-second sketch of your family tree.

BIG IDEA: The genealogy of Jesus shows us that God loved us enough to enter into our sin-stained mess. Matthew 1:21 tells us that God loved us too much to leave us in our sin-stained mess. The good news of the Christmas story is that Jesus came to save us from our mess.

Digging Deeper:

- 1) Read the genealogy of Matthew 1:1-17. If you don't know how to pronounce all of the names, don't worry about it. Just read it: "strong and wrong!" Then discuss those places and people in Jesus' family tree that were marked by sin and scandal. What does this say about God – that He was willing to bring the Messiah into the world through this kind of sin-stained family tree?
- 2) Read Matthew 1:18-21 – especially v21. What does the angel of the Lord say is the purpose for which Christ was sent into the world?
- 3) Why do you think Matthew is so intentional to lead off his gospel by highlighting the sin and scandal of Christ's family tree – and the statement that Jesus came to save us from our sins? One clue is found in Matthew's own spiritual journey. Read Matthew 9:9-13 and discuss what it must have been like for Matthew, a tax collector, to have been accepted by Jesus.
- 4) The Scriptures are full of images of what happens when we confess and repent of our sins. Take some time to read the following Scriptures – and discuss what it means to really live life with the assurance that – because of the blood of Jesus – our sins really are forgiven.
 - Psalm 103:12
 - Isaiah 38:17
 - Isaiah 43:25
 - Isaiah 44:22
 - Jeremiah 31:34
 - Micah 7:19
 - 1 John 1:9