



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 1: Planned

Suggested Week of Use: December 6, 2020

Core Passage: Luke 1:13-25

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### News Story Summary

In late October of this year, Morgan Espinoza and her husband Chris were sheltering in place in the middle of an ice storm that had knocked out power when she began to go into labor. The couple had planned to have a home birth due to COVID-19, but not for another week. They never imagined that their house would be a frigid forty-eight degrees when the baby arrived.

Between contractions, Chris loaded up firewood to heat the home, and neighbors lent power from generators to boil water for warm washcloths. Twelve hours later, Morgan gave birth to a baby boy. The couple said they would do a home birth again—but next time with electricity.

(For more information on this story, research “Oklahoma woman gives birth in ice storm.”)

### Focus Attention

To replace the Focus Attention idea, summarize the story of Morgan and Chris Espinoza. Solicit response from the group encouraging them to share how they might have responded had they been a neighbor or family member. Ask: *How does the arrival of a child impact a community and family?* Explain that over the next three weeks, we will examine events leading up to the birth of Jesus. Emphasize that the first event we will examine involves the family of a Levite who would be the father of a son that would be used by God later to set the stage for Jesus’ public ministry. Challenge the group to look for different elements in today’s passage that point to God’s plan for redemption.

### Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the Respond idea under Summarize and Challenge, conclude by recalling the story about the woman who gave birth during the Oklahoma ice storm. Direct the group to share a time when their plans went awry (vacation cut short; a meal they planned turned out horrible; a project turned out differently than they had imagined). Ask: *How are our plans different than God’s plans?* (Potential responses: His plans are bigger in scope; always come to fruition; always done with redemption in mind) Call attention to the summary statement on the first page of the session. Remind the group that God is faithful to His promises and the redemption of His creation. Conclude the group time by following the prayer suggestion.