

# Unwrapping Christmas

## He Understands

**Jesus – our high priest – REALLY understands (Hebrews 4:15).** As an infant, Jesus was given frankincense by the wise men who found Him in Bethlehem. It was a fitting gift in that frankincense was the oil used by the priests of the temple, who stood before God and offered sacrifices for the sins of God's people. According to Scripture, Jesus became our high priest who offered Himself – a perfect, innocent sacrifice without blemish – through His crucifixion and resurrection. He has made a way for us to have a full relationship with God, a relationship that was not possible because of God's holiness and our sinfulness. As our high priest, Jesus was victorious over sin and all the effects of sin, and He offers us that victory. As our high priest, He was tempted in every way (yet was without sin), which means He gets us and truly sympathizes with our struggles.

### GETTING STARTED

Thinking about the season of life you are in and/or what you are experiencing right now, who would you say really understands you because they've been where you are? What have they experienced that helps you relate to each other well? How have they been a source of wisdom and encouragement?

### GO DEEPER

1. According to Matthew 2:1-12, Herod was not willing to go to Bethlehem (12 miles roundtrip) to find Jesus, unlike to wise men who had travel hundreds of miles and were willing to do whatever for however long to find Jesus. What does it mean to come to Jesus on *His* terms, and not our own?
2. From Hebrews 4:15, why is the fact that Jesus was tempted in every way yet was *without sin* so important to our Christian faith? What did the holiness of God require that only Jesus could fulfill, and what does that mean for us today?
3. In Hebrews 9:12, Jesus *entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His blood, having obtained eternal redemption* for us. Why is it significant that He entered that place by *His own blood*, and why was the blood of goats and calves (which had been offered by high priests for centuries) insufficient or inadequate?

### MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. How do you view and deal with your own sin? Is your tendency to downplay or minimize your sinfulness, or do you tend to live in a place of constant self-condemnation and shame? What is the right way to deal with your sin that God calls you to?
2. How well do you think you grasp the concept of Jesus as your high priest as well as the significance of Jesus being tempted in *every way* yet was *without sin*? What does it mean for you that God can sympathize with your weaknesses and struggles?

### PRACTICE IT NOW

Take time as a group to purposefully thank Jesus for being your high priest and perfect sacrifice. Thank Him for offering Himself without blemish in order to satisfy God's justice for our sinfulness. Thank Him also that He sympathizes with our weaknesses and struggles. Ask Him to reveal to you even more the depths of what it means for Him to be your high priest this Christmas season.