

STUDY GUIDE

LIGHT OF THE WORLD 12.7.14

[set up]

What are some of the Christmas traditions that you or the family you grew up with engage in? Are there any traditions that are unique to your ethnic heritage?

Split into two groups (girls vs. guys if possible) and have a friendly competition between the groups by taking 5 minutes to write all the ways that the birth of Christ is communicated in relation to light at Christmas time (song lyrics, traditions, decorations, etc.) Compare lists when done.

[digging deeper]

Read John 1:1-5 and John 8:12. As you read through these passages, how can we best understand what God means when we see the words “Light” and “darkness”?

We see here that Jesus is the light of the world. The birth of Christ is a global event, for all people everywhere. Why is it then that we as American Christians tend to celebrate Christmas in a vacuum without much awareness or interest in how the birth of Christ is celebrated in other places in the world?

What parallels do you see between John 1:1-5 and Genesis 1:1-3?

As we go through the “Light of the World” series this month, each week we will be focusing on a country or two in which we have missionaries serving. The intent of doing so is to be reminded that there are other people celebrating the birth of Christ in other places around the world and to be mindful of and prayerful for the places that we specifically are connected to through our missionary efforts. This week we focus on **Ukraine** and our missionaries Emery and Clara Laszlo.

[living it out]


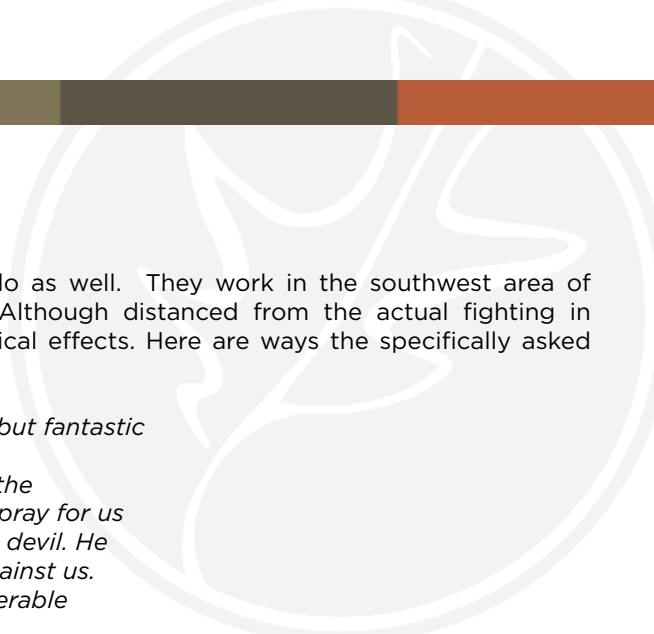
Write down 3 ways that you and your family can become more engaged and aware of the global nature of Christmas.

Turn out all but one light in the room as a symbol of how Jesus came as the Light of the World and close your time in prayer. You can pray for:

- Those you know still in darkness that have not chose to walk in the light of Christ yet
- For this week’s emphasis country of Ukraine. Here are a couple of links that you can view (best in advance of your LifeGroup) to gain insights of how to best pray for Ukraine in General

<http://www.commissionstories.com/eurasia/videos/view/war-in-ukraine>

<http://www.commissionstories.com/eurasia/site/search/search?keywords=ukraine&x=0&y=0>

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- Please lift up our Ukrainian missionaries Emery & Clara Laszlo as well. They work in the southwest area of Ukraine with the Roma people, a community of Gypsies. Although distanced from the actual fighting in Ukraine, they are feeling the emotional, spiritual and economical effects. Here are ways the specifically asked us to pray for them:

"Please pray for peace in Ukraine. The war situation is a painful but fantastic tool in God's hand to turn the people's hearts toward to God. Unemployment, misery, high inflation, diseases are tools ... and the people are hungry for God and hope for the future. Please also pray for us as a couple because we feel ourselves to be under attack of the devil. He does not like what we do now here ... and has a heavy attack against us. Also pray for the gypsies please because they are the most miserable people - among the miserable people"

- Please also consider sending them a brief email letting them know that you prayed for them as well as a note of encouragement as they serve in Ukraine and miss their family over here in the U.S. very much.

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