



*Advent is a time of light and hope. Out of the darkness of this world filled with struggles and challenges, Jesus shines in the darkness to bring hope, healing and new life. Jesus "shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5)*

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why are children a sign of hope? How do children have a way of pointing us to the future rather than causing us to look backward?
2. What was the world like in Isaiah's time? Why is Isaiah often referred to as the "prophet of hope?" Why is Isaiah (some 700 years before Jesus' birth) so important for the Christmas story?
3. How is hope such an important ingredient for these times? What so easily happens in people's lives if and when they lose hope?
4. How does Jesus' light shine in our world today? Why is that light so essential?
5. How is light stronger than darkness? How is hope stronger than defeat? How is Jesus stronger than the challenges and struggles that we face?
6. How can you personally be a beacon of Jesus' light in this world today?
7. **Read Isaiah 11:1-2 and John 1:4-5.**  
*"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of Counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 11:1-2)*  
*"In him was life, and the light was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:4-5)*
8. What do these passages say to you? What does it mean that the darkness has not overcome the light? Why is that such important and good news today?

### **MOVING FORWARD**

Jesus is the light and hope of this world today filled with so much darkness. Think about some people or places in your life that especially need the light of Jesus shining on them. Commit yourself this week to a plan where you are going to be a beacon of light for someone or something. Pray each day that the light of Jesus living in you will brighten and bring hope to those around you.

### **PRAYER**

Loving God, we thank and praise you that Jesus is that light that shines in the darkness. Thank you that even though the darkness and challenges of life often seem like they are winning, that nothing can defeat your light. Loving God, enlighten and empower each of us so that we may shine and be beacons of light to others. Amen.