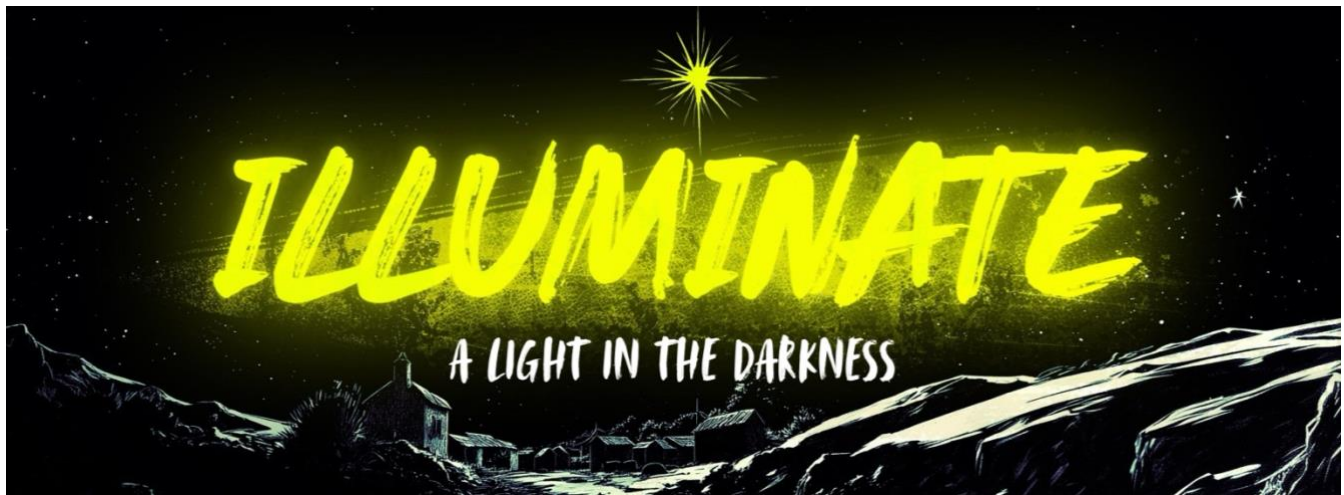




WEEK 1 – THE LIGHT PREDICTED  
HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY TEACHING GUIDE

**BIG IDEA**

Jesus stepped in to meet humanity's most desperate need.

**BIBLE**

*Isaiah 9:1–7; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18;  
John 8:12*

**ABOUT THIS WEEK**

Centuries before Jesus' birth, Isaiah spoke of a light that would one day pierce the world's darkness. This week explores how Jesus fulfills those ancient prophecies, bringing hope to people walking in despair. God's promise of a Savior reminds us that even in our darkest moments, He is working to bring light and restoration.

*WHAT? What are we talking about today?*

**HOOK – When is the *right* time to put up Christmas lights?**

- Okay, serious question: Who here puts up Christmas lights *before* Thanksgiving? And who refuses until *after* Thanksgiving?
- We all have our preferences, right? But no matter when you put them up, Christmas lights always make things feel brighter, warmer — more alive.
- But the very first Christmas wasn't about lights on trees or houses. It was about a light that showed up in the middle of real darkness.
- For the next three weeks, as we lead up to Christmas, we're going to be talking about the light that Jesus brought into the world at the very first Christmas, but before we get there...
- We're going to rewind 700 years earlier to the Prophet and the Book of Isaiah — to a time when God's people were desperate for hope, because it's essential to know **WHY** Jesus coming was such a big deal!

## CONTEXT – ISAIAH 9

- Isaiah was a prophet — someone God used to speak truth to His people. In his day, Israel was a mess. The people had rebelled against God, their leaders were corrupt, and the once-great nation was collapsing.
- The Assyrian Empire, one of the most feared armies in history, was invading city after city.
  - Towns were burned.
  - Families were scattered.
  - Fear ruled everything.
  - For the people of Israel, it felt like all hope was gone.
- Spiritually, it wasn't much better.
  - People had turned to idols.
  - Ignored God's commands.
  - Chosen their own way.It wasn't just political darkness — it was personal, emotional, and spiritual darkness.
- And then, in the middle of that chaos, Isaiah speaks these words from God:
  - **READ ISAIAH 9:2 NIV**
    - “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” — *Isaiah 9:2 (NIV)*
- This message wasn't spoken *after* everything got better — it was spoken *in the middle* of their darkness. That's what makes it powerful.
- Isaiah goes on to say that this light would come in the most unexpected way — not through an army or a political leader, but through a child.
- **READ ISAIAH 9:6 NIV**
  - “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” — *Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)*
- Try to imagine hearing that as one of Isaiah's listeners.
  - Everything around you is collapsing, and someone stands up and says, “Don't worry — a baby is coming.”It sounded impossible... until it wasn't.

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## PROPHECY FULFILLED

- Seven hundred years later, Matthew records:
  - **READ MATTHEW 1:18 NIV**
    - “This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.” — *Matthew 1:18 (NIV)*
  - The child Isaiah promised — the light that would dawn in darkness — had finally come.
  - Jesus wasn't just another teacher or religious figure. He was the light Isaiah spoke of — the one who brings hope where there is despair, peace where there is chaos, and forgiveness where there is sin.
  - When we celebrate Christmas, we're celebrating that the promise made in Isaiah 9 was fulfilled in Jesus — that the light of the world has come.
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## SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

- Isaiah's prophecy wasn't only for ancient Israel — it's for *us*.
  - Just like them, we know what darkness feels like.
    - The world around us can feel divided and hopeless.
    - Many of us battle anxiety or loneliness.
    - Some of us hide parts of our lives in spiritual darkness, hoping no one sees.
- But here's the truth Isaiah and Christmas remind us of: **God hasn't abandoned us**. He keeps His promises.
- **READ: JOHN 8:12 NIV**
  - Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." — *John 8:12 (NIV)*
- Jesus doesn't just bring light *to* the world — He brings light *into* us. On a deep, personal, life and soul-changing level. And that changes everything.
- For Israel, the message of Isaiah 9 meant hope in a world they thought was beyond saving.
  - For us, it means we have access to that same light — the light that exposes lies, brings healing to shame, and gives direction when we can't see the next step.
- This is what Christmas is really about — a God who steps into human history, into our darkness, and brings light that never fades.

## NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

- So what do we *do* with that light?

### 1. Hold onto hope.

- When things feel heavy or uncertain, whisper the prayer: "Jesus is my hope."  
A few simple words that center your heart when life feels chaotic. Go to Him in prayer. Open His Word. Remember that light has already won.

### 2. Be honest about your darkness.

- Don't hide what you're struggling with. Darkness loses power when it's brought into the light. Talk to a friend, mentor, or small group leader. You're not meant to walk through it alone.

### 3. Shine light through your actions.

- Maybe life feels good right now — praise God! That means it's time to carry the light to someone else.  
Be intentional: serve someone, speak kindness where there's gossip, or invite someone to experience hope with you.
- And as we head toward Christmas Eve services, think about one person who needs light in their life — and invite them. Your invitation could be what changes their story.

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## Gospel Invitation

- Maybe tonight, you realize you've been walking through darkness — chasing meaning, peace, or control, but still feeling empty.
  - The same light Isaiah promised and that arrived in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago is still shining today.
  - If you want that light in your life, you can simply say, "Jesus, I need You. Be my light. Forgive me and lead me."
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- That's the beginning of walking in the light — a light that will never fade.
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**Prayer:**

- Lead students in a prayer before dismissing them to Small Groups.
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