

1. Did you ever experience something that was too good to be true? What was it? Was it actually too good to be true in the end? Why or why not?

Read: *Luke 1:5-25*

2. What stands out to you about Zechariah and Elizabeth (v.5-7)?

3. It may be hard for us to believe today, but back in Zechariah and Elizabeth's day, barrenness was not only seen as a sign of God's disfavor, it was also regarded as a legitimate reason for divorce. What feelings must the couple, now well along in years, have had about not being able to have children?

4. What was the significance of the task for which Zechariah was chosen (have a look at 1 Chronicles 23:13)? Since many priests were never chosen to serve in the temple in this way, what might Zechariah have been feeling as he prepared to perform his priestly duties?

5. How might the angel's appearance have impacted Zechariah? What seems to have happened to Zechariah's hope in having a son?

6. How would the announcement and then the actual birth of a son affect Zechariah and Elizabeth? Why would Zechariah have doubted the angel?

7. How were the people who were waiting (v.21) feeling about Zechariah's delayed reappearance? What did they think when Zechariah emerged from the temple unable to speak?

8. Who in this story do you most identify with – Zechariah or Elizabeth? Why? When was the last time you doubted God? When was the last time you celebrated a long-awaited answer to prayer?

9. How does hope come alive in this story? In each of the characters? In the life of Israel? In the unfolding of God's plan? What are you placing your hope in this Advent and Christmas season?