

UNEXPECTED PRESENCE

*And they shall call His name Immanuel (which being translated means, God with us).
Matthew 1:23*

UNIQUE ENTRANCE

His Parents Divine Father _____ and human mother _____
Matthew 1:18,20

His Birth Certificate _____
Matthew 1:23

His Birth Announcement _____ and _____
Luke 2:8-20

UNPRECEDENTED ACCESS

From Restricted Area _____
Exodus 25:22, 30:6

To Wide Open Door _____
Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 9:12, 10:19-20

CLOSE PROXIMITY

_____ **Christmas** John 1:14,18

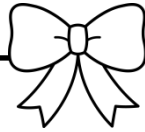
From the time that this name was published, Immanuel became the common property of all the faithful, as God gave Himself to us to be enjoyed in Christ. John Calvin

_____ **Christmas** Matthew 28:20

Human nature—Jesus ascended to heaven. Divine nature—Jesus is with us always. Immanuel. God with us. David Platt

Every Christmas _____ Revelation 21:3

The best of all is God with us. John Wesley



GIFT EXERCISE

Take time to reflect on what God has already been teaching you through His Word and through your experiences during this Christmas season.

- Ask God again to make this Christmas season one like no other. Ask Him to let you *give* to others out of what you are learning.

Through Christmas, God gave the gift of His own personal and unexpected presence. How have you thought about the presence of God before? Have you seen it as a “given” or as a “gift”? If you have taken it for granted, pause and think about just how shocking this gift is. The ongoing presence of Almighty God—always with you, always for you. If you have thought of it as something you had to earn or plead for, pause and be amazed that the gift of His presence is already given . . . to you.

Trust God to teach you more about how special this gift is as you give the gift of *Unexpected Presence* to someone else.

- Think of someone you see or interact with on a regular or periodic basis—someone who would never expect that you have noticed them or would request to spend time with them. Often people who provide many everyday services in our culture are ignored, complained to or mistreated. They are shocked when a customer or someone in the organization they view as “out-of-touch with them” or “above them” actually expresses or demonstrates personal interest in them or appreciation for them.
- Now think of a way you could spend time with that person—for no other reason than just to hang out. (e.g. invite them to your home, go to a ballgame, get coffee, etc.)
- Take the step of communicating that you would like to get together—because you appreciate them or just for fun. Make it as easy and comfortable as possible for the other person to accept your invitation without awkwardness or fear.

Through this experience, learn more of how God surprisingly and unexpectedly pursues you. He values you and gives you the gift of His presence, even though from your side it may feel crazy. Yes, He is God-- but yes, He is with you! Dwelling with you. Hanging out with you. Merry Christmas!

Send stories of your GIFT EXERCISE experiences from any of the weeks to giftexercise@nhconline.com.

JESUS CHRIST
GIFT OF
CHRISTMAS