

## APPENDIX A

# THE REDEMPTION CELEBRATION

*Permission is granted to the purchaser of this book to photocopy  
this appendix for use in a family or group celebration activity.*

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The following provides you with instructions on a mealtime celebration in praise to God for going to such miraculous and gracious lengths to redeem us. The Christmas season is an excellent time to do this. This Judeo-Christian celebration is modeled after the Jewish Passover *Haggadah* (“telling”) that Jewish families have conducted for centuries.

The traditional Jewish Passover celebrates God redeeming his people from the hands of Pharaoh and out of the land of Egypt to lead them into the Promised Land. The Passover is celebrated by Jewish families year after year as a way of passing down to their children the story of the Exodus, the story of the God of Redemption. But it is more than a story or historical event to them. The stories tell who they are, where they have come from, a depiction of a specific way of life, and a way of being in the world. Jewish parents for centuries have shared with their children that God fulfilled his promise to give them a land and make them a nation. That is why they so proudly bear the name of their forefather, Israel.

You probably don’t conduct a Judeo-style celebration that roots you in various meaningful historical events. Yet all of us can claim the historical and biblical roots of

being the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. So in this Redemption Celebration we trace your heritage and that of your family back to the very first couple. We show how because of their sin we are all separated from our Creator, and how Jesus came to earth in human form, an event called the incarnation, to redeem you specifically to a relationship with him. We attempt to convey this in a dramatic yet simple story form. And at the end of the celebration we enable you to offer an invitation for family members to commit or recommit their lives to God, for he is “our Redeemer from ages past” (Isaiah 63:16).

If you would like to learn more about the Passover as well as the other biblical feasts of the Lord and understand how they directly relate to your Christian faith, we encourage you to visit [www.ariseinglory.org](http://www.ariseinglory.org). On this Web site, Harvey Diamond, a Jewish believer in Christ as the Messiah, has done a great job of unpacking the biblical festivals and relating them in the form of an interactive devotional, called “Pathways to Glory Relational Devotional.” It provides various ways of relating with God in a manner that makes them especially relevant to the Christian life.

This Redemption Celebration is best done together with two or more families. Children from three years of age and up will enjoy and get something out of this celebration. Meet ahead of time with the adults you are planning this with to go over the details, select an emcee, and to assign certain readings and responsibilities.

The celebration consists of seven elements. Walk through each of these elements with one another to practice and plan for your meal and the different readings.

1. **“The Son of God Entered Our World” (a Scripture reading).** In your planning meeting, identify someone within the group who is willing to read this passage to begin the Redemption Celebration. The reading is found on page 440, and you have permission to photocopy that page and all the pages related to this celebration. You might ask the person to practice reading the passage aloud to the group, using the photocopied page. We encourage you to *read* these readings at the celebration rather than trying to casually relate the content. This gives your evening a sense of clarity and preciseness.
2. **The “Prophet Tree.”** Identify someone in your group willing to present the “Prophet Tree.” This person will need to follow the instructions for creating it. For practice, ask him or her to read the presentation aloud to your planning group now, using a photocopy of pages 441–443 that you provide.
3. **The meal.** Identify someone willing to take the lead to coordinate the location of the Redemption Celebration (preferably someone’s home), determine the time, decide what to eat, and so on. This person is not to do

all the work. He or she is to work with the members of your family group to coordinate the logistical details of the celebration listed on page 444. Photocopy that page and provide it to the meal coordinator.

4. **“The Saddest Story That Could Ever Be Told: The Great Separation.”** Identify someone within the group who is willing to read this personalized fairy-tale-type story at the celebration. Photocopy pages 445–446 of this reading and give them to the person willing to read this story and ask him or her to do the reading now for practice. (*Note:* The reader will need to fill in the blanks depending on gender.)
5. **“The Greatest Story Ever Told: The Great Redemption.”** Identify someone in your group willing to read this story at the celebration. Photocopy this reading, found on pages 447–448. This story, of course, is real and lays the foundation for your children and youth to commit or recommit their lives to Christ. The designated reader can practice by reading a photocopy.
6. **“How to Experience a Relationship with God.”** Identify someone in your group who is willing to make a short and clear presentation of the gospel. This is to offer your children and youth the opportunity to commit or recommit their lives to Christ, the Redeemer. The designated reader can practice reading the photocopied presentation found on pages 449–450.
7. **“Something to Celebrate.”** Identify someone in your group who is willing to conclude the Redemption Celebration by directing five people (preferably young people) to read what Jesus’ coming to earth means and then close in prayer. These five readings explain the meaning of Jesus’ coming to earth—and our lifelong response to our Redeemer. The designated person can practice by reading a photocopy of pages 451–453.

## Conducting the Redemption Celebration

After meeting with the families you plan to have the Redemption Celebration with, you are now ready to emcee your evening event and meal. Feel free to photocopy these pages as a reference guide to your celebration.

- *Introduction.* Invite everyone to be seated at the table and say, “**Tonight we are going to have a Redemption Celebration, which is a celebration of the time when God took on human form and Jesus was born into this world. And \_\_\_\_\_ (name) is going to start us off with a Scripture reading**” (“The Son of God Entered Our World”).
- Immediately following the reading, have the person responsible for the Prophet Tree make his or her presentation (“The Prophet Tree”).
- Announce that it is time to eat; offer a prayer for the meal.
- At the conclusion of the meal, thank all those who helped prepare it. And then say, “**Now we want to celebrate God taking on human form—which is called the incarnation. And we want to understand why he did that—why he came to earth. So to begin, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) is going to read something. But to gain the impact of this story, I want each young person here to pretend that \_\_\_\_\_ (name) is your actual \_\_\_\_\_ (mother/father). The story is entitled “The Saddest Story That Could Ever Be Told: The Great Separation.”**”
- After the “Great Separation” reading, sensitively gauge each person’s response. Ask, “**If that story were true, how would you feel?**”  
Then say to the group, “**I can tell you how I would feel; I would feel \_\_\_\_\_.**” (Describe as honestly and vulnerably as possible how it would affect you.)  
Then say, “**The story that \_\_\_\_\_ (name) just read shows how sad our lives would be if we couldn’t feel each other’s love. But, while that’s just a fable, it parallels a real situation, a story that’s absolutely true...for every one of us. Now \_\_\_\_\_ (name) will read “The Greatest Story Ever Told: The Great Redemption.”**”
- Following the “Great Redemption” reading the emcee says, “**Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_ (name). That is the reason God came to earth in the form of a human. It was the reason Jesus died: He wants a relationship—a close friendship connection—with you. \_\_\_\_\_ (name) will now explain to us how to experience that connection, a close relationship with God.**”

*Appendix A—The Redemption Celebration*

- Following the prayer of commitment/recommitment say, **“If you prayed that prayer from the heart, a miracle has taken place, and you are now a child of God—all because of Jesus.”** Sensitive probe to see if anyone has prayed that prayer or wants to pray further—and respond accordingly. Then at the appropriate time say: **“Let’s end our time together celebrating our redemption and what we’ve just experienced as we respond to the very God of Redemption.”** Introduce the person that is to conduct the “Something to Celebrate” presentation.
- Close your Redemption Celebration in prayer.

## The Son of God Entered Our World (A Scripture Reading)

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. “Don’t be frightened, Mary,” the angel told her, “for God has decided to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

Mary asked the angel, “But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin.”

The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.”

Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May everything you have said come true.” And then the angel left (Luke 1:26-38)...

The time came for [Mary’s] baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger (Luke 2:6-7).

## The Prophet Tree

### *Instructions for Creating Your “Prophet Tree”*

*Before the celebration:* If no one has provided you with a Prophet Tree, then take any potted houseplant or a small potted pine tree to the celebration. Prior to the celebration write or type the eight prophecies about Jesus that are listed below, including their Scripture references, on eight slips of paper approximately three by four inches. Roll the slips of paper into small four-inch rolls and tie each to a branch of the potted plant with ribbons.

### *Begin the Presentation*

Say, “Yes, Jesus was born in a manger. But how do we know that Jesus was truly the Son of God?” (Pause for possible answers.)

“Well, God gave us a way to know for certain that Jesus was his very own Son. You see, more than 400 years before Christ was born, God had his prophets foretell a lot of very specific things about Jesus. It was like identifying him by giving us his specific address. By looking back to those prophecies we know that if the information is descriptive enough, and Jesus fits the descriptions, then we will have no doubt that Jesus was in fact God’s Son.

“For example, you (name someone in the group) are one person among more than 6 billion people on this planet. If I had the task of identifying you out of the earth’s total population, I could do so by learning the answers to just eight questions. Let me ask you:

1. What continent do you live on? \_\_\_\_\_  
(African continent? European continent? North American continent? and so on)
2. What country do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Canada? Germany? England? United States? and so on)
3. What province or state do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What city, borough, or town do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What street or avenue do you live on? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your house or apartment number? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your last name? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What are your first and middle names? \_\_\_\_\_

“The answers to these eight questions will enable me to separate you from the more than 6 billion other people alive today. In the same fashion, God gave us Jesus Christ’s address. He provided us very specific information about who the Christ would be, where he would be born, and what would happen to him. And why? So that we would be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that a Jewish man named Jesus who lived over 2000 years ago was who he claimed to be—the Son of the one true God.”

*Bring Out the Prophet Tree*

Now bring out the Prophet Tree and continue by saying:

“This is called a ‘Prophet Tree.’ On it we have eight prophecies about Jesus that were written down and preserved hundreds of years before he was ever born.” Select up to eight in the group—preferably young people—to untie the slips of paper from the tree and read what is inside. One person, of course, can read more than one prophecy. They will read:

1. He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
2. He would be born to a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).
3. A forerunner would announce his arrival, a “voice in the wilderness” (Isaiah 40:3).
4. He would ride victoriously into Jerusalem on a young donkey (Zechariah 9:9).
5. He would be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9; Zechariah 11:12).
6. He would be crucified (his hands and feet would be pierced), but his bones would be left unbroken (Psalm 22:16; 34:20).
7. He would die (be “cut off”) 483 years after the declaration to rebuild the temple in 444 BC (Daniel 9:24).
8. He would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:10).<sup>1</sup>

*Could It All Be a Coincidence?*

Continue by reading:

“Every one of these prophecies was fulfilled during Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. But couldn’t that all be a coincidence? Perhaps those prophecies have been fulfilled by any number of people. Right?”

“This is where the science of statistics and probabilities comes in. Professor Peter W. Stoner, in an analysis that was carefully reviewed and pronounced to be sound by the American Scientific Affiliation, states that the probability of just *eight* of those prophecies being fulfilled in one person is 1 in 10 to the seventeenth power—that’s 1 in 100 quintillion.<sup>2</sup>

“Look at it this way: If you spread 100 quintillion silver dollars across the state of Texas, they would not only cover the entire state, they would form a pile of coins two feet deep! Now, take one more silver dollar, mark it with a big red X, toss it into that pile, and stir the whole pile thoroughly.

“Then blindfold yourself, and starting at El Paso on the western border, walk the length and breadth of that enormous state, stopping just once along the way to pick up a single silver dollar out of that two-foot-deep pile. . . Then take off your blindfold and look at the silver dollar in your hand. What are the chances that you would have picked the marked coin out of a pile of silver dollars the size of the Lone Star State? *The same chance that one person could have fulfilled those eight prophecies in one lifetime.*

“And that’s just the beginning! More than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament were fulfilled in *one person*, Jesus Christ—and all of them were made more than 400 years prior to his birth. In other words, it is completely unreasonable to imagine that the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus could have come true in one man—unless, of course, he *is*, as he himself claimed, ‘the Messiah, the Son of the blessed God’ (Mark 14:61-62), the One who was and is and is to come.”<sup>3</sup>

(The emcee thanks the presenter of the Prophet Tree, announces that it is now time to eat the meal together, and says the blessing.)

## Preparing for the Redemption Celebration Meal

- **Select where to conduct your Redemption Celebration.** A person's home is preferable, depending on the size of your group and their families. Conducting the celebration at multiple sites is an option if you have a large group.
- **Select date and time of your celebration.**
- **Decide on the meal.** Consider a potluck meal in which each family brings a dish. Decide who in your group will bring what. If you plan to conduct the celebration as an annual event you might want to identify a dish or two as a special item to always have as a traditional Redemption Celebration item.

## The Saddest Story That Could Ever Be Told: The Great Separation

The emcee makes an introduction: “Now we want to celebrate the time when God took on human form—which is called the *incarnation*. And we want to understand the reason he did that—in other words, why he came to earth. To begin, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) will read us something. But to gain the impact of this story, each young person here must pretend that \_\_\_\_\_ (name of person reading the story) is your actual mother or father. This story is entitled ‘The Saddest Story That Could Ever Be Told: The Great Separation.’

The person chosen to read stands up and begins:

“I want you to imagine with me that once upon a time, in a land far away, I was the happiest \_\_\_\_\_ (king/queen) in all the world...the happiest \_\_\_\_\_ (king/queen), in fact, in all the history of all the \_\_\_\_\_ (kings/queens) in all the world.

“This happiness was not just because I was great. It was not because I had a grand castle. It was not because I ruled a glorious kingdom. It was because on one special day, I became something even better than a great \_\_\_\_\_ (king/queen), because on that day each of you were born and I became your \_\_\_\_\_ (father/mother).

“For months, I waited for your arrival. When you finally came into the world, you were truly a unique, one-of-a-kind person who had never been seen before. Never in the history of mortal time would there be another you—so distinct, so individual, yet so connected to me.

“From the first time I scooped you up in my arms and held you close, I wanted nothing more in all the world than to love you, be close to you, and watch you grow to experience all the joys of being you. You were my child, after all, and I wanted nothing to ever come between us.

“But then...a horrible thing happened. The wicked prince of an unhappy kingdom tried to overpower me and take control of my kingdom. But he failed because I was too strong. So in anger and hatred, he chose to strike where he knew it would hurt me most. He cast an evil spell over you—a great, terrible spell.

“The evil prince’s spell caused a dreadful glass wall to surround you wherever you went and whatever you did. I could still see you and hear you—for I was still the great \_\_\_\_\_ (king/queen)—but it trapped you without your knowledge. It kept you from seeing me, hearing me, touching me, or even sensing that I was there.

“Thus, unless the spell could be broken, I would never again experience the pleasure, the joy, the closeness of being with you, my very own child.

“Oh, what anguish it was for me, for I could see you, but you could not see me. I saw your first steps...but you could not hear me cheering you on. I heard your first words...but they weren't spoken to me. I watched everything you did and followed you everywhere you went...but the dreadful glass wall kept you from feeling my ever-present love for you. I wanted to share everything with you—your thrill of learning to ride a bike, your relief at passing a test in school, your excitement of winning a game—but the evil spell took all that away from me.

“I was there, too, when you were hurt. When you cried, I reached out to wipe your tears away, but you never felt the touch of my hand. When you skinned your knee, I wanted to kiss it and make it better, but you didn't even know I was there. And on those nights when you would cry yourself to sleep, I heard you. I heard you cry, ‘Where is my \_\_\_\_\_ (daddy/mommy)? I want my \_\_\_\_\_ (daddy/mommy).’ But you couldn't hear my sobs for you.

“Oh, what a wicked spell! I would have given my kingdom—my life!—if it would break the spell and restore you to me. But it could not be, for no one on earth could break this spell. I could only watch with a broken heart, weep for you, and wait for the Spellbreaker who could reunite you with me...and bring to an end the Saddest Story That Could Ever Be Told.”<sup>4</sup>

Emcee transition to next reading:

After the reading, sensitively gauge each person's response. Ask, “How would it make you feel if that story were true?”

Then offer, “I can tell you how I would feel; I would feel \_\_\_\_\_.”  
(Describe as honestly and vulnerably as possible how it would affect you.)

Then say, “The story that \_\_\_\_\_ (name) just read shows how sad our lives would be if we couldn't feel each other's love. Yet while that's just a fable, it parallels a real situation, a story that's absolutely true...for each one of us. And \_\_\_\_\_ (name) now will read ‘The Greatest Story Ever Told: The Great Redemption.’”

## The Greatest Story Ever Told: The Great Redemption

“In a Middle Eastern land many years ago, where a beautiful river branched out to form four other rivers, was a pristine garden. Lush tropical trees and plants produced delicious fruits of every taste and texture. A paradise of grasses and flowers under a canopy of clouds and sky painted a breathtaking canvas. Singing birds and sparkling waterfalls created a soundtrack of sheer delight. It was perfection itself, the Garden of Eden, where the first man and the first woman lived in perfect harmony with each other and with their Creator, the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

“From the first moments of their existence, this first couple—Adam and Eve—enjoyed a close relationship with their Creator. They talked to him just as they talked to each other. They walked with him in the garden. They laughed together, sharing the delights of paradise—reveling in the gazelle’s grace, the eagle’s soaring strength, the sparrow’s playfulness.

“They communed with God as a dear friend and loving Father, for they were a family. And through this relationship they had everything they needed. They had love, because their love came from God. They had joy, because their joy came from God. They had peace, because their peace came from God. They had no hunger, greed, fear, or pain because God’s holy presence permeated the wonderful garden. They were a perfect family.

“But then something terrible happened. A rebellious angel named Lucifer plotted in hatred to ruin the perfect family and world God had created. Lucifer, who had been cast out of heaven because he wanted to rule his own kingdom without God, persuaded the first human couple that they, too, should rule their own world without God. So he deceived them into believing that they knew better than God did. He convinced them to selfishly and sinfully choose their own ways rather than trusting in God’s ways.

“Adam and Eve’s sinful choice to reject God and his ways formed a dreadful wall—a wall of death—that separated them from their loving Creator and Father God. *Gone* were their shared moments of intimacy and happiness. *Gone* were the moments of laughter they enjoyed together. *Gone* was their close relationship.

“From that point on, God watched in grief and sadness as children—his children—came into the world he created without knowing him and feeling his love. He watched them every moment of the day, but they could not feel his interest. He saw them follow the sinful path of Adam and Eve, which kept every child, teenager, and adult from knowing and feeling his love.

“The perfect and holy Creator, who knew no sin, watched his sinful children—who

were separated from his presence. They were now disconnected from the only source that could sustain life, love, joy, and peace. He watched as his children had to suffer the agony of war and hunger, disease and heartache, pain and suffering. Sin separated God from the cherished family he had created, and it broke his heart. But as his heart ached for his children, he already knew how he would respond.

“And this—though it is miraculous—is no fairy tale. It is absolutely true.

“God wanted to reconnect to his children and restore a relationship with them—with *you*—but God, being holy, could not relate to sin. So he devised a plan. He sent his Son into our world to become one of us—a child himself, a human baby—for you. God’s own Son came to earth—in a virgin’s womb, as the prophets foretold, as the shepherds learned—to cancel the curse so you could know, so you could *feel* his love for you.

“The sin of the first couple and your sin caused death, and the prince of darkness, Satan himself, held the power of death over you. Only one thing could cancel the curse of sin: A sinless human had to be willing to sacrifice himself for you. So God’s Son, perfect and sinless in every way, became human. As the Bible records, ‘Only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death’ (Hebrews 2:14).

“He did it all for you. Though you sinned against him, he loved and accepted you. This is the meaning of redemption—to purchase you back with his blood. It shows you how much he wants a relationship with you.

“And that kind of relationship is available to anyone who responds to his offer of a never-ending, always-with-you love relationship by believing and trusting in Christ as the Son of God, your Savior, Redeemer, and friend.

“*Not* the end—but the *beginning* if you trust in Jesus the Redeemer.”<sup>5</sup>

Emcee:

“Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_ (name). That is the reason God came to earth in the form of a human. It was the reason Jesus died—he wants to redeem you so he can have a relationship with you. \_\_\_\_\_ (name) will explain to us how to experience that relationship with God.”

## How to Experience a Relationship with God

(*Presenter:* Feel free to read these five points or simply use the following as a guide):

### Trusting in the Redeemer—Jesus Christ—involves four things:

**1. We must recognize we have a problem with God.** “No one has real understanding,” the Bible says, “no one is seeking God. All have turned away from God; all have gone wrong” (Romans 3:11-12).

Recognizing our problem with God means we acknowledge that we have turned away from God and don’t have enough understanding in life to decide for ourselves what is right. The Bible says it like it is: You “were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions” (Colossians 1:21).

**2. We must realize that Jesus Christ is our only solution.** “When people sin,” the Bible says, “they earn what sin pays—death” (Romans 6:23 *NCV*). Our problem with God has earned us death—separation from God. And we are totally incapable of solving that problem.

We can’t just try harder to be good. You see, Jesus didn’t come to earth to make bad people good; he came to earth to make dead people live. Romans 8:11 says, “The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you.” So Christ is our only solution.

**3. We need to respond to Christ’s offer to redeem us.** We need to be given new life. And Christ will give us new life when we agree with Jesus, who said:

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me (John 14:6).

You will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am who I say I am, you will die in your sins (John 8:24).

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish. Do you believe this? (John 11:25-26).

Do you really believe this? Are you convinced that Jesus Christ is who he said he is: the resurrection and the life, the only way to salvation, the only solution to your situation? Will you commit your life to him? He is ready to raise you from death to life,

from separation from him to a new relationship with him. It says in John 1:12-13, “To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn! This is not a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan—this rebirth comes from God.”

**4. You can rely on God to live in and through you.** You may be dead to God because of your sins, but he is ready, as it says in Colossians 2:14, to “[cancel] the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ’s cross.”

If this prayer truly expresses the desire of your heart to begin a new life in Christ, you can pray these words silently to God:

- God, I recognize I have a problem with you. I have sinned against you and have gone my own way in life.
- I realize now that you are my only solution. I ask you to forgive me of all my sins. Right now I am turning away from my old life and turning to Jesus Christ as my only hope of finding a relationship with you.
- I respond right now to Jesus Christ’s offer to rescue me from death. Right now I place my trust in you as my Savior and Redeemer. Right now I believe you will transform me into your child and give me an eternal relationship with you.
- I rely upon you to transfer me from death to life. You said in John 11:25 that I will be given eternal life by believing in you and that I will never perish. I believe and rely on you to transform me into your child right now.
- Thank you for doing what you said you would do. Thank you for making me your forgiven child and bringing me into a relationship with you, the one true God. Please live your life in and through me every day. I pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The emcee makes a transition to the last reading by saying:

**“If you prayed that prayer from the heart, a miracle has taken place, and you are now a child of God—all because of Jesus.”** (Sensitively probe to see if anyone has prayed that prayer or wants to pray further and respond accordingly. Then at the appropriate time say:) **“Let’s end our time together by celebrating our new life and what we’ve just experienced as we respond to the very God of Redemption.”** (Introduce the person who is to conduct the closing presentation, “Something to Celebrate.”)

## Something to Celebrate

*Instructions:* The person chosen to direct this portion should photocopy and cut out the five readings on these pages, distribute them to individuals at your celebration before it starts, and ask them to take turns reading when you call on them. Preferably, have young people at your meal read them. Follow the order from 1 to 5, and at the end of each reading the person will say, “That is worth celebrating.” Prompt the entire group to then say, “He is worthy.”<sup>6</sup>

### *1. Because of Jesus, God Accepts Me Unconditionally*

Like every other human being, I suffered the curse of death. I was born in sin, disconnected from God, and that broke his heart. And even though I sinned against him, he accepted me without condition. He wanted so much to have a love relationship with me that he was willing to set aside his glory, humble himself, and even go through a torturous death on a cross to redeem me, even though I didn’t deserve it. Jesus coming to earth shows how passionate God is about enjoying a relationship... with me.

That is worth celebrating!  
[The group responds: “He is worthy.”]

### *2. Because of Jesus, God Loves Me Sacrificially*

Even though I was born with a sinful nature—and added to my guilt many times by sinning myself—God solved the problem of my sin in a way that satisfied his mercy *and* his justice. “He sent his own Son in a human body... [and] destroyed sin’s control over [me] by giving his Son as a sacrifice for [my] sins” (Romans 8:3). In spite of my sin, God loved me enough to sacrifice himself, and he proved it by laying down his life for me!

That is worth celebrating!  
[The group responds: “He is worthy.”]

*3. I Must Respond by  
Living a Life of Devoted Worship of God*

Christ sacrificed his life for me; I can do no different for him. Romans 12:1 says, “Give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?” In Exodus 34:14 it says, “You must worship no other gods, but only the LORD, for he is a God who is passionate about his relationship with you.”

That is worth celebrating!  
[The group responds: “He is worthy.”]

*4. I Must Respond by  
Living a Life of Continual Prayer to God*

In Hebrews 4:15-16 Jesus is called our High Priest when it says, “This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There...we will find grace to help us when we need it.” Prayer allows us to share our hearts and needs with God, and he is always there for us.

That is worth celebrating!  
[The group responds: “He is worthy.”]

*5. I Must Respond by  
Living a Life of Confident Faith in God*

In Hebrews 12:1-2 it tells us to “run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish.” We trusted in Christ to redeem us, and he did. We trust in him now to see us through the trials and difficulties of life—and he will.

That is worth celebrating!  
[The group responds: “He is worthy.”]

Emcee then thanks the person in charge and the five readers and closes the Redemption Celebration in a song of worship and a prayer of thanksgiving to God for sending his Son and redeeming us.