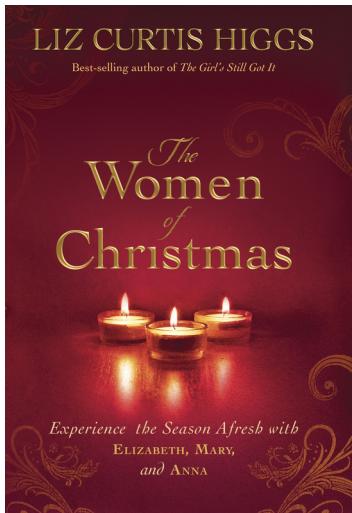


How to Use *The Women of Christmas* for Your Bible Study

A Leader's Guide from Liz Curtis Higgs

The Women of Christmas is much more than a pretty hardcover gift book with gold embossed lettering. It's also a Bible study filled with substance and heart, designed to encourage my sisters in Christ.



"*The Women of Christmas* invites us to steal away with our Savior during the hustle and bustle of one of the busiest seasons of the year. In her warm and welcoming voice, Liz draws us into the compelling stories of the women who surrounded our Messiah's birth and encourages us to consider our own relationship with him. What a wonderful way to experience Christmas!"
—Kelly Minter, author of *Nehemiah: A Heart That Can Break*

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

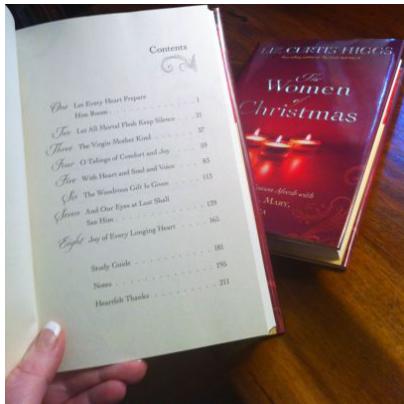
Verse by verse, I unwrap the Christmas story from Luke, sharing new truths I've discovered by searching the Scriptures in forty different English translations, as well as seeking wisdom from reliable commentaries and other solid resources. I learned *so much* in the process, and I pray you and the women you serve will too!

HOW THE CHAPTERS UNFOLD

- One:** Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room
 - Two:** Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
 - Three:** The Virgin Mother Kind
 - Four:** O Tidings of Comfort and Joy
 - Five:** With Heart and Soul and Voice
 - Six:** The Wondrous Gift Is Given
 - Seven:** And Our Eyes at Last Shall See Him
 - Eight:** Joy of Every Longing Heart
- Study Guide**
Notes

EVERYTHING YOU NEED IS IN THE BOOK

Rather than creating a separate workbook, I included the **Study Guide** at the end of the book, featuring **three in-depth questions per chapter**. Women may want to use a notebook, iPad, or other device for taking notes. For Bible study leaders who like to know where various details in the text are drawn from, it's all there for you in the **Notes**.



WEEKLY PREPARATION TIME

For your members, it should take about **fifteen minutes** to read each chapter and perhaps **thirty minutes** to answer the questions. (If my estimate doesn't match your experience, please let me know, so I can adjust those numbers here.)

FOUR-WEEK STUDY / EIGHT-WEEK STUDY

If your group meets for **an hour or less** each week, and your time together includes prayer, refreshments, and socializing, an **eight-week study** may be the best plan for you, covering **one chapter** and **three questions** each time you meet.

If you gather for **ninety minutes or more** weekly, *The Women of Christmas* can work as a **four-week study**, with **two chapters** to read and **six questions** to answer and discuss each session.

POSSIBLE FORMAT FOR ONE CHAPTER A WEEK FOR EIGHT WEEKS

10 minutes – Gathering time

10 minutes – Devotional or opening thoughts based on week's reading

30 minutes – Discussion of three Study Guide questions

10 minutes – Closing thoughts and prayer

POSSIBLE FORMAT FOR TWO CHAPTERS A WEEK FOR FOUR WEEKS

5 minutes – Gathering time

5 minutes – Devotional or opening thoughts based on week's reading

30 minutes – Discussion of three Study Guide questions for first chapter

10 minutes – Break

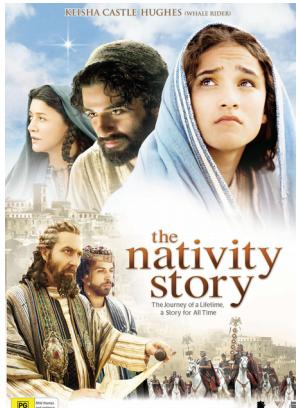
5 minutes – Devotional or opening thoughts based on week's reading

30 minutes – Discussion of three Study Guide questions for second chapter

5 minutes – Closing thoughts and prayer

A VIDEO OPTION

Though we did not record a Bible Study DVD for *The Women of Christmas*, I found another way for you to include a meaningful video portion at the start of each session.



In 2006, New Line Cinema released the movie ***The Nativity Story***, directed by Catherine Hardwicke. It's very faithful to the biblical account, and the acting and production qualities are excellent, with Keisha Castle-Hughes (*Whale Rider*) as Mary, Oscar Isaac (*Agora*) as Joseph, and Ciarán Hinds (*Persuasion*) as Herod. The beautiful soundtrack by Mychael Danna kept me company through the long writing hours, and the scenery swept me away to Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem of old.

The value of watching the movie as part of your study is to offer a richer understanding of the world into which Jesus was born: the realities of Roman rule, the harshness of the taxes levied, the role Herod played, and the challenges Mary and Joseph faced. Although Anna's story is not included, and the scenes watched each week will not always align with the chapters you'll be reading, I do believe adding a dramatic, visual element could greatly enhance your learning experience.

The Nativity Story DVD is easily purchased and very affordable. Here are direct links to simplify your online ordering:

Amazon.com:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000MGBM1I/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B000MGBM1I&linkCode=as2&tag=lizcurtishiggs

ChristianBook.com:

http://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product?event=AFF&p=1154110&item_no=106682

BarnesandNoble.com:

http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/click?id=JfnIlyaAI3o&subid=&offerid=239662.1&type=10&tmpid=8432&RD_PARM1=htp%253A%252F%252Fwww.barnesandnoble.com%252Fw%252Fdvd-the-nativity-story-keisha-castle-hughes%252F11141183%253Fean%253D794043106682



DETAILS ON USING *THE NATIVITY STORY*

The entire movie is 2 hours, 30 minutes in length. Here's how to find the scenes needed for each week:

1. Access the Menu on the DVD (usually by clicking "Menu" on the remote control)
2. Choose "Select a Scene"
3. Watch the scenes as indicated below, stopping the DVD where noted
4. If you plan to use the video, you'll need to adjust your schedule accordingly, letting the video serve as your opening thoughts and shortening your discussion time as well. Adding the video portion is more practical for groups meeting weekly for 90 minutes or more.

USING THE VIDEO BASED ON A FOUR-WEEK BIBLE STUDY PLAN

Week One: Scenes 1-5, ending with one of the Magi saying, "It will not be years"

Week Two: Scenes 6-10, ending with one of the Magi saying, "I am the wisest"

Week Three: Scenes 11-15, ending with Mary washing Joseph's feet

Week Four: Scenes 16-21, ending as the credits begin to roll

USING THE VIDEO BASED ON AN EIGHT-WEEK BIBLE STUDY PLAN

Week One: Scenes 1-3, ending with "for those who have nothing"

Week Two: Scenes 4-6, ending with a child putting grapes in basket

Week Three: Scenes 7-9, ending with Mary falling asleep in her bed

Week Four: Scenes 10-12, ending with Mary, then Joseph being shunned

Week Five: Scenes 13-15, ending with Mary washing Joseph's feet

Week Six: Scenes 16-17, ending with the Magi after departing from Herod

Week Seven: Scenes 18-19, ending with Joseph kissing Mary's hand

Week Eight: Scenes 20-21, ending as the credits begin to roll

Incorporating the movie into your study is only a suggestion, which may not work for your group. I just wanted you to know a helpful video resource was available.

MY WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY BLOG

Soon after the book released, I blogged my way through the *The Women of Christmas*, including portions of the Study Guide. Stop by my blog for additional inspiration and encouragement: <http://www.lizcurtishiggs.com/category/the-women-of-christmas/>.

FOR MY PINTEREST SISTERS

Here's something *fun* you'll want to share with your group. I've created a Pinterest board for each of our Christmas women! You'll find them here:

Elizabeth: <http://www.pinterest.com/lizcurtishiggs/elizabeth/>

Mary: <http://www.pinterest.com/lizcurtishiggs/mary/>

Anna: <http://www.pinterest.com/lizcurtishiggs/anna/>

CHRISTMAS AT THE FARM



In November 2013, I joined **Ann Voskamp**, a dear friend and blogging sister (<http://www.aholyexperience.com>), for a fun and festive webcast at her farm in a peaceful corner of Canada.

We chatted about *The Women of Christmas* and Ann's wonderful Advent devotional, *The Greatest Gift*, plus shared our own Christmas stories, memories, and (yum!) recipes.

Watch it anytime: <http://www.lizcurtishiggs.com/the-women-of-christmas/>

Bless you for considering *The Women of Christmas* for your Bible study group! If I can provide more suggestions or information, I am ever at your service: liz@lizcurtishiggs.com.

Your sister,

Liz



"Liz Curtis Higgs ably mines the Scriptures, revealing undiscovered treasures in the familiar story. Through the pages of this powerful little book, we get to peer into the hearts of these women and find our own hearts melting at the beauty of God's grace."

—Nancy Guthrie, author of the Bible study series Seeing Jesus in the Old Testament