**Shame & Flame**

**Sermon Based Discussion (December 6, 2016)**

**Receive & Believe (Advent 2016)**

**WARM UP**

1. Share about a time when you received a gift (Christmas, birthday, etc.) that you actually didn’t want. What was the gift and what did you do?

*As we continue in our Advent sermon series on “Receive & Believe”, we consider a “gift” that many people may not want: the gift of shame. We might not think it’s a gift at all, but from this passage, we see clearly that the Heavenly Father sent His Son, Jesus, into a situation of shame.*

*In this session we consider how the birth of Christ can redeem even the most shameful aspects of our lives for His glory and purposes.*

**INTO THE BIBLE (Matthew 1:18-25)**

1. What about this situation is shameful or embarrassing for Mary and Joseph?
2. What does this passage reveal to us about the character of Joseph?

**UNDERSTANDING**

1. How is Joseph putting himself into this shameful situation of marrying a pregnant woman a picture of Jesus saving us from our sins?

**DIFFERENCE**

1. How did your family handle shame or embarrassment?
2. Can you relate an experience in which God used a shameful or embarrassing past to point others to Jesus?

**APPLICATION**

1. What is a situation in your life—past or present—that this passage may apply to? What would obedience to Christ in this situation look like for you?
2. For groups that are at this point, consider sharing confidentially a part of your life that was shameful/embarrassing, that Jesus is redeeming.