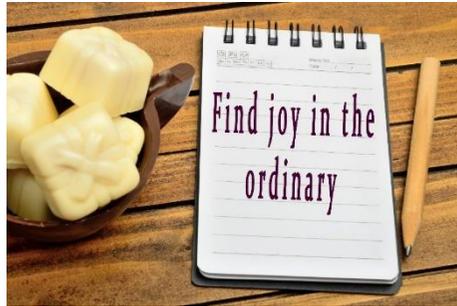


## Small Group Material: **Signs and surprises**

### **Matthew 11:2-11**

Seeing signs of the extraordinary in the ordinary

What does it look like to get ready for God's kingdom?



### **Welcome (10 mins)**

Can you think of a time when you have not achieved your ambition or where something didn't turn out as you hoped?

### **Worship (15 mins)**

Here are two songs for you to choose from

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy9nwe9\\_xzw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy9nwe9_xzw)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhnG0PGfcQw>

Both of these songs (lyrics on a separate page) speak of God's faithfulness and how we can put our trust in God in the midst of our circumstances

Use the time to listen to the song and rest in God's presence.

You may like to use the prayer consequences sheet to create prayers you can share with each other (separate page) The instructions are on the sheet.

### **Word (35-40mins)**

Read the passage together, first imagining you are one of John's disciples

How were John and his disciples feeling?

Why couldn't John see the miracles as signs of Jesus' identity?

What makes us cynical?

Now read the passage again and imagine you are listening to Jesus.

What surprises you about the way Jesus speaks about John?

Now just read verses 4-6

Where can we see God at work?

Can we see God in the outside world of our work and everyday lives – or only in church?

This is Advent; the season of expectation. So how do we live out that hope?

What distracts us from being prepared?

What could you resolve to do this week to help you live expectantly and with hope as you prepare for Christmas?

### **Witness (20-25 mins)**

Pray for Christmas events that will speak of God at work in our world (Last sessions' material had the list of Christmas events in & around St. Mary's) Pray for each other in the run-up to Christmas and your resolutions about living hopefully and with expectation, this coming week.

You may like to finish with this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPhlp0DsLH0>

## Oceans Hillsong

You call me out upon the waters  
The great unknown where feet may fail  
And there I find You in the mystery  
In oceans deep my faith will stand  
And I will call upon Your Name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine  
Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand will be my guide  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me  
You've never failed and You won't start now  
So I will call upon Your Name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine  
And You are mine  
Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders  
Let me walk upon the waters  
Wherever You would call me  
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander  
And my faith will be made stronger  
In the presence of my Saviour.....  
I will call upon Your Name  
Keep my eyes above the waves  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
I am Yours and You are mine

## Your Faithfulness Brian Doerksen

I don't know what this day will bring  
Will it be disappointing, filled with longed for things?  
I don't know what tomorrow holds  
Still I know, I can trust Your faithfulness

I don't know if these clouds mean rain  
If they do, will they pour down blessing or pain?  
I don't know what the future holds  
Still I know, I can trust Your faithfulness

Certain as the rivers reach the sea  
Certain as the sunrise in the east  
I can rest in Your faithfulness  
Surer than a mother's tender love  
Surer than the stars still shine above  
I can rest in Your faithfulness

I don't know how or when I'll die  
Will it be a thief, or will I have a chance to say goodbye?  
No, I don't know how much time is left  
But in the end, I will know Your faithfulness

When darkness overwhelms my soul  
When thoughts and storms of doubt  
Still I trust, You are always faithful  
Always faithful

I can only imagine what it will be like  
When I walk by Your side  
I can only imagine what my eyes will see  
When Your face is before me  
I can only imagine, yeah

Surrounded by Your glory  
What will my heart feel?  
Will I dance for You, Jesus  
Or in awe of You be still?

Will I stand in Your presence  
Or to my knees will I fall?  
Will I sing hallelujah?  
Will I be able to speak at all?

I can only imagine  
I can only imagine

I can only imagine when that day comes  
And I find myself standing in the sun/son  
I can only imagine when all I will do  
Is forever—forever worship You

I can only imagine, yeah  
I can only imagine

I can only imagine  
When all I will do  
Is forever—forever worship You

I can only imagine

Complete the sentence in **just the first box** to express something that means a lot to you about God's character, thinking particularly about times when life is difficult.

Fold this top section over, covering what you have written. Now wait till everyone is ready and then pass your paper on to the person on your left and take the sheet from the person on your right. Now complete the sentence in the 2<sup>nd</sup> box and turn the top over again and pass on. Once the sheet of prayers is complete everyone unrolls their papers and takes turns to read out each sheet.

Lord you are

Thank you that

Open our eyes to

We hold on to your promise that

We celebrate your