



Jesus Among Us

Supposing He Was With Them

February 1, 2026

Leader's Guide Text: Luke 2:41–52

Leader Goal: Help the group move from **assumption** → **awareness** → **intentional return**, without guilt or pressure.

Leader posture: This sermon is about *faithful people drifting*, not unfaithful people failing. Keep the tone warm, normal, and hope-filled.

1. Assumption Check

Question: Mary and Joseph didn't lose Jesus through rebellion, but through assumption.

Where in everyday life do you find yourself assuming things are "fine" without really checking?

Leader tip: Let people answer broadly—this warms up the room without forcing spiritual vulnerability right away.

Why this matters (from the sermon):

Pastor Tony emphasized: "*Nothing careless. Nothing intentional. Just assumption—fed by busyness, distance, and familiarity.*"

Leader guidance:

- Let answers stay broad at first (life, family, work, routines).
- Avoid rushing this into a "spiritual inventory."

If the group stalls:

- "Why does assumption usually show up when things feel stable?"
- "What makes assumption feel safer than paying attention?"

2. Routine vs. Relationship

Question: Which spiritual routines are life-giving for you right now—and which might you be doing on autopilot?

Follow-up:

How can a good routine quietly replace attentiveness to Christ?

Why this matters:

The sermon stressed that **good things can eclipse the best thing** when they become ends instead of means.

Leader guidance:

- Affirm routines—don't diminish them.
- Gently redirect toward **awareness**, not abandonment.

If needed:

- "What's the difference between discipline and autopilot?"
- "Have you ever done the right things without being present?"

3. "In the Group" Faith

Question: How easy is it to mistake being around Christians or church activity for actually being close to Jesus?

Why this matters:

Pastor Tony stated clearly:

"Proximity to God's people doesn't replace proximity to God Himself."

Leader guidance:

- Keep this from becoming critical of the church.

- Emphasize Christ as the center of community.

Helpful prompts:

- “Why does community sometimes feel easier than communion?”
- “How can community help us drift if Jesus isn’t the focus?”

4. Recognizing Drift

Question: What are some early signs that you personally might be drifting spiritually?

Leader tip: This is a great moment to normalize drift without shame.

Why this matters:

The sermon noted that drift is usually **slow and unnoticed**, not dramatic.

Leader guidance:

- Normalize drift—this is not about shame.
- Encourage honesty without forcing disclosure.

If the room gets quiet:

- “What fades first when drift begins—joy, prayer, gratitude?”
- “Why is drift harder to notice than rebellion?”

5. “Have I Been Closer Before?”

Question: Looking back, was there a season when your walk with Jesus felt more intentional than it does now? What was different about that season?

Why this matters:

Pastor Tony asked: *“If the answer is yes, who moved? Not Him—it’s always us.”*

Leader guidance:

- Keep this reflective, not regret-focused.
- Emphasize memory as a **gracious invitation**, not condemnation.

Follow-ups if helpful:

- “What priorities shaped that season?”
- “What from that season is still possible now?”

6. Community vs. Communion

Question: Why do you think community can sometimes feel easier than personal time with God? How can a group help protect both?

Why this matters:

The sermon warned that when communion fades, community can become a substitute.

Leader guidance:

- Affirm the gift of community.
- Reframe the group as a *support for communion*, not a replacement.

If needed:

- “How can groups help us notice drift sooner?”
- “What does Christ-centered community actually look like?”

7. The Gracious Return

Question: What does “returning to Jesus” look like in simple, practical terms this week—not dramatically, but intentionally?

Why this matters:

The sermon closed by emphasizing: *Restoration begins with awareness, not guilt.*

When we return, we discover Jesus hasn’t moved.

Leader guidance:

- Keep steps small and specific.
- No pressure for “big spiritual resets.”

Closing prompt: Invite each person to name **one small step** toward awareness this week.