

Introduction:

1. Think of an old building you know that was torn down and replaced. Was the replacement any better? Why or why not?
2. When did you need support or protection or leadership, and you looked to a teacher or a coach or a boss or a pastor or a priest or a parent...and they let you down? What do you think drove that leader to act the way they did?

Understanding:

3. Read Micah 3:1- 3 which describes how God viewed the leaders in Micah's time. How does this explain the reason for Micah saying in 5:1, "They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod".
4. Do you think that the siege being laid against the city in Micah 5 was ONLY due to the leaders doing a poor job? Why?
5. The living bible paraphrase of Micah 5:2 says "O Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are but a small Judean village, yet you will be the birthplace of my King who is alive from everlasting ages past!" How can it be that Bethlehem WILL be the birthplace of some who is ALREADY alive? How does that connect to Advent?
6. Micah 5:3 spoke to the people of his time about exiles being brought back. Nowadays Jesus brings us out of exile, when we feel like we're under siege from all kinds of painful things. In what ways has Christ brought YOU out of exile? In what ways are you still praying for him to bring you out of exile?
7. If you were to imagine that Jesus were being born today in the U.S., would he be more likely to come from New York City or Paducah, Kentucky? Why do you think so?
8. Micah 7:18-19 is a beautiful description of God's rescue from sin. It's also a preview of how Christ rescues us. Work through these verses and explain how you can see Christ's plan of salvation in them.
9. Read from Micah 5:4 to the beginning of verse 5 "And he will be our peace". Jesus is the one leader who gives us the inner rest that we deeply desire. Explain a situation where Christ has brought you peace in the face of attack or obstacles. If you have not seen that happen, where do you need to trust Christ do it?

Application:

10. Jesus said, "blessed are those who mourn". So, this Advent, allow yourself to notice the brokenness in the world—all the ways that people are under attack—under siege. Allow yourself to grieve about that.
11. Allow yourself to realize, again, how imperfect human leaders are. Sooner or later, they always let us down. So, if you've been idolizing some human leader, Advent is a good time to stop.
12. Micah 6:8 says "And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Experiencing that mercy, pray for ways to point people, and keep pointing yourself, to the one Leader who will never fail us.