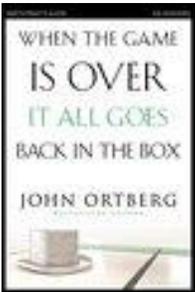


**ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION STUDY**

Please join us for our next Adult Christian Education Study titled, "When the Game Is Over, It All Goes Back In the Box" by John Ortberg. Pastor Ortberg is the same author who wrote one of our previous studies, "If You Want to Walk On Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat." "When the Game Is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box" asks us what can we take with us to the kingdom of God?



His answer tells us we can take pretty much only what we brought to the game. Everything else goes back in the box - the cash atop the corporate ladder, the vacation home at the lake, and the status vehicle in between. All the tokens, game pieces, and prizes are left behind when we walk away from the table. The only real "winnings" we claim and keep are our own soul and the love we have for Christ and each other.

If you think you might need a better game plan - one that offers an eternal perspective - this strategy-filled playbook walks you through what it takes to really win big at the game of life. This book is a thoughtfully written instruction manual for Christian 'game players' of all ages. Using games as a metaphor, Ortberg presents carefully considered tactics for succeeding in life from God's vantage point. As Christians, we will especially appreciate Ortberg's wise counsel on being the kind of player other people want to sit next to, as he exhorts readers to learn to lose with grace, win with grace, and forgive with grace.

We will begin this study on January 2nd and will continue on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 10am to 11:30am.

Jay Wenger

**SPECIAL DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES**

The choir will present the cantata, **EMMANUEL – God With Us**, during our regular worship services on December 13th. Our candlelight Christmas Eve worship service begins at 6pm and will include holy communion. Please come and bring a friend or two to share in these uplifting and meaningful worship experiences.

**ACTIVITIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Pastor's Scripture Class** for the upcoming Sundays will be held on the first, second, and third Wednesdays of this month (December 2nd, 9th, and 16th) at 10am in Luther Hall.

Come join us at the **San Antonio Food Bank** on Wednesday, December 2nd. In memory of Bill Shuler we are scheduled to help sort food from 5:30pm to 8pm. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the narthex. Please indicate if you will be there or would like to carpool. POC is Tami Griffin

**Choir practice** continues for the upcoming cantata. Please look on the other side for the revised dates and times of practice.

**Adult Sunday School** begins each Sunday at 9:30am. The **Youth Sunday School** will meet downstairs at the same time.

December 9th is our next **Lunch Bunch**. No sign-up sheet will be placed on the table this month, but those planning to attend are encouraged to let Dona know. The **Education Action Team** will meet at 6pm and the **Worship Action Team** will meet at 6:30pm. All activities will be in Luther Hall.

The **quilters** will meet on Tuesday, December 15th, at 10am.

Atonement's **Men in Mission** will meet a week early on Saturday, December 19th, at 9am for breakfast, fellowship, and Bible study.

The next **Congregation Council** meeting will be on December 20th following worship services.

For those who wish to adorn the altar with **poinsettias** for our Christmas services, you are encouraged to bring them starting December 20th.

**Christmas Eve worship services** will begin at 6pm. If you are in need of a ride, please sign up in the narthex.

**Newsletter Deadline – December 20**

**AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS**

Congratulations to **Jackie Oertel** on becoming a great-grandmother once again. Her grandson, Aaron Oliver, was born on October 19th.

**PRAYERS**

Please keep Mary Arredondo, Milton Schram, Edna Long, Norma Otten, Leonard Humes, Mae Mercereau, and all other homebound members in your prayers. Also, please pray for those who are or have recently been hospitalized (Ralph Kuster), those who have been ill, those who mourn, and all others with special needs and requests.

**POINSETTIAS AND CHRISTMAS**

There is an old Mexican legend how this flower and Christmas are linked together. It begins with a poor girl named Pepita who had no present to give the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve service. As she sadly walked to the chapel, her cousin Pedro tried to cheer her up. "Pepita," he said, "I'm sure that even the smallest gift, given by someone who loves Him will make Jesus happy."

Pepita still didn't know what to give so she picked up a small handful of weeds from the roadside and made a small bouquet. She was embarrassed by her small gift as she walked through the chapel to the altar. She began to feel better as she knelt down and placed the bouquet at the bottom of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into bright red flowers, and everyone who saw them believed they had witnessed a miracle. From that day forward, the bright red flowers were known as the 'Flores de Noche Buena' or 'Flowers of the Holy Night'.

The shape of the poinsettia flower and the leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ while the white leaves represent His purity.

\* Now that you know the legend, you are invited to bring poinsettias to the altar for our Christmas Eve service. Please bring your gifts of love on Sunday, December 20th. You may take them home after our December 24th service.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & THANK YOU'S**

Thank you to everyone who participated with Operation Christmas Child. We donated 43 boxes this year.

**UPDATED CHOIR PRACTICE SCHEDULE**

Below is the **revised** choir practice schedule for the upcoming Christmas cantata. *All choir members are now scheduled for each practice.*

Wednesday, December 2, 7pm

**Friday, December 4, 7:30pm - Mark's home**

Sunday, December 6, after service

Wednesday, December 9, 7:30pm Dress rehearsal

**Sunday, December 13: Christmas Cantata**

**NATIVITY BIBLE QUIZ**

- Which archangel announced Jesus' birth to Mary? a. Michael b. Gabriel c. Raphael
- After Mary became pregnant with Jesus, her first action was to:
  - Explain to her parents what had happened
  - Explain to her Joseph what had happened
  - Visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant too
- Which star did the wise men follow to find the baby Jesus?
  - The Star in the East
  - The North Star
  - The Star of David
  - The Dog Star

What relation did John the Baptist have with Jesus?  
 a. Mentor b. Friend c. Disciple  
 d. Cousin e. He would have startling blue eyes

**Vision Statement:** *Growing Disciples*

**Mission Statement:** *Serving as the Lord's Disciples*