

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

This Matters / Week 2

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

The enemy uses toxic shame to trap you - Jesus uses grace to set you free

SCRIPTURE

"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." - John 8:3-11

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To give your students the space to ask big questions about sex and sexual ethics, process their shame, and confess anything in their lives. [Remember to look at the shepherding doc on our website for how to handle crisis moments when students confess sin](#)

THINK ABOUT THIS

This series is about giving a biblical world view on some of the more challenging, difficult, and sensitive topics in our world today. This year, there will be a theme of emotions throughout all 4 messages that are linked to a difficult topic: anxiety, sex and pornography, resentment and bitterness in relationships, and substance abuse. We want you as a small group leader to create a culture in your small group where students want to share and be vulnerable. Be reminded of the onboarding grid that we share in our onboarding document, we want both high support/care and high challenge.

Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

DURING GROUP

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out from tonight's message? Have you ever heard sex explained like that before?
- Why is it difficult to talk about sex? Especially at church?
- Is sex talked about at school? Well of course but why?
- Why do you think there's so much shame wrapped around sex?
- Do you think sexual sin is worse than the others? Why or why not?
- Have a student read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 out loud. What does this passage mean?
- After hearing the story of the woman in the John 8 narrative, has your view of Jesus changed?
 - How does Jesus appear to you in this story?
- How does Jesus' reaction to the woman apply to our lives?
- Do you think she felt shame in that moment?
- Have you felt shame before about your sin or brokenness?
- How should we handle this as believers?

One idea on the back of the page to start things off

TRY THIS

Set an expectation at the beginning of small group to do some of the following (maybe all!)

1. Put all phones away for less distraction
2. Call the students to a higher standard to have a serious conversation
3. Set the expectation that certain things shared in group might need to be shared with a parent because we're called to partner with them
 - Sin and shame should not be hidden in the dark
4. There's to be no judgement or laughing if someone decides to share something about their past
5. This is not a trauma dump sesh. We're not trying to outdo one another in hardship, but share to experience freedom