

# LEADER GUIDE



Thank you for allowing God to work through you as you lead your group. The small group experience is crucial to our actually doing what the scriptures that form the basis of this series tell us to be and do. The relationships developed in a small group setting allow people to process what they are learning from the sermons and their reading. Such processing is crucial to personal change. Without it, most of the time we are left with good intentions. Individuals change the most in the context of mutual sharing. Small group leaders are asked to help create an environment where this mutual sharing can occur. The leader need not make it all happen, but only needs to facilitate an atmosphere where people feel that they can make it happen together.

As a result, your job is to walk in step with the Spirit. You don't have to be the best teacher, you don't have to be a front-line leader type and you don't even have to possess an out-going personality. The best small group leaders are those who commune with God and pray for their group members. If you start there, God will lead you.

Our desire is to provide you with tools that will support you in this endeavor. For this reason, we have written small group lessons. Each week's lesson corresponds with the weekend sermon during the Scandalous Love series. In addition, each group member will have access to a daily prayer and reflection guide that will help members reflect on the message. This is intentional. No one learns something new just because they hear it one time. The best way to learn something and to change is to hear it, read it, write about it and process it with others. The small group experience provides a venue for processing the information.

Each lesson contains the same elements:

- **Icebreakers** (suggestions on the back of this sheet)
- **Worship Time** (suggestions in the next column)
- **Focus Scripture** (found in the Prayer Journal)
- **Discussion Questions** (found in the Prayer Journal)
- **Ministry Time Idea** (suggestions in the next column)

These have been written so that you can use it exactly as it is written, but most of the time God will lead you in slightly different ways. You might do worship first and move the icebreaker around. Someone in the group might bring a worship idea. The ministry time should always be a result of listening to God's leading.

Most likely you will not have time to discuss all of the questions during the small group time. Pray about what you will ask and follow what you sense the Spirit leading you to do. It is almost impossible to write questions that will fit every group. Therefore, you might ask the first question and the group will answer the next two questions during the natural flow of conversation. If this is the case, skip the next questions and go to the next one.

For the worship segment of the group time, feel free to do what fits your group. You can read a Psalm, listen to a worship song on a CD, ask people to share ways they have seen God at work in their lives, or just simply open with a time of silence and saying a prayer.

At the end of the meeting, it is important to include some time of ministry to one another. Here are three options that have proven to be effective:

1. Reflect and pray together about ways that the group as a whole can respond and receive the truth of the teaching.
2. Give each person an opportunity to share how they might apply the truth to their lives.
3. Give time for people to share personal concerns or needs and provide a time to pray for those.



# ICEBREAKER SUGGESTIONS

*For each week, we have provided a couple of options for icebreakers. Pick one that you think will work best for your group.*

## **Week One**

- In 90 seconds or less, share with us your background in the church. (This is best for a new group)
- Share with us one way that you saw God at work in your life this week.

## **Week Two**

- How did you respond when you heard the word “love” during the last week?
- What were some ways that love was expressed (or not) in your family?

## **Week Three**

- How do you typically respond when someone lets you down?
- What is the most meaningful gift that you have ever received?

## **Week Four**

- What is your favorite game to play? When was the last time you played it?
- What is one thing that has changed in your relationship with God over the last few weeks?

## **Week Five**

- What is your favorite song right now?
- What has been a big change that you have faced in the last couple of years?

## **Week Six**

- How has your view of God changed during this series?
- What is your favorite animal?

## **Week Seven**

- What is something in your life that you really enjoy doing?
- What is one thing from this series that has stood out to you?

