

LIFEGROUP LEADER NOTES

THE STORY THAT MAKES SENSE OF EVERYTHING

WEEK ONE: GOD IS LOVE

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2020

Hi LifeGroup leaders! Welcome to week 1 of our 5 week series called, “The Story that Makes Sense of Everything”. On Sundays, Pete Maddocks will be teaching this series, then our LifeGroups are going to follow along with these studies. The LifeGroup studies will consist of a slide presentation you can “share screen” in your online group meeting, leader notes to give you insights into the content of the slides and a short video from Pete you can share screen with your group. What follows is an explanation of the series and insights into the questions and Scriptures you have been given in the slide presentation. May God bless you as you lead your group in the coming weeks!

Series Title: The Story that Makes Sense of Everything

This series will walk through the meta-narrative of scripture using Love as the primary theme. Metanarrative Definition - an overarching account or interpretation of events and circumstances that provides a pattern or structure for people’s beliefs and gives meaning to their experiences.

Without a metanarrative you will struggle to make sense of your life and likely conclude along with Shakespeare's Macbeth that, “Life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” However, with the right/true metanarrative you can make sense of your life.

Each week the aim is to focus on a major event in the story of scripture and show how understanding this event as part of the metanarrative will help you make sense of your own life, who you are and who God is.

Our hope for the series:

- People will come to know the story of scripture in a way that they are better able to contextualize it to their own lives. If they know the story, they will be able to participate in it by aligning their lives/stories/choices up with the story God is unfolding.
- People will see the theme of love as the dominant theme of the story the Bible is telling and a compass in their decision making.

Week 1

God created us as his image bearers. When you embrace this truth you can embrace that your life has purpose and value.

Know - The metanarrative of scripture is the revelation and glorification of the God who is Love. You were created in the image of God (who is love) in order to make his love visible in the world. Life is not random. It is not, "a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing". You were created for a purpose.

Do - Believe that God wants to use you. Believe that in every moment I'm being invited into a bigger story than my own story.

Experience - that you have immeasurable value.

SLIDE QUESTIONS and SCRIPTURES

SLIDE 1

The Story that Makes Sense of Everything

Leader Note: For this first slide, let the group know this is a 5-week study designed to help us all understand more about the overarching story (metanarrative) of Scripture. The better we know the Story the more we're able to contextualize it to our lives and live in a way that honours God.

SLIDE 2

Q - When you picture God, what comes to mind?

Leader Note: To open the discussion, you may want to share your own insights on what comes to your mind when you picture God. You might picture God from artistic interpretations like Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" or a character who played Jesus in a movie you've watched. Or perhaps rather than a visual image you think of a word such as "love" or "Jesus". What are the different images of God you've had throughout your life? Ask each of your group members to share what they picture when they think of God.

SLIDE 3

1 John 4:7-12 New International Version (NIV)

God's Love and Ours

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God

is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Leader Note: Have someone in your group read this Scripture out loud to the group, then ask the following question. “Over the series we're going to be exploring the theme of love and what it means when we as Christians say, "God is love". How would you explain to someone what it means that 'God is love?'" Note: Love is an attribute of God. Love is also a key aspect of His character. Everything God does is loving and is motivated by His love. God has demonstrated His love for us by giving us His Son, Jesus, to die for us so we could be with Him forever.

SLIDE 4

Genesis 1:26-27 New Living Translation (NLT)

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make human beings^(a) in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,^(b) and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁷So God created human beings^(a) in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Leader Note:

Ask someone to read Genesis 1:26-27 out loud for the group.

Ask them to notice the emphasis on the idea that we were created in God's image.

Ask your group,

“What does it mean to believe that humans are created in the image of God?”

Here are some insights about being created in God’s image.

The image of God (Latin: *imago dei*) means we are created in the likeness of God in some really cool ways. We aren’t animals. In fact, God has given us dominion over the animal world (see Genesis 1:28). We are like God mentally with our ability to reason and choose. Anytime we create something beautiful, accomplish something for Him, name a pet or enjoy a symphony,

we are proclaiming the fact we are made in God's image. We are like God morally. We reflect God's holiness as we live morally upright lives before Him. Whenever someone writes a good law, rejects evil, praises good behaviour and follows their conscience they reflect the fact we are made morally in God's image. We are like God in the way we are wired for community. God lives in community in the trinity and we reflect His image as we live in community with one another. Every time someone connects in God-honouring relationship with others, we reflect God's image. We are created in God's image with our ability to choose freely. God has given us free will. Although we were originally created righteous and holy, Adam and Eve made the choice to rebel and bring us the sin nature. Although we still bear God's image today we also carry the damage caused by sin – mentally, morally, socially and physically. The Good News is that through Jesus was can be restored to more fully reflect God's image. Through Jesus, we are a new creation made in God's likeness (see 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:24)

Insights from Got Questions – What does it mean to be created in God's image?

Ask your group, "Do you believe you were created for a purpose? How have you experienced that play out in your life?"

Here are some insights about being created for a purpose.

The Westminster shorter catechism says our chief purpose in life is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. That's a pretty good summary! 😊 We are created to glorify God by living a life that pleases Him. We do this as we follow Jesus, love God and love people. This is the mission of Creekside and the great purpose which God has created us for. We enjoy Him as we make it our goal in life to know Him more, love Him more and walk each moment with Him. God has given us His Spirit to give us the power to live out the purpose He has created us for.

Ask your group, "During the Covid-19 quarantine do you find it difficult to find your purpose? Do you find your purpose has changed, gotten lost or become clearer lately?"

SLIDE 5

Missions Prayer

Creekside supports **Paul A**, a linguist with **Wycliffe Canada** and its partners since 1997. Currently, he directs one of their training programs, which is hosted by the Canada Institute of Linguistics and Tyndale University College, in Toronto. This program is vital to Wycliffe's strategy to recruit, train, and mobilize Canadians for work in Bible translation, literacy work, and other types of cross-cultural ministry. When he's not teaching in Canada, Paul provides consultant support to language projects in Asia.

Please pray for Paul and his family! Here are some prayer points:

- Pray for students preparing for ministry at CanIL and Tyndale. They are trying to finish up course assignments and exams remotely.

- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, CanIL is moving it's entire summer program online for the first time. This will be a big adjustment for instructors and students alike. Pray for a successful summer school and creative solutions to the challenges of teaching concepts and skills in this new learning environment.
- No one knows how the current situation will affect things like enrollment in training programs or travel for workshops in the Fall. A drop in enrollment can be detrimental because, unlike public universities, our programs do not receive government subsidies and rely largely on tuition revenues. Pray for a good Fall enrollment.
- Pray for national colleagues and co-workers serving Bibleless people groups on the field. Many are working in areas with limited access to health care, and some are unable to return to their homes due to travel restrictions. Pray for their health and safety, and for the health and safety of the communities they serve.