

SMALL  GROUP

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

This Is Real Love / Week 1

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus shows us what real love is.

SCRIPTURE

1 John 4:9-10 NLT

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students see how Easter demonstrates God's real love for us and to encourage them to accept that love for themselves.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Keep in mind that the things we talk about at Easter—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—can feel abstract or distant to your middle schoolers. That can make them hard to understand, hard to believe, and hard to see how they matter for their lives today. Be prepared for some doubts, questions, and uncertainties to arise as you lead this week. Of course, your job isn't to answer all questions, prove all points, or change all minds. Rather, it's to create a safe space for students to process. Learning to ask questions and think for themselves is a part of growing and maturing, not just in faith but in life. So, if your students express any uncertainties about Jesus' death and resurrection in particular this week, don't feel defeated. Instead, see it as a chance to point them toward discovering more about their faith and have potentially life-changing conversations with your group as they do.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the content as needed, and don't feel like you need to complete everything listed.

DURING GROUP

JUST FOR FUN

What's your favorite part about the Easter season?

DISCUSS THIS

1. In your own words, how would you define "love"?
2. What's one thing a middle schooler might say they love?
3. What do you think makes God's love for us different?
4. What might keep someone from believing God really loves them?
5. What's one way Jesus showed us God's real love for us?
6. How might knowing God's real love is really available to you change the way you . . .
 - a. Feel about yourself?
 - b. Think about your faith?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

Hand each student the provided card and ask them to personalize the Scripture by writing their name in the blanks. When they're finished, scatter the cards face down in the middle of your group. One at a time, have each student select a card and read it aloud to the group. When everyone's card has been read, ask your students to take their cards home and place them on their mirrors as a reminder of God's love for them.

God showed how much He loved _____ by sending his one & only Son into the world so that _____ might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that _____ loved God, but that he loved _____ & sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away _____'s sins.

(1 John 4:9-10 NLT)

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