

# LEADERS GUIDE

## Love and Dating

Dear Campus Life Small Group Leader,

Thank you so much for leading this group with your students! Below you will find a few important notes and clarifications about what to expect as you move through this material. We also recommend you [review the standards and best practices for the Small Groups RMA](#) found at YFC's Knowledge Base before starting a small group.

### WHO IS THIS GROUP FOR?

"Love and Dating" is a series dealing with a topic that most, if not all, high school students deal with on a daily basis whether they're in a relationship or not. Unfortunately, most of what they see in media, in their friends' relationships, and often in their home does not reflect what God intended when He created us and gave us the beautiful opportunity to have a loving relationship with someone.

Our intention was to create a curriculum that facilitates discussion about how God views our romantic relationships and also to expose them to the love that God has for them--a love so deep that it's beyond our own understanding. (Ephesians 3:17-18)

***This group is designed for high school students who may or may not have faith in Christ.***

For the non-Christian young person, it's important to challenge them to approach what we share as God's design for relationship with an open mind and heart. We are asking them to "hear us out" while being willing to hear them out. Our prayer is a conversation that many students want to have will lead to an opportunity to share the Gospel in the highly relational context of a small group setting.

If you are a middle school director, we recommend you take time to revise these meetings so they fit

the developmental stage of the students you are speaking to. Use discernment and discretion as a middle school student should be approached differently with these issues.

## THE LEADER'S POSTURE

There is a good chance that this topic will raise questions and hurts regarding your students' experience with dating and sex. They may come to you already wounded in this area and feeling shame. In addition, your students may have questions regarding LGBT+ relationships potentially based on their own experiences as well. We encourage you to go into leading your small group from a posture of humility. Don't assume that you know all the answers. Sexuality is a multifaceted topic and the questions are more complex than they may appear. By God's grace, you get to facilitate a conversation with students about issues that touch the deepest part of the heart. They have given you their trust, at least in part. In time this trust may grow and develop into trusting Jesus. Be tender and be humble with them.

## LGBTQ+ QUESTIONS

Again, please approach these questions from a posture of humility. We would encourage you not to have that discussion with the entire small group unless it seems like most or all of them want to talk about it. Instead use this as a good opportunity to have a one-on-one with the student(s) who are asking about it. Read up on the resources we listed above and check out some general pointers on this discussion below:

- 1) First, remember that your small group is ultimately about introducing students to a lifelong relationship with Jesus and not about merely changing behavior.
- 2) Be sure you understand *what* they are asking and *why*. It is unlikely that they are just curious. Often there are unspoken questions behind the question they verbalized. Before answering find out what's behind their initial question. (Source: *Guiding Families* by Bill Henson, p. 64-65).
- 3) Listen and don't react. We don't love well unless we listen well. Slow down your response. You do not have to offer an immediate answer to every question. If you don't know the answer or want time to think about it, set up an appointment with the student to talk further. Then pray about it and get help from trusted resources before you answer them.
- 4) Be careful with your words. They matter. (We suggest checking out the glossary of terms here from *Guiding Families* page VI-VII. Also, *Posture Shift Course Handbook* p. 48 )

- 5) Learn what the Bible teaches on what God's plan for sexuality is in general - not just homosexuality. Most of the passages that discuss homosexual behavior also discuss other sinful actions as well. Regardless of our sexual behavior and who we are attracted to, we all fall short of God's standard and need Jesus - our Savior. (Note: Preston Sprinkle's explanation of this is excellent. In *Living in a Gray World* p. 43-56 and *People to Be Loved* he thoughtfully outlines the Bible's teaching.)
- 6) There is a difference between same-sex *attraction* and same-sex *behavior*. The Bible teaches that same-sex *behavior* is a sin. It does not teach that same-sex *attraction* is. These desires could turn into sinful actions but the desire itself is not sin. (James 1:14-15)
- 7) Remember we are hoping that all students will find their identity in Jesus. We want to guide them to move away from labels and identities whether they are about their sexuality or some other identity. We find our true identity in God so don't land in a discussion about whether or not they are gay, land in a discussion about where their true identity should be anchored.

Again, we are thankful that you are jumping into this journey with your students. We pray it's a fruitful time and that it serves to deepen your authentic Christ-sharing relationships with your students.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

In this series, we used a lot of material from the book [The New Rules for Love, Sex, and Dating](#) by Andy Stanley. We recommend you read that book prior to starting the series. We also recommend [The Four Loves](#) by C.S. Lewis.

For discussions around sexuality, are "Living in a Gray World: A Christian Teen's guide to understanding homosexuality" and "People to be loved. (both by Preston Sprinkle) As well as "Guiding Families of LGBT+ Loved Ones" by Bill Henson.

## FONT DOWNLOAD

To view the word documents, you will need to make sure you have the YFC Steelfish font downloaded! Get it here: <https://yf.cx/steelfish>. We've included PDF versions of the lessons as well!

## FEEDBACK

If you enjoyed this series and want to share some feedback, stories of how this impacted your ministry, or have any questions/concerns, please contact us at [campuslife@yfc.net](mailto:campuslife@yfc.net).

