

You'll find a large group sermon outline plus small group facilitator and student guides within each teaching lesson. The sermon outline also provides small group breakout questions for youth groups that do their large group and small group meetings on the same night.

LARGE GROUP OUTLINES

This resource gives you a strong sermon outline to build your large group message from. It provides main points with a brief explanation of each point to get you started, plus illustrations to help your students truly understand the biblical truths you're teaching.

THE LAYOUT

At the top of every lesson, you'll see a brief overview of what you'll lead for the night:

- 1. MARK OF A DISCIPLE**—this is the character trait of a Christ-follower and overall main idea of the lesson we want students to walk away with.
- 2. THE ROOT** of the lesson—each Deep Discipleship lesson is grounded in one of the 8 Roots of the Gospel.
- Main **SCRIPTURE** passage
- You will also find plenty of **LEADER CUES** in the right margin throughout the lesson with tips to help you navigate the meeting time.

OPENING

- 5. WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**—there is space to write any important information you need to pass on to your students about future events.
- 6. GAME OR ICE BREAKER**—If you like to start your meeting time with a game, we provide a library of screen games for you to choose from. We also provide an ice breaker question if you prefer to start with a discussion.
- 7. WORSHIP**—Whether you have a worship leader/band or sing along to a playlist, we provide a curated Spotify list with song suggestions. This allows you the option to choose what best fits your group, depending on your theological view of worship.
- 8. TRANSITION**—in the graphics package included with every teaching series, we supply intro and bumper videos for you to play for a smooth transition into your teaching time.

DEEP DISCIPLESHIP **No Condemnation** **WHEN LIFE IS HARD**
Large Group Outline 3

1 MARK OF A DISCIPLE
Disciples of Christ aren't controlled by guilt and shame because there is no condemnation in Jesus.

2 IDENTITY ROOT
Help students discover their unique identity in Christ.

3 SCRIPTURE
ROMANS 8:1-11

OPENING

5 WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

6 GAME OR ICE BREAKER
Based on your group's size, choose a **Game** from the **Game Library** OR use the **Ice Breaker** prompt.
• **Game**—GRAB AND GO
• **Ice Breaker**—When you daydream, what is it usually about?

7 WORSHIP
Craft a time or worship with a live band or sing along to a playlist (e.g., YouTube, Spotify, etc.).
• Check out our curated Spotify list. We understand that every church has a different theological view of worship. These songs are suggestions, please pick what works best for your church.
• <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2xmeIKGJk1E7bJYSCbRwe?si=d264e715a4740e5>

8 TRANSITION TO MESSAGE

MEDIA AS STUDENTS ARRIVE
1. Play background music (optional)
2. Display **SERIES Title Slide** and announcement slides in a loop or customize the provided **PowerPoint**.
3. Play your own countdown timer (optional) before you start.

GAME LIBRARY
Use the **GRAB AND GO** game that is included in your sample. The Deep Discipleship system comes with a library of games to choose from.

SLIDES (optional)
Use **SERIES Background & Blank Slides** or **PowerPoint** to create lyric slides.

VIDEO
Show **SERIES Bumper Video** or **Series Promo Video** after the last worship song. This will give the students something to focus on while the band leaves the stage and you step onto it.

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MESSAGE

- 9. TEACHING POINTS**—each lesson has 3-4 main points with a brief explanation to help you build your sermon.
- 10. ILLUSTRATIONS**—to help better connect your students with the biblical truth you are teaching, we give suggested illustrations plus a library of object lessons.
- 11. SLIDES**—in the graphics package of each series, we provide blank slides with the background of the series graphic for you to include your teaching point, Scripture references, or both.

CLOSING

- 12. MARK OF A DISCIPLE**—an opportunity to reinforce the main idea and character trait of a Christ-follower we want students to understand.
- 13A. OPTION: Large group & small groups on different nights**
REFLECT AND RESPOND: We provide a couple of contemplative questions to help students think through what they have just learned.
- 13B. OPTION: Large group & small groups on the same night**
BREAKOUT QUESTIONS: We provide a discussion guide to hand out to your small group leaders to facilitate a small group meeting.
- 14. PRAYER**—a space to write down prayer requests and close out the night.

No Condemnation
WHEN LIFE IS HARD | Small Group Lesson 9

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

9
POINT 1: Christ brings freedom
Read or have someone in your group read Romans 8:1-2

To have a relationship with God, we must be perfect. Holy (Lev. 19:2). That's the standard. But we messed that up in the very beginning. We are born sinful (Ps. 51:5). It's in our nature (Eph. 2:3). This means from our first breath, we were slaves to sin (John 8:34), unable to save ourselves. We were too weak (Rom. 5:6). So God stepped in and did what we could not. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus set us free from sin and all the guilt and shame that comes with it. We have freedom in Christ!

FACILITATOR NOTE: There are a lot of Scripture references in this first point. Consider pulling students aside before the message to ask if they would be okay reading in front of the group. Then assign the different Scripture references to the different students who don't mind reading out loud. This is an easy way to have students involved in an element of the service and develop student leaders.

SLIDES (optional)
Use the **SERIES PowerPoint** OR the **Background & Blank Slides** to create these slides to support your message:
• Romans 8:1-2
• Point 1

11
POINT 2: Christ brings righteousness
Read or have someone in your group read Romans 8:3-4

Christ not only sets us free from sin, but he also makes us righteous. When we become a Christ-follower, God sends us a helper, the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, God living in us, will teach us how to do what is right and pleasing to the Lord (John 14:26).

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a personal story about a time you needed help learning how to do the right thing. (EXAMPLES: I kept messing up the play until the assistant coach showed me a new technique. Or, my cake never tasted as good as my grandmother's until she walked me through her own recipe.)

Similar to how we need help from others (coaches, teachers, instructors) to learn the right way to do something, God himself shows us the right way to live through the Holy Spirit and the example of Jesus.

SLIDES (optional)
• Romans 8:3-4
• Point 2

10
POINT 3: Christ brings a new mindset
Read or have someone in your group read Romans 8:5-8

We are not our thoughts, but we do tend to act out the things we spend a lot of time thinking about. If you spend significant time thinking about music, there is a good chance you'll find your way into a band or choir. How we think about things, life included, shapes how we interact with them.

ILLUSTRATION: Chose an object lesson from the Identity Root or share a personal story about something you think is scary and how those thoughts shape how you act toward it. (EXAMPLE: I never swim in the ocean because I'm terrified of sharks.)

SLIDES (optional)
• Romans 8:5-8
• Point 3

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CLOSING

12
MARK OF A DISCIPLE
Disciples of Christ use their spiritual gifts to unite the body of Christ.

SLIDES (optional)
• Mark of a Disciple

FACILITATOR NOTE: DO YOU HAVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION RIGHT AWAY?
• If YES, then **STOP HERE**, divide into groups, and provide your Small Group Leaders with a copy of the **Small Group Breakout Questions** on the next page.
• If NO, then end your gathering with the **Reflect & Respond** questions and **Prayer** prompt below.

13A
REFLECT & RESPOND
Give the students time to silently think through what they have heard and contemplate these questions:
• How does it feel to know Christ has set you free from sin's control?
• How can this freedom change the way you live? Talk? Think? Treat others?

SLIDES (optional)
Use the **SERIES PowerPoint** OR the **Background & Blank Slides** to display the **Reflect & Respond** questions.

SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT (OPTIONAL)

Pick a few questions from each section to discuss. Close with prayer.

13B
BREAKOUT QUESTIONS

Build Meaningful Relationships

- When was the last time you let your emotions and feelings impact your actions?
- When your parents catch you doing something you shouldn't do, how do you feel?
- What are some past mistakes that instantly brought feelings of deep guilt and shame?

Share Personal Stories & Ask Intentional Questions

- How does having no condemnation change how we respond to our sin?
- In what ways do you think guilt and shame try to control us?
- What circumstances can cause us to feel guilt and shame regarding our relationship with God?
- When have you ever felt unfit for God or beyond his repair? What do you do with those feelings?

Make Life Application & Hold Students Accountable

- How could embracing the freedom you have in Christ impact or change your feelings of guilt and shame?
- What can you do to practice relying on the Holy Spirit more than your feelings?

14
PRAYER
Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks.
Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.



SMALL GROUP LESSON GUIDES

This resource provides a detailed teaching guide for small group leaders and a student handout the group can use to follow along.

THE LAYOUT

At the top of every Facilitator's guide, you'll see:

- 1. MARK OF A DISCIPLE**—this is the character trait of a Christ-follower and overall main idea of the lesson we want students to walk away with.
- 2. THE ROOT** of the lesson—each Deep Discipleship lesson is grounded in one of the 8 Roots of the Gospel.
- Main **SCRIPTURE** passage
- OVERVIEW**—a brief synopsis of the small group lesson.

We tried to provide your small group leaders with more content than they need for their meeting time. Make sure they know they don't have to cover everything in their guide. They have a good understanding of their group and can choose the material they believe will best fit their students while skipping over the rest.

OPENING

- 5. PRAYER**—always an excellent way to start any small group meeting.
- 6. OPENING QUESTIONS**—an easy way to check in on your students and get them warmed up for discussions.

EXPLORE

- This is the meat of the small group lesson, where you break down the Scripture passage into smaller units and discuss God's Word together.

DEEP DISCIPLESHIP **No Condemnation** **WHEN LIFE IS HARD**
Small Group Lesson 3 **FACILITATOR GUIDE**

1 MARK OF A DISCIPLE
Disciples of Christ aren't controlled by guilt and shame because there is no condemnation in Jesus.

2 IDENTIFY ROOT
Help students discover their unique identity in Christ.

3 SCRIPTURE
ROMANS 8:1-11

4 OVERVIEW
Today we are looking at the third lesson in our When Life is Hard series and focusing on the Identity Root. We all sin, which can easily lead to feelings of guilt and shame. But the reality is that disciples of Christ aren't controlled by guilt and shame because there is no condemnation in Jesus.

FACILITATOR NOTE: We're giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

OPENING

5 PRAYER
Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together. **1-2 minutes**

6 OPENING QUESTIONS
• How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
• When was the last time you let your emotions and feelings impact your actions?
• What are some past mistakes that instantly brought feelings of deep guilt and shame **3-5 minutes**

EXPLORE

EXPLORE GOD'S WORD
• Disciples of Christ aren't controlled by guilt and shame because there is no condemnation in Jesus.
• We all sin and mess up. When we do, we often feel guilt and shame, which are powerful emotions that can threaten to control us. However, as Christ-followers, we don't have to be ruled by those feelings because there is no condemnation in Christ. **3-5 minutes**

Read Romans 8:1-4 and discuss 1-2 of these questions:
• How does having no condemnation change how we respond to our sin?
• In what ways do you think guilt and shame try to control us?
• How would embracing the freedom you have in Christ impact or change your feelings of guilt and shame? **7-10 minutes**

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CONNECT AND APPLY

- 8. CONNECTION**—an example to show how the biblical account you are studying fits into the daily lives of your students.
- 9. MARK OF A DISCIPLE**—an opportunity to reinforce the main idea and character trait of a Christ-follower we want students to understand.
- 10. APPLY IT**—a suggested action step students can practice ensuring they apply the biblical truths they are learning.

CLOSING

- 11. PRAYER**—a space to write down prayer requests and close out the night.
- 12. MEMORY VERSE**—challenge your students to dedicate this verse to memory so they can carry it with them wherever they go.

No Condemnation
Small Group Lesson 3

WHEN LIFE IS HARD
FACILITATOR GUIDE

Say something like: One of the incredible blessings that comes from being in Christ (meaning we have placed our faith in him and have a relationship with him) is having no condemnation. That means when we sin, and we will undoubtedly continue to sin, we don't have to worry about eternal punishment for that sin because Christ paid that price for us. Therefore, when feelings of guilt and shame come, we don't have to be controlled by them. Christ has removed our condemnation. We are loved and accepted in Christ.

Read Romans 8:5–11 and discuss 1–2 of these questions: 7–10 minutes

- How does the Spirit change our mindset?
- What encouragement do you find knowing that the Holy Spirit lives in you?
- What can you do to practice relying on the Holy Spirit more than your feelings?

Say something like: This passage talks a lot about the Spirit, God himself working in us. As strong as feelings of guilt and shame may be, the Spirit is stronger. As Christ-followers, we choose to live by the Spirit, not our feelings. Our faith should include feelings but not be governed by them. Feelings come and go, but faith in Christ can be steadfast. The Spirit has the authority to set us free from our feelings of guilt and shame.

CONNECT & APPLY

8 CONNECTION

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of how you've played a role on a team, club, organization, or church body and how it went.

Example: If a house becomes abandoned and starts to deteriorate, it risks being condemned. This means the location authorities come in and label the home as unfit for anyone to live in. The building is past the point of repair. Once a house is marked condemned, there is not much more someone can do. In many cases, it will be demolished and forgotten. As Christ-followers, we can feel like a building beyond repair at times. We may start feeling overcome with guilt and shame. Honestly, we feel condemned, as if we are beyond repair or unfit for God. But the Bible says there is no condemnation for us. Yes, we will sin, but we don't have to let the guilt and shame of that sin make us feel condemned. In Christ, there is no condemnation. Because of Jesus, we are never unfit for God or beyond his repair.

- How does a condemned house illustrate the feelings of guilt and shame we sometimes have when we sin?
- When have you ever felt like you were unfit for God or beyond his repair?

5–7 minutes

MAKE PERSONAL STUDIES

9 MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ aren't controlled by guilt and shame because there is no condemnation in Jesus. Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

2–3 minutes

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No Condemnation
Small Group Lesson 3

WHEN LIFE IS HARD
FACILITATOR GUIDE

10 APPLY IT 5–10 minutes

Make a list of things causing you to feel guilt and shame. It might be things you have heard said about you, things you believe about yourself, or things you have done. After you finish your list, do something to visibly "throw it away." You could ball it up and toss it in the trash, burn it, or rip it to shreds—something that demonstrates there is no condemnation for you. Doing this with other believers might be a powerful experience.

Be specific:

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

FACILITATOR NOTE: Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.

CLOSING

11 PRAYER

Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks. *Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.*

2–3 minutes

12 MEMORY VERSE

Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
ROMANS 8:1 (ESV)

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