



## Session 1: Loved

### HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *This small group lesson is designed to help you and your students go deeper into the fact that God created and loves us. As they learned in the large group talk, God created humanity, the pinnacle of his creation, in his own image. He made us as an outpouring of his Trinitarian love, not because he had to, but because he wanted to. He made each of us for a purpose, and he equips us with everything we need to fulfill that purpose.*
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students about their chief purpose: glorifying and pursuing relationship with God. That is why the Small Group Leader Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.*

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A copy of the Facilitator's Guide for you and any other facilitators.
- A Student Book for each participant.
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare: *A large sheet of paper from a flip chart or a large piece of butcher paper for each group of students, 1 or 2 markers, and an optional prize for the winning team.*

### TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Don't forget to take a minute and watch the teacher prep video found in your DNow Studies account. It's a short video that will take you through some of the need-to-knows before you dive into this lesson with students.



**The Small Group Leader Guide** This table outlines the parts of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe that you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

<b>Lesson Outline</b>	<b>Included in Facilitator's Guide</b>	<b>Included in Student Book</b>	<b>Approximate Timeframe</b>
<b>Large Talk Review with Opening Questions</b>		Yes	3-5 minutes
<b>A Second Look</b> Another illustration of God's love for each of us, followed by discussion questions.	Yes	Yes	10-15 minutes
<b>A Little Deeper</b> Dig into Bible passages that were not in the Large Group Talk. See what else Scripture says about this topic.	Yes	Yes + Discussion Questions	15-20 minutes
<b>Live it out</b> An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson—followed by discussion questions.	Yes		10-15 minutes
<b>Apply it</b> A practical application for students to do this week.	Yes	Yes	2-3 minutes
<b>Student Devotional</b> A short devotional for students to do on their own.		Yes	



## THE FIRST MEETING

Since this is the first meeting together for this event, take the time to lay the foundations for the whole event.

- If your students don't know each other, cover introductions and consider an icebreaker (see [leadertreks.com/freebies](http://leadertreks.com/freebies) for several icebreaker and team building activities).
- Be sure to cover the schedule and ground rules for the event, especially if you are staying at a host home.
- Tell students why you are here. You are probably sacrificing some time and comfort to be a small group teacher and, chances are, it's worth it! Let students know why you care so much about them and why you want to invest in them to help them grow. Tell students why you think they're great and why it's worth it for you to be a small group leader this weekend!

## LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW

Take a minute to review what students just learned in the Large Group Talk. Have them pull out their notes, and ask them to share what their answers were for the two questions found on **page 4** of the Student Book. Consider having students share their answers with a partner, and then ask for two or three volunteers who might want to share with the whole group.



## A SECOND LOOK

Read this story together as a group and answer the following questions, found on **page 5** of the Student Book.

*Tucked in the wall of a far room of Pastor Lee's house is a box. This is no ordinary box. It doesn't contain fancy shoes or expensive jewelry or beautiful Christmas decorations. One side of this box opens to the street, and another side opens into the pastor's laundry room. It's heated and lined with a baby blanket. Why? Because hundreds of babies have shown up in this box since 2010.*

*Pastor Lee's story started three decades ago, when his wife gave birth to a son with severe disabilities. They practically lived in a hospital for 14 years, seeing other kids just like their son. But these other children had no parents. This fueled a love in Pastor Lee for the unwanted and the abandoned.*

*In South Korea, a horrifying number of babies are abandoned each year, a lot of them left in the streets to die. Many of these babies have disabilities and need constant attention. That's why Pastor Lee created the baby box. Instead of abandoning their children to die, parents can place their baby in this box on the side of Pastor Lee's house. Each baby that comes through that box is loved. They are cared and prayed for. They are treated as priceless.*

*But Pastor Lee didn't stop there. He adopted 10 of them, as many as the government would allow. Some of these adopted children will never be able to say "thank you" or even feed themselves. But that didn't stop Pastor Lee from helping these children. His love was bigger than that.*

**Discuss:**

- Put yourself in Pastor Lee's shoes. What sacrifices would you make in order to help these children?
- What makes an abandoned baby valuable?
- What sacrifices does God make in order to love people?
- Why does God think you are so valuable?

**Leader's Note:** Be sure to say a positive or encouraging comment after students share: "Thanks for saying that," "Good insight," "I think we've all felt that way," or "I've never thought of it like that." If you let silence take over after a student shares, it can change the tempo of the discussion and prevent students from sharing any more. Stay upbeat, nod at them, and smile. It can change the whole atmosphere of each small group time.

**A LITTLE DEEPER**

In this section, you'll take a look at several Bible passages, and students will answer questions. The Background Notes below will give you a little more insight into the confusing parts of these passages. As students share, remember to listen deeply. Don't be afraid to ask second-level questions.

**Read each Bible passage and answer the questions found in the Student Book on pages 7 and 8:**

Romans 8:38–39: For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Background Note:** Paul uses this list of extremes to emphasize the fact that God's love of his children is permanent. Whatever barriers we think might separate us from God's lavish love were destroyed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The powers of this world tried to stop Jesus' mission of love when Herod attempted to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16). The devil tempted Jesus to abandon his mission of love in the wilderness at the beginning of his earthly ministry (Matt. 4:1–11). The vary people Jesus came to save tried to end his mission of love by hanging him on a cross and burying him in a tomb (Matt. 27:32–61). But Jesus triumphed over each of these barriers, demonstrating God's unfailing love to the world.

**Discussion questions found on page 7 of the Student Book.**

Psalms 139:7–12: Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.



**Background Note:** God is everywhere. He isn't bound to one location like you and me. Theologians call this attribute of God "Omnipresence." God is present anywhere and everywhere. What does that mean for our day-to-day lives? God is always there for us. Even when we feel completely lonely, God is by our side. Even when we feel like God is distant, he's actually closer than we can imagine. If we have things we want to hide, that might make us feel uncomfortable, but if we're looking for someone to protect us, comfort us, and support us, this is the best news in the world.

**Discussion questions found on page 8 of the Student Book.**

Zephaniah 3:17: The LORD your God is with you,  
the Mighty Warrior who saves.  
He will take great delight in you;  
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,  
but will rejoice over you with singing.

**Background Note:** This passage was originally written to the people of Israel, God's chosen nation. Does that mean these words don't apply to us? (After all, most of us are probably Gentiles—not Jews.) Of course not! This verse describing God's love applies to his current followers, too. Romans 11:17 says, "Some of the branches [of Israel] have been broken off, and you [Gentiles], though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root." All who follow Jesus Christ are part of God's people. We know from other verses that, as Zephaniah 3:17 claims, God is with his people at all times, he saves us from our worst enemies, and he finds immense joy in his relationship with us.

**Discussion questions found on page 8 of the Student Book.**



## LIVE IT OUT

### Dream Car

*What You'll Need:* A large sheet of paper from a flip chart or a large piece of butcher paper for each group of students, 1 or 2 markers, and an optional prize for the winning team.

Split your students into groups of 4 to 6 people. Give each group a piece of paper and 1 or 2 markers. The small group leader(s) will judge this contest.

Say something like: *Ford is taking submissions for a new concept car designed by the public. Anyone can submit an entry, and the winner will get the very first car of this design ever made.*

Each entry must include:

- A drawing of the exterior of the car.
- A list of features. These features must utilize current car technology. (Cars can't fly, so designing a flying car won't win.)
- A close-up drawing of its most prominent (or valuable) feature.
- A name for the car (e.g., Mustang, Grand Cherokee, Outback)



*Remember, dream big! There's no budget, so create a car you would want to drive. Your team will have 15 minutes to create its car design, and then each team will present their car to the rest of the group and the judge(s). Each presentation should be only 1 or 2 minutes, and it should explain what makes this car so great!*

After each team presents, you and any other leaders can decide on the winner, or you can take votes. (Voting for your own design is not allowed.)

### Debrief:

- What was your thought process during this design process?
- What do you think God thought about when he was designing the world?
- What are some things about your car that you love?
- What are some things God loves about his creation?



### APPLY IT

What can you do to remind yourself of God's love and/or show someone else God's love? Think about something you can do within the next 24 hours!

#### Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

**Leader's Note:** Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." Challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.

### WHAT'S NEXT

**Schedule:** Be sure to let students know what's happening next in the schedule and what they need to do or bring with them.

**Student Devotional:** The Student Book contains a short devotional for students to do on their own. Make sure to point this out to students and let them know if and when this fits into the schedule of the weekend. The devotional that corresponds with this lesson is found on **page 35**.