

# SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## 1 TIRED & OVERWHELMED

### REGISTRATION/ORIENTATION NIGHT

As you make your plans to start your 13-week cycle, consider having a Registration/Orientation Night prior to Session 1. See page 41 for more information.

### OVERVIEW

Single parenting is a seemingly impossible task. This week's session offers hope for single parents who are tired and overwhelmed. Group members will learn:

- Why single parenting is never a solo endeavor
- Reasons they can have hope when all seems lost
- How deeply interested God is in their situation

### TARGET AUDIENCE

All single parents should be welcomed, no matter what circumstances created their single-parent status. It's likely your group will include a mixture of people who are:

- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Never married

Make sure you stress to group members that they are welcome no matter what circumstances led to their single-parent status and that the information presented will be relevant to the issues they face.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

Many participants may be nervous about coming to the group this first time, especially about what might take place during the discussion time after the video. Acknowledge to your group that you understand this and encourage them to stick with the group. Many will feel much better by the end of the first session; others will take two to three sessions to become comfortable with the group process. Encourage each participant to commit to attending at least three sessions (most will become fully committed to the group in that time frame).

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer. Leaders should circulate and show warmth, care and compassion toward group members as they arrive.

### REGISTRATION

For first-time participants, have them:

- Complete a Registration Form and pay registration fee (if applicable).
- Get a personal copy of the workbook, a pen and any handouts.
- Get a name tag giving their first name only.

After first-time participants have registered:

- Offer snack/drink if available.
- Introduce them to the other leaders and participants.

Allow 10–15 minutes for fellowship PRIOR to session start time.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

### WELCOME THE PARTICIPANTS

- Introduce your leadership team.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.
- Session agenda (what to expect, schedule).
- Briefly share your experience with single parenting.
- Briefly describe the Single & Parenting program.
  - Video seminar
  - Support group
  - Workbook
- Introduce participants to the online Single-Parent HelpCenter.
- Give quick overview of workbook sections and how structured. Be sure to explain how to use the perforated Care Cards in the back of the workbook.
- Encourage participants to do the Hopework exercises for the next week. Explain that this material will be reviewed during a portion of the discussion time.
- Encourage note-taking during the video – refer to workbook video outline.
- Go over group guidelines.
  - Attendance
  - Dating within the group
  - Confidentiality and commitment levels that are expected from leaders as well as participants
  - Everyone having a chance to share (speak only from personal experience and do not force your opinion on others)

# 1 CONTINUED

## VIEW VIDEO (TIME: 31 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

## DISCUSS VIDEO

### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

Before your session, review the discussion questions. The primary questions are those we think will yield the most productive discussions. Additional questions are listed as well. They are designed to provide you extra material if needed or alternate questions that might be more relevant to the makeup of your particular group.

As a group facilitator, remember:

- Do not attempt to assume the role of a counselor
- Be in control, keep people on track
- Watch body language and eye contact
- Silence is golden—listen and probe
- No cross talk (do not allow side conversations when someone else is talking)
- Trust God to meet group needs
- Don't get into a debate (theological or any other)
- Use gentle interruptions

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines:

- Everyone is encouraged to share during the discussion, but not required to.
- The group is not designed for “advice-giving” or counseling.
- Speak from personal experience and do not try to force your opinion on others.
- Confidentiality – What is said in the group stays in the group. A good, simple rule to remember is “Never tell someone else’s story.”
- No cross talk (no side conversations when someone else is talking).

### ICEBREAKER

- 1 In two to three sentences, have participants explain how they became a single parent and how old their children are.
- 2 Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

## PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“You learned in the videos that you can have hope, even when all hope seems lost. Let’s take time to discuss what you learned and how you were encouraged.”

- 1 **What are you hoping to get out of these 13 sessions?**
- 2 **What is one thing that really stood out to you on today’s video? (10–15 seconds or less)**
- 3 **What is one of the greatest challenges you face as a single parent?**

## ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 **Carol Floch realized that she could not parent alone. Give an example of how this is true for you.**
- 2 **Thinking back over the video, what is one change in your single parenting that you could make starting this week?**

## WRAP-UP

### PRAYER REQUESTS

**CLOSE WITH PRAYER** (*Reminder: A member of the leadership team should always lead this prayer*)

**REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK** exercises in workbook for next week and to use the weekly Care Card found in the back of the workbook for encouragement

**INVITE GROUP MEMBERS** to return for the next session (and to invite a single-parent friend to attend as well)

**NEXT WEEK’S SESSION TOPIC: Your Children & Your Fears.** If you feel inept at times to help your children through their struggles, next week’s session offers practical guidance.

## SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER (10 minutes)

# QUESTIONS? WE’RE HERE TO HELP.

Call the Single & Parenting helpline at **800-395-5755** or **919-562-2112**.

Visit the Single & Parenting LeaderZone at **[www.singleandparenting.org/leaderzone](http://www.singleandparenting.org/leaderzone)**

## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 2 YOUR CHILDREN & YOUR FEARS

### OVERVIEW

Single parents worry a lot about their children and how the absence of the other parent will affect them. Session 2 offers hope, encouragement and help by covering topics such as:

- How children typically respond to losses
- How to help a grieving, hurting child
- How to release worry

### WHAT TO EXPECT

At this stage in the development of your group, you will find a range of feelings among the group members. Some are still uncomfortable about expressing emotion and openly talking about how they feel. Others have returned enthusiastically after finding the first session helpful. It is important at this stage to continue to work on helping each person feel comfortable and accepted.

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Again this session, you should plan to spend extra time setting the foundation for the Single & Parenting program. You won't go into this much detail in subsequent weeks, but doing so at the beginning of the first two sessions helps group members understand the process and structure of your program.

### WELCOME THE PARTICIPANTS

- Introduce your leadership team.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.
- Session agenda (what to expect, schedule).
- Briefly share your experience with single parenting.
- Briefly describe the Single & Parenting program.
  - Video seminar
  - Support group
  - Workbook

- Introduce participants to the online Single-Parent HelpCenter.
- Give quick overview of workbook sections and how structured. Be sure to explain how to use the perforated Care Cards in the back of the workbook.
- Encourage participants to do the Hopework exercises for the next week.
- Encourage note-taking during the video – refer to workbook video outline.
- Go over group guidelines.
  - Attendance
  - Dating within the group
  - Confidentiality and commitment levels that are expected from leaders as well as participants
  - Everyone having a chance to share (speak only from personal experience and do not force your opinion on others)

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2 What does God promise when you cry out from being tired and overwhelmed? (Day 1, Q3)
- 3 Why is it okay to let others help you when you are tired and overwhelmed? (Day 2, Q2)
- 4 What are the benefits of trusting God with your situation? (Day 5, Q3)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

- DAY 1 – God won't let you down.
- DAY 2 – It's okay to let others help.
- DAY 3 – You can be a good parent.
- DAY 4 – Even the worst situation can be turned around.
- DAY 5 – God makes all things right again.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 41 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

## 2 CONTINUED

### DISCUSS VIDEO

#### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

Before your session, review the discussion questions. The primary questions are those we think will yield the most productive discussions. Additional questions are listed as well. They are designed to provide you extra material if needed or alternate questions that might be more relevant to the makeup of your particular group.

As a group facilitator, remember:

- Do not attempt to assume the role of a counselor
- Be in control, keep people on track
- Watch body language and eye contact
- Silence is golden—listen and probe
- No cross talk (do not allow side conversations when someone else is talking)
- Trust God to meet group needs
- Don't get into a debate (theological or any other)
- Use gentle interruptions

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines:

- Everyone is encouraged to share during the discussion, but not required to.
- The group is not designed for “advice-giving” or counseling.
- Speak from personal experience and do not try to force your opinion on others.
- Confidentiality – What is said in the group stays in the group. A good, simple rule to remember is “Never tell someone else’s story.”
- No cross talk (no side conversations when someone else is talking).

#### ICEBREAKER

Icebreaker statements or questions are a great way to help group members relax and become comfortable. There is a list of sample icebreakers on page 126 of this Leader’s Guide.

#### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“This week’s video gave you ideas on how to help a grieving, hurting child. In today’s discussion, we’ll talk about how these concepts can be used with your children.”

- 1 **What is one thing that really stood out to you on today’s video?** (10–15 seconds or less)

- 2 **What are two fears you have for your children? And two you have for yourself?**

- 3 **LaVerne said she blamed herself for her child’s failures. In what way can you identify with her?**

- 4 **What is one practical step you can take this week to entrust your children to God?**

#### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 **The videos encouraged us to become experts on our children. Share one way you can learn more about each child this coming week.**

- 2 **What changes have you seen in your children’s behavior since you became a single parent?**

- 3 **What are some warning signs that you’re putting too much pressure on yourself to control the outcome of your child’s life?**

- 4 **What are your dreams for your children?**

- 5 **How have your dreams for your children changed since you became a single parent?**

#### WRAP-UP

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

**CLOSE WITH PRAYER** (*Reminder: A member of the leadership team should always lead this prayer*)

**REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK** exercises in workbook for next week and to use the weekly Care Card found in the back of the workbook for encouragement

**INVITE GROUP MEMBERS** to return for the next session (and to invite a single-parent friend to attend as well)

#### NEXT WEEK’S SESSION TOPIC: Rest & Comfort

You’ll discover how to find rest for yourself. Having a hard time believing that? Come back and hear what others have found out.

#### SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE’RE HERE TO HELP.

Call the Single & Parenting helpline at **800-395-5755** or **919-562-2112**. Visit the Single & Parenting LeaderZone at [www.singleandparenting.org/leaderzone](http://www.singleandparenting.org/leaderzone)

## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 3 REST & COMFORT

### OVERVIEW

Rest and comfort will seem like impossible goals for many of your group members. This important session shows them how they can succeed in a deeper rest than they ever imagined possible:

- Why taking a break can make them a more effective parent
- How to rest their body and soul
- The most important thing they can do for their children

### WHAT TO EXPECT

Hopefully, your group members are getting to know each other and are becoming comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.

If new members join your group in this or future sessions, look for ways to make them feel welcome.

One way to do this is to have group members introduce themselves and share how they became a single parent, how many children they have and their children's ages. For example: "I became a single parent when my husband and I got a divorce. I have three girls. They're 3, 4 and 16."

While you might think this process seems repetitive to existing group members, it is very helpful to new members and it actually helps people remember names and single-parent stories.

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?

- 2 What does the Bible say is the best way for you to respond to your children during times of adversity? (Day 1, Q3)

- 3 What powerful tool does God offer to help you parent your children? (Day 2, Q3)  
Give examples of how prayer has made a difference in the lives of your children.

- 4 Although you may feel a situation involving your child is hopeless and impossible to change, what is God's perspective? (Day 5, Q2)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

**DAY 1** – Hold your child's broken heart through comforting, listening and praying.

**DAY 2** – Make praying for your children a habit.

**DAY 3** – God can change hearts.

**DAY 4** – God loves your child.

**DAY 5** – God wants the best for your child.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 36 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

- Everyone is encouraged to share during the discussion, but not required to.
- The group is not designed for "advice-giving" or counseling.
- Speak from personal experience and do not try to force your opinion on others.
- Confidentiality – What is said in the group stays in the group. A good, simple rule to remember is "Never tell someone else's story."
- No cross talk (no side conversations when someone else is talking).

### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

# 3

CONTINUED

## PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“In this video you learned about rest. Let’s talk about how what you learned can be applied to your life.”

- 1 **What is one thing that really stood out to you on today’s video?** (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2 **Describe one activity you do to help you relax and one new activity you could begin doing?**
- 3 **Friends and family can give you a break from parenting. How do you feel about asking for their help and how often do you do it?**
- 4 **Give one practical tip you use to help your children get the rest and comfort they need.**

## ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 **Share something that has happened (serious or humorous) as a result of being exhausted.**
- 2 **Conflict often interrupts our rest and comfort. How can a relationship with God help you walk through conflicts?**
- 3 **How much sleep do you require and how much do you average on a daily basis? What can you do to improve this?**
- 4 **How do feelings of shame and insecurity impact your rest and comfort?**

## WRAP-UP

### PRAYER REQUESTS

**CLOSE WITH PRAYER** (*Reminder: A member of the leadership team should always lead this prayer*)

**REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK** exercises in workbook for next week and to use the weekly Care Card found in the back of the workbook for encouragement

### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE

and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

### NEXT WEEK’S SESSION TOPIC: Money & Career

Would you like to have a handle on your finances? Be able to save money? How about some tips on how to enjoy your job? Session 4 offers practicable strategies.

## SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE’RE HERE TO HELP.

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## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 4 MONEY & CAREER

### OVERVIEW

Single parents will learn contentment, how to trust God, and practical financial strategies in this Single & Parenting session. Material covered includes:

- Easy-to-follow budgeting tips
- How to get out of debt
- Secrets of reentering the workforce
- Understanding that God cares about their financial needs

### WHAT TO EXPECT

Many of the people who are in your group have experienced the inevitable financial struggles that accompany being a single parent and will benefit from this video seminar and the subsequent discussion. Some may be in the middle of a career transition or having to enter the workforce again or for the first time. Most participants look forward to the help this session provides.

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2 What does the Bible say on what is essential to successful planning? (Day 2, Q1)
- 3 How is spending time with God (reading God's words in the Bible and praying) refreshing? (Day 4, Jeremiah 31:25 and accompanying Scripture passages)

- 4 According to Philippians 4:19, which of your needs will God supply? (Day 5, Q3)  
How have you seen this promise play out in your life?

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

**DAY 1** – Ask for and accept help.

**DAY 2** – Take time to plan.

**DAY 3** – Learn the difference between resting and escaping.

**DAY 4** – Spend time with God.

**DAY 5** – God will provide for you.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 37 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“Today's discussion will further the video teachings on money and career—an area we can all use help with.”

- 1 What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2 What is one aspect of creating or keeping a budget that you think is difficult?
- 3 Describe two challenges that you have in balancing your responsibilities to both parent and provide for your children?
- 4 How are you teaching your children financial responsibility?

### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 How have you seen God provide for you financially?
- 2 Many people in the videos shared about their financial situations. Whose circumstances did you identify with most and why?

# 4

CONTINUED

3 Whether you are currently looking for new or additional work, or not, what job search tip was the most eye-opening to you on the video?

4 What is one practical budgeting tip you have heard, used or seen today that you would like to share with the group?

5 Dave Ramsey mentioned that people tend to make unwise choices with their money. Do you think that applies to you? If so, how?

## WRAP-UP

### PRAYER REQUESTS

**CLOSE WITH PRAYER** (*Reminder: A member of the leadership team should always lead this prayer*)

**REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK** exercises in workbook for next week and to use the weekly Care Card found in the back of the workbook for encouragement

**ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE** and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

**NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Parenting Goals & Expectations.** Discover the benefits of becoming an expert on each of your children!

**SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER**  
(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 5

# PARENTING GOALS & EXPECTATIONS

### OVERVIEW

All parents have goals and dreams for their kids. This Single & Parenting session will show your group members how to balance their dreams and expectations against their child's abilities, gifts and personality. Among the main points, we'll explore:

- ☐ Which parenting goals are important to set
- ☐ How critical it is to understand their child's unique needs
- ☐ How to get their kids to obey

### WHAT TO EXPECT

From this point forward, your group will begin to develop patterns and its own personality. Look for unhealthy patterns (such as group members who dominate conversation), and do your best to keep the group healthy and focused on its purpose. Maintain a "culture of openness," and train your group to embrace new participants who join your group.

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2 What does the Bible say is the result of wanting and spending what you don't have? (Day 1, Q2, Ecclesiastes 5:10)
- 3 According to the Bible, what is the secret to being content in any and every situation? (Day 2, Q2)
- 4 What is God's perspective about work? (Day 4, Q2)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

**DAY 1** – Money and possessions are temporary.

**DAY 2** – Money won't make you happy.

**DAY 3** – Spend less than you earn.

**DAY 4** – Work is a good thing.

**DAY 5** – Success is not a future event.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 39 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

"The videos showed the importance of recognizing the unique characteristics of each of your kids. We'll continue discussing how to frame your parenting goals with this in mind."

- 1 What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2 What did you learn about the concept of letting your children experience the full consequences of their actions?
- 3 How will your approach to disciplining your children change after seeing this video?
- 4 Thinking back on the video, do you have any new ideas you can add to your parenting skills?

### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 What are one or two practical steps you can begin taking to help minimize nagging your children?
- 2 What are possible ways you could teach your children about the things of God as it relates to their unique needs?

# 5 CONTINUED

**3** What goals do you have for your children's futures? How do those goals differ from what the experts on the video said our goals for our children should be?

**4** Did the video inspire you to make some new parenting goals? If so, please explain.

## WRAP-UP

### PRAYER REQUESTS

**CLOSE WITH PRAYER** (*Reminder: A member of the leadership team should always lead this prayer*)

**REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK** exercises in workbook for next week and to use the weekly Care Card found in the back of the workbook for encouragement

**ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE** and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

## NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Suffering & Adversity

Discover how to turn your past from a source of regret into a trusted friend.

## SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 6

# SUFFERING & ADVERSITY

### OVERVIEW

Is it trite to say that God can turn the bad someone is facing into something good—or is it really true? Group members will find out in today's Single & Parenting session. We'll cover important ground, including:

- How single parents can allow suffering to work for their good
- How adversity can prepare their kids for success
- Often-overlooked reasons why all of us experience pain and suffering

### WHAT TO EXPECT

From this point forward, your group will begin to develop patterns and its own personality. Look for unhealthy patterns (such as group members who dominate conversation), and do your best to keep the group healthy and focused on its purpose. Maintain a "culture of openness," and train your group to embrace new participants who join your group.

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- What does the Bible say is the alternative to exasperating (irritating, frustrating) your children? (Day 1, Ephesians 6:4)
- What is the result of godly, heart-focused discipline, according to the Bible? (Day 2, Q2)

- What does God want you to do if you have a grievance against your child? (Day 4, Q2)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

- DAY 1** – Discover the unique needs of your children.
- DAY 2** – Don't let your children undermine your authority.
- DAY 3** – Care for your child.
- DAY 4** – It takes humility to seek forgiveness.
- DAY 5** – God is patient with you.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 41 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

"In the video you learned that there's a reason for suffering and adversity. Let's discuss how you can allow suffering to work for your good."

- What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- Dr. Viars emphasized your past is not just a story of what other people have done to you. It also includes how you've responded. How does that insight change the way you view your past suffering?
- Why might single parents who are easily discouraged by their failures be encouraged by remembering that God has forgiven and accepts them?
- A single parent had a very rough day and at the end of the day, realized how poorly he or she had treated people. What truths from this session would be encouraging to this person?

## 6 CONTINUED

### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 Describe one way you have suffered as a single parent, and tell us how you can apply what you learned today to that situation.
- 2 How have you balanced the need to be honest about your pain with your desire not to overwhelm people with your problems?
- 3 Elyse Fitzpatrick said that guilt isn't a good motivator. What should motivate us to be good parents?
- 4 Name two good things that have come out of your past sufferings.

### WRAP-UP

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

**CLOSE WITH PRAYER** (*Reminder: A member of the leadership team should always lead this prayer*)

**REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK** exercises in workbook for next week and to use the weekly Care Card found in the back of the workbook for encouragement

**ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE** and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

#### **NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Emotions & Stability, Pt. 1.**

Struggling with worry? Depression? Shame? Lack of self-worth? Next week's session will show you what to do with your emotions.

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#### **SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER**

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 7 EMOTIONS & STABILITY, PT. 1

### OVERVIEW

Many single parents feel like they are slaves to their emotions. Even so, it is important for them to understand they don't have to be controlled by how they feel. Today's session will show group members how to break free from controlling emotions by understanding:

- What their emotions are trying to tell them
- How to work through their depression
- How to eliminate fear

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2 No matter what trial you are facing, what does God give you in order to face that moment? (Day 1, Q4)
- 3 According to the Bible, how should we face adversity or trials? (Day 2, Q1)
- 4 Even when experiencing suffering and adversity, what does the Bible say God is doing in our lives? (Day 3, Q1)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

- DAY 1** – God's grace is sufficient.
- DAY 2** – Suffering does produce results.
- DAY 3** – Becoming like Christ is a hard, but wonderful process.

**DAY 4** – Set your hope on the right things.

**DAY 5** – God forgives us completely.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 35 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“Let's continue the video teaching by talking about the message in *your* emotions.”

- 1 What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2 What are two of your biggest fears as a single parent?
- 3 What insights about your emotions did you gain from this session?
- 4 To deal with fear, Dr. Welch recommended looking back on each day to see how God has provided. What evidences of God's provision and care have you seen recently?

### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 Think of one person whose opinion you give too much weight to. What negative effect is that having on your emotions?
- 2 Think of one person whose opinion you value. What positive effect is that having on your emotions?
- 3 How has becoming a single parent changed your identity: the way you see yourself?
- 4 What's the benefit in seeing yourself as a child of God, as opposed to defining yourself by your circumstances?

### WRAP-UP

### PRAYER REQUESTS

# 7 CONTINUED

## CLOSE WITH PRAYER

### REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK

exercises in workbook for next week

### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE

and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

### NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Emotions &

**Stability, Pt. 2** Find out how to address your anger, worry and anxiety and the benefits of doing so.

---

### SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 8

## EMOTIONS & STABILITY, PT. 2

### OVERVIEW

Is it trite to say that God can turn the bad someone is facing into something good—or is it really true? Group members will find out in today's Single & Parenting session. We'll cover important ground, including:

- What's causing their anger and what they can do with it
- How to forgive someone who won't admit he's done anything wrong
- How others can help them deal with their emotions

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2 What drives your emotional responses according to the Bible? (Day 1, Q1)
- 3 When you are depressed, what is the object of your hope? (Day 2, Q1, Psalm 42:11)
- 4 Why is there no reason for shame when you belong to Christ? (Day 3, Q4)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

- DAY 1** – You don't have to follow your emotions.
- DAY 2** – Depression is an opportunity.
- DAY 3** – You're not a disappointment to God.
- DAY 4** – Look for evidences of God's grace and care.

**DAY 5** – You don't have to be defensive about your failures.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 36 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

"The video introduced some new ideas on anger and other emotions. In our discussion, we'll apply these teachings to our own lives."

- 1 What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2 When it comes to your relationship with your children, how can you apply what you have learned today about anger?
- 3 What practical steps toward forgiveness stood out to you?
- 4 What people or circumstances do you try to exert too much control over? How do you react when things don't go the way you want?

### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 Cassandra mentioned that she blamed herself when her kids got sick or didn't like the dinner she prepared. How can you identify with her desire to be a perfect parent?
- 2 Our emotional reactions have a physical component. Some people hold it in, while others overly express themselves. Which do you identify with most, and how can you get closer to a healthy balance?
- 3 Give one example of good anger in your single-parenting experience.

- 4 **Cassandra took comfort in the fact that God loves her despite her flaws. How does your understanding of God's acceptance affect the way you deal with your flaws?**

## WRAP-UP

### PRAYER REQUESTS

### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

### REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK

exercises in workbook for next week

### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE

and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

**NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Parenting Tools & Projects.** The next session offers practical advice on how to address the source of your child's behavior.

---

## SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 9

# PARENTING TOOLS & PROJECTS

### OVERVIEW

This session introduces your group members to profound and effective parenting techniques that go straight to the hearts of their children. Among the things participants will learn:

- How to teach their children to be grateful
- The unique challenges faced by children of divorce
- The vital link between a child's heart and his behavior

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2 What does James 4:1 say is our source (root) of anger? (Day 1, Q1)
- 3 What does the Bible say to do first when a worrisome situation occurs? (Day 3, Q3)
- 4 According to the Bible, why can we trust God with our emotions? (Day 5, Q1)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

**DAY 1** – Get to the source of your anger.

**DAY 2** – You can't control anyone.

**DAY 3** – You can control your thinking.

**DAY 4** – Address your emotions with prayer.

**DAY 5** – You can choose to receive God's peace.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 35 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“You saw in the videos that each child faces unique challenges. We'll discuss how you can help your children no matter what they're facing by addressing their hearts.”

- 1 What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2 What is one issue you typically argue with your children about?
- 3 What are your thoughts about using the techniques mentioned on the videos to avoid parent/child power struggles?
- 4 What steps can you take to focus more on your child's heart, rather than being focused on external behavior?

### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 Give one practical way you can model gratefulness to your children.
- 2 How has your child been affected by either:
  - a. Living in two countries
  - b. The absence of a father or mother due to abandonment
  - c. The death of a parent
- 3 How have you hurt your child by talking negatively about his or her mom or dad?
- 4 What things have you found helpful to lessen the effect of the emotional trauma upon your child?

# 9

CONTINUED

## WRAP-UP

PRAYER REQUESTS

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

### REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK

exercises in workbook for next week

### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE

and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

### NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Parenting Approaches

**& God's Love** Discover how God's love for you should inform your approach to parenting.

---

### SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 10 PARENTING APPROACHES & GOD'S LOVE

### OVERVIEW

When single parents are weighed down by the challenges and pressures of life, it can be hard for them to understand how much God loves them and their children. But understanding God's love can dramatically change their approach to parenting. This session helps single parents understand:

- Whom they should model their parenting after
- How their child's bad behavior can be used to point them to God
- The ultimate reason they should be patient with their kids

### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2 When interacting with your child, what does the Bible say about how you should be “clothed”? (Day 2, Q1)
- 3 What is the benefit of choosing to react humbly in a tense situation? (Day 2, Q2)
- 4 When you have felt weary and burdened, what does God graciously invite you to do? (Day 5, Q2)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

**DAY 1** – Develop the good in your children.

**DAY 2** – Slow down before reacting.

**DAY 3** – Consider the reasons behind your responses.

**DAY 4** – God has things under control despite our mistakes.

**DAY 5** – You can experience God's rest.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 43 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“Today's discussion will further the video teaching on how God is your model for parenting.”

- 1 What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2 When you think about the expectations you have for your children, which of them, if any, are unreasonable?
- 3 When your children get upset or don't obey, what are some things you can do, as Julie Lowe suggested, to “slow the situation down”?
- 4 What are you learning about yourself as you parent your children?

### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 How is being a single parent revealing your need to trust God more?
- 2 Name two areas that your children consistently fail or struggle in.
- 3 How can you use their failures and struggles in these areas to show them they need God's mercy and patience?
- 4 How do you use your children's bad behavior to point them to God?

**10**  
CONTINUED

## WRAP-UP

PRAYER REQUESTS

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

### REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK

exercises in workbook for next week

### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE

and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

### NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Talking & Listening

Learn how good communication can transform a bad situation.

---

### SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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# SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## 11 TALKING & LISTENING

### WEEK 14 CELEBRATION SESSION

As you make your plans to end your 13-week cycle, consider having a week 14 Celebration Session. See page 43 for more information.

#### OVERVIEW

This important session shows your group members how the words they say can effect profound change—either positive or destructive. Your group will learn communication skills, including:

- How their words and heart are connected, and why that's important
- How even good desires can lead to conflict
- When to ignore the hurtful words of others

#### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

#### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

#### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- What does the Bible say about whose responsibility it is to make sure your children are taught about God? (Day 1, Q1)
- What does God command us to do as parents in Ephesians 6:4? (Day 3, Q4)
- What does the Bible say God did for us even though we did nothing to deserve it? (Day 4, Q2)

#### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

- DAY 1** – Talk about God with your kids.
- DAY 2** – Help your kids see their need for God.
- DAY 3** – Let your kids know how much God loves them.
- DAY 4** – The gospel provides a solution.
- DAY 5** – We don't have to work to please God.

#### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 39 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

#### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

#### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

#### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“The videos showed how our hearts and our words are connected. Let's talk more about how that knowledge can help us in a conflict.”

- What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- Susan Lutz reminded us that “God is always in the room.” How would your communication with your children or another adult change if you were constantly aware of that?
- What are some of your habits that have hampered communication with your children or their other parent?
- Share a listening skill that you need to improve on when communicating with your children and your ex-spouse.
- Discuss how the concept of “assigning less weight” to communication with your ex might apply in your life.

#### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- When you encounter conflict with your child's other parent, what is one tip you have found helpful to minimize the conflict?

# 11

CONTINUED

2 Give an example of how you have established new communication boundaries in your role as a single parent in relation to your children's other parent.

3 When hurtful words come from your child or your ex-spouse, how do you deal with it in a way that honors God?

4 What are practical ways you can refuse to catch (respond to) negative comments from your former partner, without being dismissive or appearing prideful?

## WRAP-UP

### PRAYER REQUESTS

### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

### REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK

exercises in workbook for next week

### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE

and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

## NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Conflict & Resolution

Avoiding conflict with certain people can be a challenge. For you, that could be your former spouse, your children or a friend. In the next session, find out how to address and resolve conflicts in your relationships.

## SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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## SESSION AGENDA & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# 12 CONFLICT & RESOLUTION

### WEEK 14 CELEBRATION SESSION

As you make your plans to end your 13-week cycle, consider having a week 14 Celebration Session. See page 43 for more information.

#### OVERVIEW

Conflict will always be a part of life for all of us, including the single parents in your group. To help them resolve the conflict they'll encounter, this session offers wise, practical advice, including:

- The best way to interact with someone they're in conflict with
- Why to focus on changing themselves, instead of waiting for someone else to change
- When to seek help from others in managing conflict

#### 30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS

Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

#### OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
- Begin session with a prayer.

#### DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1 Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2 What does the Bible say you should be quick to do when someone says something to you that would typically result in you flaring up inside? (Day 1, Q1)
- 3 What does the Scripture say about how you can diffuse a potential argument? (Day 3, Q1)

- 4 According to the Bible, what one word should describe the nature of everything that comes out of your mouth? (Day 3, Q3)

#### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

- DAY 1** – Let God help you respond.
- DAY 2** – Help your children control their tongues by example.
- DAY 3** – Kind words open the door for change.
- DAY 4** – We say what's in our hearts.
- DAY 5** – God uses our mistakes to refine us.

#### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 36 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

#### DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

#### ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

#### PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“Let's talk about the ideas introduced on the videos regarding how to manage conflict.”

- 1 What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2 Share about a time when you sent a poorly worded letter, email, voice mail or text message that led to confusion or conflict with your former partner or your children.
- 3 The video reminded us that God showed kindness to us when we were His enemies. Practically, how might you mirror this behavior when dealing with your former partner?
- 4 In what ways do you feel prejudged in your status as a single parent, and how does that affect your interaction with others?

#### ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1 What tip from this session are you most eager to apply? Why?

**2** What did you learn from the videos that will help you respond appropriately when your children interact with the different lifestyle of their other parent (economic status, moral beliefs, religion)?

**3** How are you prejudging others (could be your ex-spouse or your children)? How do you think that affects them?

**4** What is a major co-parenting challenge you have faced recently?

### WRAP-UP

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

#### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

#### REMINDER TO DO HOPEWORK

exercises in workbook for next week

#### ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE

and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**RETURN NEXT WEEK** with a single-parent friend

**NEXT WEEK'S SESSION TOPIC: Dating & Single Sexuality.** Hear important tips and helpful instruction

on dating and sexuality. We will also discuss “what comes next” for group members after this Single & Parenting group concludes its 13-week cycle.

---

### SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER

(10 minutes)

## QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

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# 13 DATING & SINGLE SEXUALITY

## ALERT!

### Essential information about structuring and leading this session

Because of the sensitive nature of the Dating & Single Sexuality session, we highly recommend:

- Video can be viewed as a mixed group or separated by gender. The session is included on both Discs 4 and 5 to facilitate split viewing, if you elect.
- Even if you view the video as a mixed group, it is essential that you divide your group by gender for the small group discussion.
- Male leaders should be assigned to lead the men's group discussion
- Female leaders are assigned to lead the women's group discussion.

There are some important reasons for this approach:

- You'll find the conversation to be awkward and guarded if you attempt to have a mixed-gender discussion time on this topic.
- Same-sex interaction will be more natural and comfortable, and there is the potential for peer accountability to develop.
- Your group (and your church) avoids criticism by exercising wisdom and discretion through segregating the discussion by gender.

**REMINDER:** If you prefer the males and females in your group to view the material at the same time but in different rooms, we have provided the Session 13 video seminar on both Disc 4 and Disc 5.

### FINAL SESSION DYNAMICS

As this is the final session in the 13-week series, we recommend you give special consideration to how you will "wrap up" your Single & Parenting group. Please consider these two options:

- **ADD AN ADDITIONAL "CELEBRATION SESSION" IN THE 14TH WEEK** This is our recommended option, as it allows you to bring everyone back together after having been separated for the Dating & Single Sexuality session. This format facilitates an informal atmosphere for fun, food and fellowship. See "Agenda for week 14 Celebration Session" on page 43.
- **EXTENDED 13TH WEEKLY SESSION** If Session 13 is your closing night and you do not have the option for the Celebration Session described above, consider extending your dismissal time by an additional 15 minutes after the conclusion of the discussion groups. This additional time will allow you to bring group members back together briefly for closure, testimonies and celebration. If you elect this option, be sure to coordinate your schedule with your child care providers. See "Wrap-up" below.

### OVERVIEW

Our culture presents a very permissive approach to dating and sexuality. It is easy for single parents to get caught up in this worldview. This video presents compelling alternatives:

- Eye-opening reasons to stay sexually pure (why it's not too late)
- When it's the right time for single parents to date
- Essential qualities for a potential mate

### WHAT TO EXPECT

Don't be surprised if group members push back on the concepts of sexual purity and reserving sex for marriage. As mentioned above, sexual freedom is increasingly ingrained in our culture. Don't attempt to debate or argue the point. Simply ask your group members to be willing to consider the biblical guidelines for relationships, then allow the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. Remember, it may take a while for the truths presented in this session to work their way into the lives of your group members. The life-change may come weeks or months after viewing the video.

**30–60 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR SESSION BEGINS** Leadership team arrives 30–60 minutes prior to start time for setup and prayer.

## OPENING THE SESSION

Start the session promptly at the published time.

- Welcome the participants.
- Share any announcements.
  - For small group discussion time, divide group by gender because of the sensitive nature of this topic.
  - If this is your closing night, instruct participants to gather back into a large group at a specific time to close the group.
  - If you are offering an additional Celebration Session in the 14th week, give details of what to expect.
- Begin session with a prayer.

## DISCUSS HOPEWORK EXERCISES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK

- 1** Who would like to share what was most meaningful to you in the Hopework exercises this past week?
- 2** In the face of a conflict, what does God promise to give you (James 4:6)? (Day 1, Q3)
- 3** When facing a potential conflict, what is the first thing you need to do, according to James 4:10, and why is that important? (Day 3, Q1)
- 4** What does the Bible say is the best way to overcome evil? (Day 4, Q2)

### BIG IDEAS FROM THIS WEEK'S HOPEWORK:

**DAY 1** – Only God can fulfill the desires in your heart.

**DAY 2** – Your kids benefit when you speak humbly and graciously.

**DAY 3** – God is the one who knows best.

**DAY 4** – Choose to make a positive change in yourself.

**DAY 5** – Christ handled conflicts perfectly, and it's credited to us.

### VIEW VIDEO (RUNNING TIME: 38 MINUTES)

**SHORT BREAK** – serve snacks (if you did not offer them prior to the start of the meeting), then transition to small group(s).

**REMINDER:** Divide group by gender because of the sensitive nature of this topic. Instruct participants where to meet for their small group discussion and when to gather back into a large group afterward.

## DISCUSS VIDEO

Remind group members of discussion group guidelines, if needed for new participants

## ICEBREAKER

Choose from the list of sample icebreakers on page 126.

## PRIMARY QUESTIONS

“As you saw on the videos, it's important to decide ahead of time how and why to stay sexually pure and who will hold you accountable. Let's discuss this together in a safe setting.”

- 1** What is one thing that really stood out to you on today's video? (10–15 seconds or less)
- 2** When do you feel the loneliest, and what are some ways you deal with your loneliness?
- 3** How has the information you have seen today changed or reinforced your view of dating as a single parent?
- 4** Liz mentioned that sexual temptation starts in the mind. What are some things you do (or could do) to avoid sexual temptation (at home, on dates or otherwise)?
- 5** Who holds you accountable to maintain your sexual purity? If no one does, who could?

## ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE QUESTIONS

- 1** What should you do now if you've come to understand that your current lifestyle is not in line with God's plan for you?
- 2** What could you begin doing to model and teach your children about sexual purity?
- 3** How much pressure (internal or external) do you feel to remarry for the sake of your children?

# 13 CONTINUED

**WRAP-UP A** (if you are adding a Celebration Session in the 14th week)

## **GATHER PARTICIPANTS**

back into a large group at a specific time

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

### **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO GO ONLINE**

and take advantage of the Single-Parent HelpCenter

**REMIND PARTICIPANTS** of the closing Celebration Session next week and details

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### **SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER**

(10 minutes)

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**WRAP-UP B** (if you are closing your 13-week cycle tonight)

## **1 GATHER PARTICIPANTS**

back into a large group at a specific time

If you have had multiple groups during the last 12 weeks, instruct participants to return to their normal small group location and the people they have been with over the last 12 weeks.

**ALLOW 10 MINUTES FOR THE GROUP TO SHARE FINAL THOUGHTS** and have closure with the fellow group members they've been with over the weeks. Instruct participants to complete the following two statements (do one full round of answering the first statement, then everyone goes around and answers the last statement: 30 seconds or less to give their answer):

- **The most meaningful thing about Single & Parenting for me was ...**
- **The most important step I took as a result of Single & Parenting was ...**

Direct participants to return to the large group at a specific time.

**2 PROVIDE PARTICIPANTS WITH A COPY OF THE PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM** and ask them to complete the form right there on the spot and give back to you.

**3 ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO TEAR OUT THE THANK YOU CARD** from the back of their workbook and ask them to complete and give back to you for you to give to your pastor.

**4 BRIEFLY DISCUSS WORKBOOK PAGE 147 "WHAT'S NEXT?"** and encourage participants to continue growing and developing as a single parent.

**5 PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPANTS TO GIVE A SHORT TESTIMONY** on how Single & Parenting has helped them. An optional activity would be to ask participants to give "one-sentence-only" testimonies on what they got out of the last 13 weeks.

**6 ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM** and applaud their service.

**7 ACKNOWLEDGE EACH PARTICIPANT** by giving some creative gift or memorable item that is low cost (booklets, gift Bible, decorative item and something positive for participants to remember their 13-week journey). Certificates are available to download on the LeaderZone in the Library/Articles section.

**8 PROVIDE EACH PARTICIPANT WITH A FEW BROCHURES** for the next 13-week cycle of your Single & Parenting group. Encourage participants to invite other single parents to come to the next 13-week cycle and to come back and go through the seminar again.

### **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

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**SHORT LEADER DEBRIEFING SESSION & PRAYER**  
(10 minutes)

## **QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.**

Call the Single & Parenting helpline at **800-395-5755** or **919-562-2112**.

Visit the Single & Parenting LeaderZone at **[www.singleandparenting.org/leaderzone](http://www.singleandparenting.org/leaderzone)**