

# GET UNCOMFORTABLE

## LEADER GUIDE: COLLEGE EDITION

We all crave relationships. Both Christians and non-Christians desire to belong to a group—a family of friends they can trust with the truth about who they are. As a leader, you have the opportunity to foster something powerful—biblical community. You strategically invite your group to experience authentic friendships the way God intended. This means doing life together, encouraging one another in Christ, and loving one another through the happy and difficult times. Biblical community is the glue that will bind your group together, and it will absolutely baffle non-believers.

Before young adults change their worldviews, practice spiritual disciplines, or memorize Scripture, they have to belong. As you spend time with your group, pray with them and serve them in unexpected ways. You can give them the security they need to take risks in their faith. When you lay that foundation of trust and belonging, you enable God to transform the lives of your group members. No longer is Bible study just an isolated hour of teacher-student study; it goes deeper, building lasting community that influences our lives and the very threads of who we are.

**Note:** Before reading any further, take a few minutes to read the article “What Did I Sign Up For?” in your leader tools section of this CD-ROM. It gives several helpful tips for planning and carrying out your group study sessions. Then continue reading through this leader guide.

**Disclaimer:** The suggestions, ideas, and questions provided in this leader guide serve as just that—a *guide*. Every group is different, and you will need to adapt this content to the specific needs of your unique group. Always include hangout time during your session. Play music and provide light snacks. No one likes a set pattern, so feel free to mix it up to keep the experience fresh each session. You may discover that a session provides more content than you can cover in one group meeting, especially if the discussion is rich. Consider carrying that topic over to the next time you meet.

### BEFORE YOUR FIRST MEETING

- Preview all printed and multi-media features available for this six-session study. Multi-media options are listed and explained below.
  - Display promotional posters (available in the leader tools menu of this CD-ROM) around your church and/or community announcing the start of this study.
  - Consider posting information on your church’s Web site or your personal blog or MySpace.
  - Distribute member books to study participants and encourage them to read and work through the first session before your first meeting time.
-  • Send the audio file “Our Place at the Table” (see multi-media features below) to those in your group. (Or consider sending this to several young adults in your church or community to spark interest and encourage participation in the study.)
- Listen to the music available on the CD-ROM (see Music & Playlist below) and download the remaining songs on the playlist via iTunes at [www.threadsmedia.com/studies](http://www.threadsmedia.com/studies).

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### MULTI-MEDIA FEATURES

#### VIDEO SEGMENTS

Show the video segments (located on the DVD) at the suggested times during your group meeting.

**Session 1: "More Than Stats" (3:40)**

**Session 5: "DayBreak: An Experiment in Truth" (12:42)**

#### MUSIC & PLAYLIST

A playlist of music that compliments the topic and themes of the study is available in the leader tools section of this CD-ROM. Four songs from the playlist come with your leader kit and are located in the music & e-mailable audio files section of this CD-ROM. They are for you, the leader, and are playable on a CD player and a computer. Encourage your group members to visit [www.threadsmedia.com/studies](http://www.threadsmedia.com/studies) and download these songs via iTunes, or you can send your group members the playlist in the leader tools section of this CD-ROM.

**Track 1: "Tanzania" by Alli Rogers**

**Track 2: "Heal This Land" by The Longing**

**Track 3: "God of Justice" by Tim Hughes**

**Track 4: "Sustaining Me" by Spur58**

#### E-MAILABLE AUDIO FILES

E-mail these audio files (located in the music & e-mailable audio files section of this CD-ROM) to your group between meeting times to provide an additional way to connect with the topic of the study. Participants can listen to them on their computer and/or download them to an MP3 player to listen as they go. You can preview them on your computer/MP3 player as well. Then when your group meets, discuss your thoughts about them together.

**Session 1: "Our Place at the Table"**

**Session 2: "What Else?"**

**Session 3: "It's Not Political"**

**Session 4: "Do Something"**

**Session 5: "Fair Trade"**

**Session 6: "She Went"**

### ONLINE FEATURES

You'll find topical articles, additional leader helps, blogs from Threads staff and authors, and a list of organizations that serve the poor and fight injustice at [www.threadsmedia.com](http://www.threadsmedia.com). At [www.lifeway.com/bible](http://www.lifeway.com/bible) you'll find different Bible translations, commentaries, word studies, and other resources to supplement your preparation.

### QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

You may use the questions in the member book, those provided in the leader guide, or a combination of the two. There are most likely more questions than you need, so pick and choose what best suits your group. Three types of questions are provided in this leader guide for each session:

**Engage:** Introductory questions that everyone can answer easily. These help to break the ice and get the conversation started.

**Encounter:** Connect to God's Word and each other. They ask what the Bible text says or means about a particular topic.

**Express:** Ask "So what?" They help identify how truth applies directly to our lives

Before each group meeting time, set an open and comfortable environment. Have snacks and listen to music from the playlist as people arrive.

## BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION — SESSION 1

### ENGAGE

"A mature believer develops what I call a 'healthy sense of self-forgetfulness' rather than an unhealthy preoccupation with self. Jesus demanded that if we would truly follow Him, then we must deny ourselves (Luke 9:23). There is an unbelievably huge world out there in need of believers who have denied themselves, let go of the table, and become runners in God's race to increase His eternal kingdom through Jesus Christ."

When you think of the words poverty, oppression, and injustice, what images, thoughts, or feelings come to mind?

Do you agree with Todd's assertions that Americans live in a cocoon, disconnected from the way the majority of the world lives? What factors contribute to this?

Do you think the college environment is more or less likely to facilitate such a disconnection? Why?



Watch "More Than Stats."

What's your initial reaction to the video?

Where do you see examples of waste on your campus?

### ENCOUNTER

"This is where God wants His children—He wants us to be so attuned to the suffering and pain of those around us that we respond to those needs without thinking. Giving to the needs of others, personally involving ourselves in the hopelessness of others, and diving into the misery of others in the name of Christ will become our second nature."

How important do you think issues of justice and mercy should be to a Christian?

What influences on your campus uplift those issues?

What aspects of campus life detract from those issues?

**READ JOHN 13:1-17.**

What part of the story stands out to you? Why?

How does Jesus model a life of service and sacrifice in this passage?

How does this passage relate to our responsibility to others (including the poor and oppressed)?

How will we be blessed if we do these things (v. 17)? Have you ever experienced that blessing in your own life? How?

Why do you think the church has become silent and inactive in regard to the poor, oppressed, and needy?

What parts of the current church culture are pleasing to Jesus and which do you think He is unhappy with?

**READ JAMES 1:22-27.**

How would you sum up these verses in a single sentence?

Why do you think widows and orphans are so important to God?

Is it really fair for their care to be the measuring stick of pure religion? Why or why not?

What are some ways you can engage in needs like these on your campus?

### EXPRESS

"Many of us are living our Christian lives holding on to the programs, events, and comfort of our local church. Many of us have never ventured out from these programs—Sunday service, Wednesday dinner, weekly Bible study, and the annual Christmas gift drive. When no one is around, though, we wonder, "Is this all there is? Is this all that we're supposed to do and be as the people of God?"

What can we do as a group to help each other practice the self-denial that Jesus calls us to?

Does being a college student make self-denial easier or harder?

How can we help each other focus on the needs of others rather than focusing only on our needs?

What is one thing that you would like God to do in you or through you as you "get uncomfortable"?

## BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION — SESSION 1

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### **PRAY**

Ask for a volunteer to pray specifically that God would begin to burden your group this week with the state of the world.

### **BEFORE NEXT TIME**

Make some notes about each participant this week. Jot down specific things you believe God wants to change or encourage in them through your study. Begin praying to that end.



Send the audio file “What Else?” to the group members. Listen to the clip to prepare and engage discussion during the next session.

## THE CHARACTER OF GOD — SESSION 2

### ENGAGE

“God’s love for the marginalized in society extends further and deeper than the passion of any rock star, politician, or preacher that is calling us to social action.”

Describe a time in your life when God surprised you. What did you learn about God and His character through this?

Has your picture of God changed since you’ve been at college? How? Why do you think it did?

What do you think is important to God?

### ENCOUNTER

“Our God is a God who actually takes sides, gets righteously angry, and declares right from wrong.”

### READ ISAIAH 30:18 AND ISAIAH 61:8.

How would you define “justice”?

When you think of God being a just God, what usually comes to mind first? How did this session help you come to understand God’s justice?

When you look at the world around you, do you see evidence of God’s justice? Why or why not?

In light of God’s love of justice, what should be the Christian’s attitude toward justice?

How do you think a college student could develop a greater sense of the need for justice in the world?

### READ MATTHEW 9:35-37.

What do we learn about the compassion of God from this passage? Why do you think that Jesus responded as He did?

What stands out to you about His response?

What is different about the way we typically respond to people like those Jesus encountered?

Why would Jesus refer to these people as “the harvest”?

What sort of workers do you think Jesus is looking for?

What does the harvest look like on your campus?

### READ ISAIAH 59:15 AND LUKE 11:42.

What do we learn here about God’s moral clarity? How do you know if you are on God’s side of an issue?

How do you see the Pharisees based on Jesus’ words? Can you find any similarities between their lives and your own?

What is one area of your life in which you are bypassing justice?

### EXPRESS

“God’s character consistently stirs Him into action. We serve a God who intervenes on behalf of the poor and the oppressed; He does not stand idly by. According to the Bible, God’s justice, compassion, and moral clarity compel Him to an active real-world response.”

How can you support “justice” in your day-to-day life?

How can you properly use the “power” God has given to you and help others to do the same?

How can you regularly express God’s compassion? What will need to happen for you to do this?

College students are busy. Is there any room in your schedule to pursue justice? If not, how does your schedule need to change?

What can you do to live with “moral clarity” that matches the character of a just and compassionate God?

### PRAY

Ask for a volunteer to turn in their Bible to Psalm 36.

Have them read Psalm 36:5-12 to close in prayer.

### BEFORE NEXT TIME



Send the audio file “It’s Not Political” to the group members.

Take some time and examine your own view of God. Do you have a balanced view, or do you gravitate toward God’s more “popular” attributes? Encourage group members to consider how their prayer life this week reflects their view of God. Encourage them to make some notes and discuss them next week.

## THE TRUE CONDITION OF OUR WORLD— SESSION 3

### ENGAGE

“The condition of the world today can be explained by one three letter word—sin. If sin is the true culprit, then every issue of poverty, injustice, and oppression has a spiritual element to it.”

Do you watch the news? Why or why not?

Do you think college campuses discourage or promote a true picture of the rest of the world?

How is your view of life outside the U.S. changing based on the information presented in this session?

Why do you think so few of us grasp what is happening in the rest of the world?

### ENCOUNTER

“We’re all born into this sin, and we all suffer the consequences of God’s judgment. This wasn’t just a spiritual spanking and it didn’t just affect Adam and Eve. The effects of sin are experienced in every part of creation.”

#### READ ROMANS 5:12 AND GENESIS 3:16-19.

How did sin enter the world? What were the immediate effects of sin in the lives of Adam and Eve?

What were the long-term effects on them? How has their sin affected us?

Can you identify the effects of sin on your campus? How about your own life? What specific areas can you isolate?

#### READ ROMANS 8:18-23.

How has creation been effected by sin? What does that look like in our world today?

What do you think it looks like for creation to groan?

What is the responsibility of those who have the firstfruits of redemption?

What does this passage teach us about the Christian’s role in preserving or protecting God’s creation?

How can you express the responsibility and hope of this passage on your campus?

### EXPRESS

“We have been given a special invitation from God; a mission that only the people of God can accomplish. The very mission of the church is to go out among the dying, the hurt, and the needy, and share the good news of salvation in Jesus through word and deed.”

If the root of our world’s condition is sin, what should we prioritize as we look to meet the needs of the poor and the oppressed?

How do you think a person balances social action and evangelism?

Why do you think that some people focus on the symptoms of the world’s sickness rather than dealing with the cause?

Where have you seen that happen?

Why is it important for us to meet both physical needs and spiritual needs of people?

If you wanted to do both, where would you start on your campus?

### PRAY

Ask for anyone who feels led to pray this week. Ask those who pray to specifically pray that your group would see the world as it is and be moved to action in the same way that Jesus was.

### BEFORE NEXT TIME



Send the audio file “*Do Something*” to the group members.

Begin to make plans for a group service project. Get ideas from your group members and let them know that at the end of this study, you will engage in a service project together. See the Service Opportunities list located on the CD-ROM for suggestions.

## WHAT'S MY ROLE? — SESSION 4

### ENGAGE

“God’s design is that we, the church—not the government, Hollywood, or big business—would be the agent of change in the world.”

If you could change the world in one way, what would you do?

What obstacles stand in the way of the church collectively changing the world?

What is the most controversial issue of social justice on your campus? Why do you think it’s so controversial?

### ENCOUNTER

“At our essence as believers, we can either be proclaiming servers or serving proclaimers. There is really not much different in the two; both express the same truth. In either case, we shouldn’t be proclaiming Christ without serving people, and we shouldn’t serve people without proclaiming Christ.”

### READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-20.

What do you think it means to regard someone in a purely human way?

Have you encountered professors on your campus who do so? What is their outlook on humanity? On religion?

What is the opposite of regarding someone in a purely human way?

How would your campus be different if you regarded people like that?

What does regarding someone with God’s viewpoint require of you?

What does it mean that we are Christ’s ambassadors?

How does it make you feel when you think about God making His appeal through you?

### READ JOHN 20:21.

What is the manner in which the Father sent Jesus?

What does that mean for the way Jesus sends us?

What are we sent to do, in light of the fact that we are sent as the Father sent Jesus?

What does it mean specifically for you as a college student?

What is the difference between serving and proclaiming?

Why is the difference important?

Which is easier for you? Why?

Why do you need both?

### EXPRESS

“Our acts of service give credibility to the gospel message, while the message clarifies the purpose for our acts of service.”

How can you dialogue about these important issues on your campus without making a political statement?

What are some practical ways you can become more informed concerning social justice on a daily basis?

How can you remind yourself to intercede specifically for these issues often during the day?

What are three creative ways you might bring a greater awareness of these issues to your campus?

### PRAY

Ask the members of your group to join hands. Explain that you are committing together to take action, no matter how small it may seem. Close with a prayer of dedication.

### BEFORE NEXT TIME



Send the audio file “Fair Trade” to your group members.

Continue to work through details of your service project. Prepare to give a report of those details to your group at your next meeting. Intentionally watch the news and e-mail your group members some thoughts of specific current event stories you saw.

## LETTING THE RUBBER MEET THE ROAD — SESSION 5

### ENGAGE

"The world will not be changed until God's people are willing to actually make some changes in their lifestyle to embrace God's heart for the poor. That means real, tangible sacrifice of those things we have mistaken for needs. It means being willing to give up time, money, energy, and comfort for the sake of others."



Watch "DayBreak: An Experiment in Truth."

How did Frecia live out the things we've been studying?

How did she discern what God was calling her to do to help the poor and needy in the world around her?

As a college student, how can you relate to her story?

Is there a specific area on your campus, in your community, or around the world you sense God moving you toward?

### ENCOUNTER

"We all have something that we can give to meet the needs of others. We can give money, time, talent, prayer, and our words of insight."

Do you agree or disagree with the statement above?

What sorts of things has God given to you so that you can give them to others?

Do you think it's easier or more difficult to find something to give as a "poor" college student?

What are some creative ways you can think of to give?

Read the following verses about Jesus' "ministry of touch" to the poor, oppressed, and needy:

"Reaching out His hand He touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be made clean'" (Matthew 8:3a).

"So He touched her hand, and the fever left her" (Matthew 8:15a).

"Just then, a woman who had suffered from bleeding for 12 years approached from behind and touched the tassel on His robe . . ." (Matthew 9:20).

"Then He touched their eyes . . . and their eyes were opened" (Matt. 9:29-30a).

"They . . . brought to Him all who were sick. They were begging Him that they might only touch the tassel on His robe. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well" (Matthew 14:35-36).

What sticks out to you in these passages? Do you resonate with any one more than the others? Why?

Why was Jesus so passionate about this particular ministry?

What is communicated through the ministry of touch?

Why do you think so many of us avoid the ministry of touch?

Can you think of a specific time in your life when the ministry of touch has been meaningful to you?

### EXPRESS

"In every city on our globe, you can get involved in ministering to the poor and needy. God wants you to start in the town that you call home, but your involvement doesn't end there."

When you think about giving to meet the needs of people around you, which is the easiest for you to give: your time, your talent, or your money?

Which is the most difficult?

Who do you think God wants you to be the ambassador to on your campus?

What can you do to not only be ready to respond when someone crosses your path but also to intentionally put yourself with the poor or needy so that you can be Christ's ambassador?

What can you as a group do together to be Christ's heart, hands, and feet to the students on your campus? How about the professors? The other professional staff?

## LETTING THE RUBBER MEET THE ROAD — SESSION 5

### PRAY

Close in prayer by asking the group to kneel where they are. Explain that their moment of kneeling will represent their willingness to sacrifice for the coming kingdom. Ask for a volunteer to verbally close in prayer.

### BEFORE NEXT TIME



Send the audio file “She Went” to the group members.

Finalize all the details of your service project. Be ready to give times, places, and other details to your group at your final meeting. Look back over the notes you made about your group after your first meeting. Spend some time reflecting on how you have seen people change, then send an encouraging e-mail to individuals with your thoughts.

## CHANGING THE WORLD IN GOD'S STRENGTH — SESSION 6

### ENGAGE

"Be certain of this—God does not give His children any assignment that He will not empower them to accomplish."

If you could do anything in the world for God, without the fear of failure, what would you do?

What does "serving God" look like as a college student?

Have you ever been tired of serving God? When? Why?

### ENCOUNTER

"Ultimately God will accomplish what He wills to accomplish. He chooses those who are available to be used by Him to accomplish His tasks and gives them power and perseverance through His Spirit to be His chosen vessels."

How did Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Isaiah, and the apostle Paul express their availability to God?

Is there room in your life for that kind of availability? If not, what needs to change?

Read these verses about the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and write down the key point of each verse.

1 Corinthians 2:14—The Spirit gives us wisdom that those who don't know Christ won't understand.

Luke 11:13—The Spirit is a sign that God loves us and that we know Him.

Luke 12:12—The Spirit will give us the right words at the right time.

John 14:26—The Spirit reinforces all of God's truth in our lives.

John 16:13—The Spirit will guide us into all truth.

Romans 15:13—The Spirit gives us overflowing hope.

Ephesians 1:13—The Spirit is a sign of our belief and a seal of God's promise of our salvation.

Ephesians 4:30—We should live every day to please the Spirit of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:6—Following the Spirit leads to transformation in our lives.

2 Timothy 1:14—He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.

Do reading these verses together change your view of the Holy Spirit? How?

What is the Holy Spirit's role in your job as an ambassador? What's your role?

What do you think is the most difficult part of serving in this way? How can a healthy confidence in the Holy Spirit help you through that?

Which of these promises offer you the most comfort as you seek to share the love of Christ in real and practical ways?

What are some practical ways you can remind yourself of the Holy Spirit's abiding presence in your life?

### EXPRESS

"God calls us to do great things in the world, but He does not do so out of need. He could feed all by Himself, but He's called us to be the conduit for the food. He could provide clothing and medicine by Himself, but He has given us the charge to take provision to those in need. In those terms, God's directive to us is not a burden; it's a blessing."

Which of Todd's three steps at the close of the session to experience God's empowerment in your life do you need to focus on now?

Which do you think is the easiest for a college student? Which is the most difficult?

What can you do to increase your availability to answering God's call on your life?

### PRAY

Ask the group to close in prayer by extending their open hands, palms up. This will symbolize the need for your group to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Ask all who are comfortable to pray for the future of the individuals in your group.

After you complete Session 6, carry out your group service project. Encourage your group members to process their experience in the interactive journal at the end of the member book. You can all do this individually or collectively, but be sure to share your thoughts and goals with each other. Commit to continuing service efforts together—even if it gets uncomfortable.