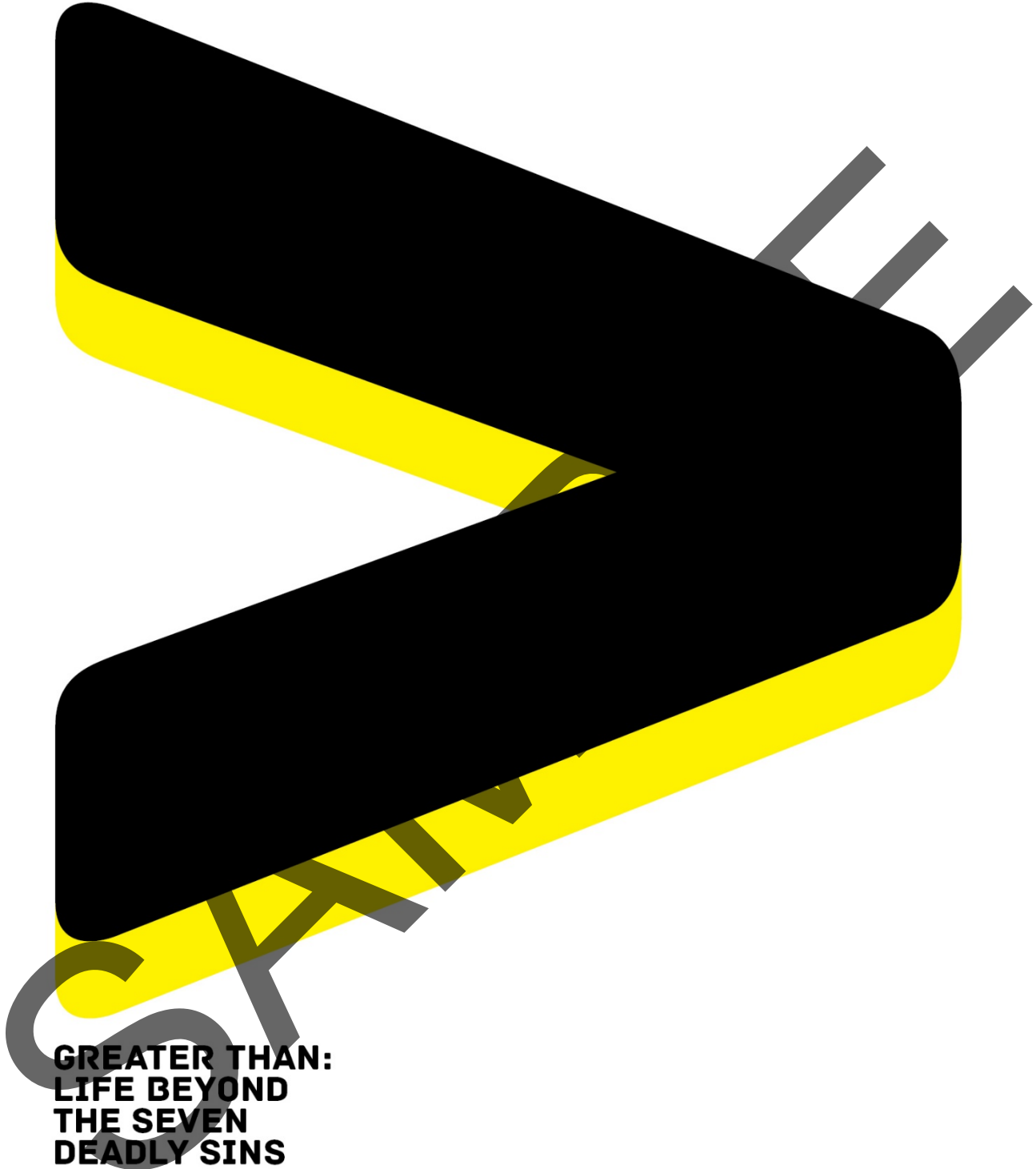


LEADERS NOTES



**GREATER THAN:
LIFE BEYOND
THE SEVEN
DEADLY SINS**

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Welcome to a new series on the Seven Deadly Sins.

This series will be a great chance for small groups to wrestle with not only our sin, but also the thoughts and feelings behind sin. However, we do not just want to think about our sinfulness and how bad we are but we want to be able to offer hope to our young people that there is **life beyond** the sin in our lives. This hope we have in Jesus, can help us live without the crippling effects of sin in our lives.

This series aims to do a few things.

1. Identify sin through the causes and consequences.
2. Offer disciplines that can help overcome sin
3. Point to how Jesus is better and gives us the perfect example of how to live without sin.
4. Use the fruit of the Spirit to help show us that we are able to overcome sin.
5. Open up a discussion about our sin in an environment that listens well, is empathic and prays for each other.

STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT

In this series, there is no structure. Each week is designed differently and offers the leader the chance to choose the direction, pace and questions based on the interest your group. One option is letting each member of your group pick a question to guide the order for that week.

But.

We need to make sure that every week we do the following.

1. Always talk about **Jesus and the Cross**
2. Always come back to the **Big Idea**
3. Always Open the **Bible** (don't just use the questions that are discussions)
4. Try to complete a question covering Head, Heart and Hands each week
 - a. Head – Knowledge about the concept
 - b. Heart – Attitude about the concept
 - c. Hands – Application to do with the concept

The first two weeks set up the term so be prepared and look over those two weeks knowing that they are quite different to the seven weeks that look at each specific sin. In addition, it will be helpful to go through the 'Two Trees' metaphor introduction in the start of the booklet.

MODELLERS NOT MESSENGERS.

As leaders of small groups, we really need to be a modeller and not a messenger when it comes to the gospel and the impact it has on our lives. We need to be modelling what it

means to open up and talk about our sin. We need to model what it means to share our struggles in a way that is both appropriate and real. Our young people can see through fakeness and don't appreciate when people are fake. If we are not honest, it can create a real gap between our young people and us, which suggests that we have everything in our lives sorted and they really need to work on things - which we know is not the truth. We need to model what we want our young people to be doing not just telling them what to do.

EMBRACE THE QUEST

Our young people are on a quest in their lives to find authenticity. They are looking at the world and looking at Jesus working out what they want to put their trust in. We need to embrace this quest with them. So what does this mean and how do we do it?

1. **Our opinions** – We often have had more time in our lives than our young people to come up with opinions and ideas about things in our lives. One thing that really isn't helpful, is telling our youth people our opinion and painting it as fact (even if it might be). If you have an opinion on something, try starting the sentence like this...

In my life, I have concluded that...

Or

Someone once told me...

In addition, finish with

What do you think about that?

Or

Do you agree or disagree with that?

For example,

In my life, I have come to the conclusion that it is better to walk away from a situation that I am getting angry in so that I don't lose it. What do you think about that?

2. **The Quest** – Each of our young people are at different stages in their understanding and relationship with Jesus. We need to be acutely aware of this and change our approach to these studies as our young people change. Here are some questions to help know if you are on track.

Is my group hard every week? Do I feel like we are getting anywhere?

Is my group one that needs lots of structure or lots of freedom to discuss and take tangents?

How did I help my young people on their quest for their identity this week?

How was I, someone who modelled Jesus this week and not just gave a message?

When we ask these questions, we should be thinking about how we need to adapt the way we do things so that we can better help young people on their quest.

3. **Wonder** – One of the most helpful things for our young people is to create and foster wonder in God's world. How can we each week, add wonder or awe to our small group time? One simple way to do this is to just add the words 'I wonder' to your questions. For example – I wonder why God made Man on the 6th day?
4. **Love the Grey** – Giving our young people a chance to discern things for themselves is really important. We should never move away from biblical truths but there is lots of different things in this world that are grey and are not black and white. This stuff often produces some of the best discussion in our small groups. Why not give them homework for the week?

For example – I want you to think about whether we are predestined or not this week and come back to chat about it next week.

5. **Hold out the Gospel** – We want our young people to choose to follow Jesus. But we also shouldn't dismiss the fact that the world offers many different ways to live and following Jesus is just one of them. We also want our young people to choose for themselves to follow Jesus because then they will own this decision. We want to hold out the gospel to them as a way to live and through our modelling, showing them that following Jesus is the best way to live.
6. **The Quest is so much more** – Being someone who makes disciples is someone who does more than just a 2 hr study on Sunday, but invests in the lives of youth. If we are to truly embrace the quest, we need to at the very least be in contact with our youth during the week and sharing our lives.

We pray that this term will be helpful for your young people as you meet together and learn more about what it means to follow Jesus. Please also give us feedback on this work so that we can continue to make it better for the future.

Week One // Life Beyond Death

Big Idea - Real life is about growing the loving character of Jesus, the sinful life is ugly and selfish. In Jesus' death and resurrection, we die to selfishness and rise to new life in Jesus' Spirit.

When have you seen something or someone trying to tell you what the good life looks like this week?

The good life is everywhere. From what we wear to what we watch, everything is trying to convince us that the good life can be found in the things of this world. Try to get specific answers from your group.

Name a tv show that sells us the good life?

Think about a show that sells a product or a way of living (MasterChef, House Rules, Gossip Girl etc...) These often construct a view of the world that promotes a life living for yourself that will satisfy and bring contentment. Maybe show a trailer for one?

Read Galatians 2:20. What does this passage say about the good life?

What does it mean for the Spirit of Jesus to be living in me? Should we be conforming to what Apple tells us? Should we be chasing the good life through Snap chat or social media? Of course not. If we trust in Jesus and follow him, then this life is not ours but we belong to Jesus. This is what it means to have life beyond death. To live knowing that the death and resurrection of Jesus has given us life!

Think about someone who think is living the good life in Jesus. What is it about them that made you choose them?

Think about someone who you look up to as someone who follows Jesus. Work out what they do that makes them someone you look up to.

How do you know what the good life is?

This good life is a life that brings contentment and satisfaction. The problem is that we try to find the answer in things that are not Jesus. Things that always break or let us down (including ourselves). Scott Sauls says 'Don't put your trust in things that work, put you trust in things that last'.

Jesus is greater than the good life because...

He has brought us eternal life through his death. This life is short and often hard. We will never find the good life. This is the lie that the world has sold us. The good life (in worldly terms) is completely unattainable. Only life through Jesus can bring us contentment.

Which passage in the bible best describes what God has done to secure life for us?

Have a think about this with your group. Try to get them to come up with an answer here. Here are some to help (John 3:16 or Romans 8:28)

If I was to rate my life out of ten. What would it be? What can I do to help this rating?

Be honest, open and talk not only about the rating, but also about how through Jesus, we can have the good life. Use the tree metaphor here to help explain.

Pray.

SAMPLE