**The Message of the Cross – Leader’s Notes**

**HOOK**

**1. What brand are you most loyal to?**

**2. Who’s a wise person in your life that you look to for insight?**

**3. What day did you pray the most this week? What were you praying for?**

**BOOK/LOOK**

**4. Read 1 Cor. 1:18-25**

**How can the same Gospel message look like foolishness to some people but to believers be the power of God?** (Believers who have experienced the transforming power of God’s grace know something that can’t be easily understood from an outside perspective.)

**5. What would make the biggest impact on the unbelievers you have the most relationship with: miracles, or a careful and reasoned explanation of the truth of the Gospel?**

**6. What was Paul’s main message as a missionary evangelist?** (1:23 Christ crucified.) **Is that overly simplistic, or a shortened way of saying something more? How are we tempted to complicate things when we share the Gospel with others?**

**7. How did the cross go from being a symbol of horror to a symbol of grace?** (Good Friday for us wasn’t a good Friday for Jesus. But His sacrifice brought us eternal life.) **What’s the main message of the cross?** (The cross points to the centrality of Jesus. The cross is really a reference to the One who isn’t on the cross. The cross came to represent the whole message of the Gospel. Jesus’ death and resurrection can both be represented by a cross. The cross also represents the presence of Christ. Salvation in Christianity is found in a person – the sinless Son of God.)

**8. What are the three tenses of salvation (past, present and future?)**

* We’ve been saved from the penalty of sin. The work of Christ on the cross was completed once for and for all in the past.
* We are being saved from the power of sin. His work continues to work itself out in our lives, making us holy.
* We’ll one day be saved from the presence of sin. The fullness of Christ’s work on the cross is yet to come when Christ returns and vanquishes the last enemy, death.

**9. Read 1 Cor. 1:26-31.**

**What social position were you in when you were called into the Christian faith? Does growing older and smarter make us more open to the Gospel or less open?**

**10. What does it mean that Christ is our wisdom, our righteousness, our holiness and our redemption?** (Righteousness has to do with our standing before God. We’re justified: God declares us righteous in Jesus Christ. We’re also sanctified, set apart to belong to God. We’re made holy to serve God. Redemption emphasizes the fact that we’re set free because Jesus Christ paid the price for us on the cross.)

**11. Read 1 Cor. 2:1-10**

 **a) What does the Cross tell us about God?**

(God doesn’t work like we do. God suffers with us. God knows our pain. God is full of grace and mercy. God loves us – Romans 5:8. The cross gives us hope that life won’t forever consist of suffering.)

 **b) What does the Cross tell us about ourselves?**

(We’re sinners. We deserved to die, but God loves us so much that He sent the sinless Son of God to die in our place. We’re valuable! We’re important! We’re loved!)

**TOOK**

**12. Is the primary message of the Cross spiritual (i.e. forgiveness of sins), or is there power in the Cross for physical healing? (Read Matthew 8:16,17)**

**13. How does the Cross help us become more holy?** (The cross confronts our pride, and reminds us of how sin separates us from God.)

**14. Who in your life network needs to be transformed by the power of the Cross? (**Pray for them by name and see what the power of the Cross will do in their lives)

**15. Read or sing the words of the hymn: The Old Rugged Cross. What’s the attraction of the Cross to the author of this song?**

The Old Rugged Cross (song) Words and music by George Bennard

1. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross
the emblem of suffering and shame
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
for a world of lost sinners was slain

CHORUS
So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged cross and exchange it someday for a crown

2. Oh that old rugged cross so despised by the world
has a wondrous attraction for me
for the dear lamb of God left His glory above
to bear it to dark Calvary

3. To the old rugged cross I will ever be true
its shame and reproach gladly bear
then He’ll call me someday to my home far away
where His glory forever I’ll share