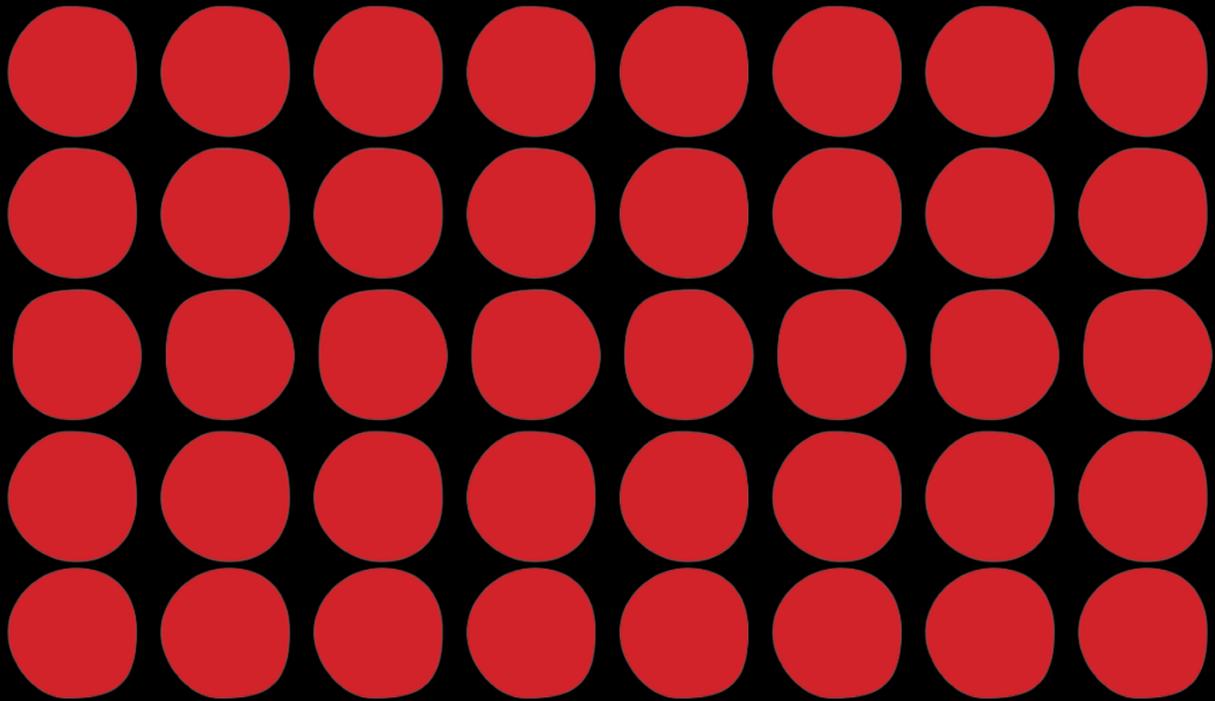


RED LETTER

CHALLENGE



A 40-DAY LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

ZACH ZEHNDER

WEEKLY SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEENS

INTRODUCTION

How has Jesus changed for you from your elementary years to now as you are growing into a teen? Is Jesus more clear or more confusing? What questions are you hoping to get answers for after 40 days of looking at what Jesus said?

We are about to embark on a 40-day *Life-changing Experience* called *Red Letter Challenge*. Before we begin our journey, take some time to go over the Group Promise together by reading it aloud. Make sure everyone understands the commitment.

GROUP PROMISE

I commit to these basic *Red Letter Challenge* Group Promises. This is my “ALL IN” pledge to live out Jesus’ words, both in my own life and in helping my Group do so.

- ➔ I will be on time and show up with my whole heart.
- ➔ Especially due to the nature of the content in *Red Letter Challenge*, I understand that this Group is 100% confidential. Whatever is shared in the Group stays in the Group.
- ➔ I will respect other Group members by participating openly and speaking honestly, without dominating the discussions.
- ➔ I will not try to fix people, preach a sermon, or give unsolicited advice.
- ➔ When I share in the Group I will share primarily about myself and not about others.
- ➔ I will trust God to work in all of us as we explore the words of Jesus together!

As we embark on this 40-Day Challenge, what is the most challenging thing you’ve ever been through or done in your life?

Which of these statements more describes you:

_____ Yes! I like being challenged. Bring it on! _____ No, yikes! This challenge is intimidating.

WATCH RED LETTER CHALLENGE SMALL GROUP VIDEO WEEK 1 - INTRODUCTION

DISCUSSION

Describe what hitting the mark would look like. Is it getting good grades? Getting a PR in your sport? A video you made going viral? Dating that special person? Making your parents proud? Is your idea of hitting the mark the same as God’s idea of hitting the mark? Why or why not?



DISCUSSION (CONT.)

Read the story of The Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37

Both the priest and the Levite were trained the right way theologically, but they missed the mark. When there was someone actually in need, they did the opposite of what God wanted them to do. Part of the problem in the Christian faith is that we don't know what targets to shoot for and what it truly means to follow Jesus.

The Red Letter Challenge has identified five targets to shoot for:

- 1** Being: Growing in your relationship with God by spending time with God through spiritual habits.
- 2** Forgiving: Receiving God's forgiveness and giving away forgiveness to others.
- 3** Serving: Using your unique gifts and talents to serve others in this world.
- 4** Giving: Using the resources God gives you to be generous to others, especially those in need.
- 5** Going: Sharing the Good News of Jesus with others in this world, particularly those who have no faith in Jesus.

Take a look at the five targets we'll be shooting for over the next five weeks together. Thinking about your life right now, which one of these five will be the easiest for you? Which of the five weeks do you expect will stretch you the most or be most difficult for you?

CLOSING THOUGHT + PRAYER

Read the following quote together out loud: "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." (Leo Tolstoy) #REDLETTERCHALLENGE   

Adolescence is a season of radical change. You are growing and changing in many ways. What is a way you have changed from two years ago? In all that change, have you grown spiritually as well? How do you know?

Spend time praying for your group as you embark on the 40-Day Challenge together. Ask God for encouragement, strength, and perseverance to live out the words of Jesus.

**For a deeper study and daily challenges to go alongside of the weekly small group experience, purchase Red Letter Challenge: A 40-Day Life-Changing Experience at www.redletterchallenge.com and read the Introduction and Days 1-5.*



INTRODUCTION

Ice breaker: Share with the group about the most inconvenient time your cell phone died.

Take some time to discuss the previous week's readings and challenges. Be honest about whether you did all, some, or none of the challenges. Challenges are not homework; they are opportunities. Completing them is not mandatory, but optional. You can still attend small group even if you didn't do any, but we challenge you to be honest about how you are doing with the challenges.

DISCUSSION

- ➔ Celebrate a "win" that you had in Red Letter Challenge over the past week.
- ➔ Share a struggle.
- ➔ What did God reveal to you during the readings and challenges this past week?

WATCH RED LETTER CHALLENGE SMALL GROUP VIDEO WEEK 2 - BEING

Read Daniel 6:7-10

Even when facing the punishment of death, Daniel continued to practice being with God—praying three times a day and following closely after God with diet, service, and leadership—while living as an exile in a foreign land without a church building or any organized religion.

Read Daniel 1: 4-16.

Daniel's habits didn't just start when he was an older man; he began as a teenager. Daniel didn't have any idea what he would face in the future.

The habits you have now could be preparing you for a big challenge in the future. It was simple; Daniel picked something he wouldn't budge on. What's your "line in the sand?" Where do you draw the line and say, "I don't want to be a part of these things?" But, again, deciding what you are going to do *now* helps you in the moment if the temptation may come later.

Practicing spiritual habits helps keep those lines clear in your mind.



CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK

The challenge for the Week of Being focuses on several spiritual disciplines:

- 1 Bible Reading
- 2 Prayer
- 3 Worship
- 4 Solitude/Rest
- 5 Community (Celebrating God with others)

What do these disciplines look like in your life right now? Which one of these comes easiest to you? Why? Which one of these do you struggle with the most? Why is that?

Rank yourself on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is “very poor” and 10 is “excellent”) on how disciplined you are currently in your relationship with God. Then, if comfortable, share that number with the group.

CLOSING THOUGHT + PRAYER

Read the following quote out loud together as a group: “If a man wants to be used by God, he cannot spend all of his time with people.” (A.W. Tozer)

#REDLETTERCHALLENGE   

Pray for the Lord to draw each of you near to Him this week. Then, pick one way to focus on how God comes to you through that habit. Finally, pray for your group to recharge with God, celebrate, and rest in Him.

**For deeper study and daily challenges to go alongside of the weekly small group experience, read Days 6-12 of Red Letter Challenge: A 40-Day Life-changing Experience.*



INTRODUCTION

Ice breaker: The opposite of forgiveness is revenge. Have you ever thought about how you could get back at someone for a hurtful action? Ever imagined having the perfect comeback line? Why does it feel so good to do that?

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DISCUSSION

- ➔ Celebrate a "win" that you had in Red Letter Challenge over the past week.
- ➔ Share a struggle.
- ➔ What did God reveal to you during the readings and challenges this past week?

WATCH RED LETTER CHALLENGE SMALL GROUP VIDEO WEEK 3 - FORGIVING

Define forgiveness in your own words. Is it harder to forgive yourself or forgive others? Explain. Rank yourself on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is "very poor" and 10 is "excellent") on how you are at receiving and giving away forgiveness. If comfortable, share that number with the group. How is forgiveness different from excusing what people have done or just avoiding what people have done? Why would you choose not to forgive someone? Who is your unforgiveness hurting - you or the person who hurt you? Has anybody ever wronged you more than you have wronged God? Is the way God forgives us different from the way we forgive others? Explain.

CLOSING THOUGHT + PRAYER

Read the following quote out loud together as a group: "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." (Louis B. Smedes) #REDLETTERCHALLENGE   

Thank God for the forgiveness He has offered you. Then, ask him to reveal any areas of unforgiveness in your own life. Finally, as challenging as it might be, pray for someone in your life right now that you need to forgive.

**For deeper study and daily challenges to go alongside of the weekly small group experience, read Days 13-19 of Red Letter Challenge: A 40-Day Life-changing Experience.*



INTRODUCTION

Ice breaker: Dr. Gary Chapman says we all have a love language. The 5 love languages are:



What is your love language? Is this how you both receive and give love?

Take some time to discuss the previous week's readings and challenges. Be honest about whether you did all, some, or none of the challenges. Challenges are not homework; they are opportunities. Completing them is not mandatory, but optional. You can still attend small group even if you didn't do any, but we challenge you to be honest about how you are doing with the challenges.

DISCUSSION

- ➔ Celebrate a "win" that you had in Red Letter Challenge over the past week.
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WATCH RED LETTER CHALLENGE SMALL GROUP VIDEO WEEK 4 - SERVING

Zach mentioned Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. As a teen, most of your needs have been met by your parents or friends. As you grow, you will transition from depending on your parents to having more ownership of your life.



DISCUSSION (CONT.)

Fill out your list below using Maslow's chart. What level are you at? What are you missing?

- _____ Self-actualization (desire to become the most that one can be)
- _____ Esteem (respect self-esteem, status, recognition, strength)
- _____ Love and belonging (friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection)
- _____ Safety needs (personal security, employment, resource, health)
- _____ Physiological needs (air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing)

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

It's easy to get caught up in taking care of yourself. But caring for others and seeing good happen because of what you did is important to your feeling of fulfillment.

What? God's Word reveals that our purpose is to serve God by serving others. What do you have (gifts, talents, position) that you can use to help others? What are you naturally good at doing? How can God be glorified through your talents, skills, or abilities? Jesus said, "If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles" (Matthew 5:41).

Who? Who is someone you know, whether an individual or a group, living out their God-given purpose?

Spend some time as a group discussing how you can serve your community together. Set a date and make a plan for serving together as a group. Make it fun and enjoy serving!

Rank yourself on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is "very poor" and 10 is "excellent") on how you are serving God right now. Then, if comfortable, share that number with the group.

CLOSING THOUGHT + PRAYER

Read the following quote out loud together as a group: "If you could never speak another word aloud again, how would you preach the Gospel?" (Mark Crossman) #REDLETTERCHALLENGE   

Pray for God to reveal purpose in the lives of your group and fill them with a spirit of service.

**For deeper study and daily challenges to go alongside of the weekly small group experience, read Days 20-26 of Red Letter Challenge: A 40-Day Life-changing Experience.*



INTRODUCTION

Ice breaker: Talk about a time you've been stingy in your life. Be honest.

Take some time to discuss the previous week's readings and challenges. Be honest about whether you did all, some, or none of the challenges. Challenges are not homework; they are opportunities. Completing them is not mandatory, but optional. You can still attend small group even if you didn't do any, but we challenge you to be honest about how you are doing with the challenges.

DISCUSSION

- ➡ Celebrate a "win" that you had in Red Letter Challenge over the past week.
- ➡ Share a struggle.
- ➡ What did God reveal to you during the readings and challenges this past week?

WATCH RED LETTER CHALLENGE SMALL GROUP VIDEO WEEK 5 - GIVING

Zach says that after reading the words of Jesus, it's impossible to be a stingy Christian. Agree or disagree? True prosperity is not how much we have but how much we give. Agree or disagree?

Read Mark 12:41-44

What was it about the widow's offering that moved Jesus? Have you ever given sacrificially?

Read Acts 4:32-35

Is this even possible for us to live like this today? Why or why not? All your life, you have been given things. Now you are beginning to learn how to make your own money. Teenagers don't have much spending money, and the little you get, you probably spend on a car, entertainment, or fun with your friends. Even with the little you make, how can you be more generous? Why do you think it can be so hard to give away money and resources that are ultimately God's anyway? What keeps us from giving more?

Spend some time as a group discussing how you can give to a cause.

Rank yourself on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is "very poor" and 10 is "excellent") on how generous you are. Then, if comfortable, share that number with the group.



CLOSING THOUGHT + PRAYER

Read the following quote out loud together as a group: “If someone were to look through your bank statements and credit card purchases, would they be able to tell that you’re a follower of Jesus?” (Zach Zehnder) #REDLETTERCHALLENGE   

Pray for God to give everyone in your group a spirit of generosity, and ask Him to lead you as you start to give sacrificially.

**For deeper study and daily challenges to go alongside of the weekly small group experience, read Days 27-33 of Red Letter Challenge: A 40-Day Life-changing Experience.*



INTRODUCTION

Ice breaker: Talk about the best and worst television commercials you've ever seen.

Take some time to discuss the previous week's readings and challenges. Be honest about whether you did all, some, or none of the challenges. Challenges are not homework; they are opportunities. Completing them is not mandatory, but optional. You can still attend small group even if you didn't do any, but we challenge you to be honest about how you are doing with the challenges.

DISCUSSION

- ➡ Celebrate a "win" that you had in Red Letter Challenge over the past week.
- ➡ Share a struggle.
- ➡ What did God reveal to you during the readings and challenges this past week?

WATCH RED LETTER CHALLENGE SMALL GROUP VIDEO WEEK 6 - GOING

Pastor Zach talks about your testimony and that it can change lives.

Read each of the following Scriptures: Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 20:21, Acts 1:8, Mark 16:15, John 20:21 What do they have in common?

Zach mentioned in the video that sometimes, what keeps people from talking about Jesus is the feeling that they need to know everything first. However, what's most important is the difference Jesus has made in your life. Answer these two questions with your group:

- 1 What has God done for you?
- 2 What difference has God made in your life? (If you have already completed Day 36 of RLC, you can refer back to what you wrote there)

Rank yourself on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is "very poor" and 10 is "excellent") on how you are currently going and sharing God with others. Then, if comfortable, share that number with the group.

No matter where you rank, God came to you and gave you his best, a 10, when you were at 0. Anything that you share now first comes because He first gave to you.



CLOSING THOUGHT + PRAYER

Read the following quote out loud together as a group: “You are God’s Plan, and there is no Plan B!” (Chris Hodges) #REDLETTERCHALLENGE   

Pray that God would give you a spirit of boldness for sharing your testimony, and pray for people in your life that don’t know Christ yet.

**For deeper study and daily challenges to go alongside of the weekly small group experience, read Days 27-33 of Red Letter Challenge: A 40-Day Life-changing Experience.*



INTRODUCTION

Ice breaker: Celebrate with your group this week. Throw a party, go out to eat together, or plan a fun outing. Praise God collectively for what He's done in your group over the past 40 days!

Take some time to discuss the previous week's readings and challenges. Be honest about whether you did all, some, or none of the challenges. Challenges are not homework; they are opportunities. Completing them is not mandatory, but optional. You can still attend small group even if you didn't do any, but we challenge you to be honest about how you are doing with the challenges.

DISCUSSION

- ➔ Celebrate a "win" that you had in Red Letter Challenge over the past week.
- ➔ Share a struggle.
- ➔ What did God reveal to you during the readings and challenges this past week?

WATCH RED LETTER CHALLENGE SMALL GROUP VIDEO WEEK 7 - CONCLUSION

Looking back over the past 40 days, how is your heart still wrestling with applying the words of Jesus?

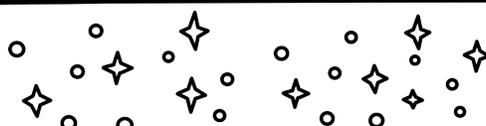
- 1 In which ways do you think you've grown the most?
- 2 As you move forward, how can you be intentional about continuing to live out the words of Jesus?

CLOSING THOUGHT + PRAYER

End your group time with this blessing from Pastor Zach:

May you pursue Jesus with all your heart, may God use you to do mighty things for His Kingdom, and after all is said and done in this world, may you hear God say to you, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." #REDLETTERCHALLENGE   

**For more 40-day challenges, check out www.redletterchallenge.com/join to find more resources and info for how to launch another 40-day experience with your small group or with your entire church!*



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