



# The Story of EVERYTHING

## Big Idea Discussion Guide / Session 2 - Sin

### Big Idea

Sin is what went wrong with the Story Of Everything. Sin is all about wrecking relationships. God is at work to save the world He made from sin, to restore our relationships, and to bring us back to Him.

### Ice Breaker

When you think of a villain, what comes to mind? What are the attributes of a good villain?

### Introduction

All great stories have certain components that make them truly memorable. People enjoy a compelling cast of characters, an appealing setting, and an exciting plotline. When the inevitable conflict arises, people need for the conflict to be resolved in a convincing way in order for the story to feel complete.

*The Story of Everything* starts with God living in perfect community with humankind. All is good. Then something goes wrong. A conflict arises—sin has entered the scene.

1. What are some euphemisms people use today for sin (e.g. “white lies”)? Why do you think people use them? Do you ever hear the word “sin” used outside of the church?

Many of us think of sin in terms of broken rules and bad behavior. Some rules and behaviors are seen as being more important than others. We feel there is a line that must not be crossed or consequences will be felt.

Tim Keller in *The Reason for God* describes sin this way: *“According to the Bible, the primary way to define sin is not just the doing of bad things, but the making of good things into ultimate things. It is seeking to establish a sense of self by making something else more central to your significance, purpose and happiness than your relationship with God.”*

### Sin is Relational

Sin in the Bible is not just breaking rules, but instead is described as fracturing a relationship—the relationship

between God and people (Genesis 3:10,23,24), the relationship between creation and people (Genesis 3:17-19), and the relationships of one person to another (Genesis 3:12,16). Peace is broken and harmony disappears when sin arrives. Death arrives for the first time into God’s good creation.

### Sin is what went wrong with the world

We are born knowing that there is “something wrong.” Physics teaches that entropy leads to chaos. Politics tells us that the wrong government structure brings disorder. Psychopathology explains evil in terms of poor parenting, faulty genes, or damaged self-esteem. All of these are reasonable theories, but we believe that ultimately sin is the issue.

When human beings sin, they don’t just break their relationship with God. Romans 8:21 speaks of creation being in bondage to decay. What is wrong at an atomic, molecular level in our universe can be attributed to what went wrong in the garden when sin and death entered the world. (Described in Genesis 3.)

### Sin is Directional

Sin leads us away from God and each other, and towards destruction. We attempt to carry out our existence in the absence of God’s influence in our life. Simone Weil wrote, *“All sins are attempts to fill voids. Because we cannot stand the God-shaped hole inside of us, we try stuffing it full of all sorts of things, but only God may fill it.”*

2. How have you seen the effects and/or consequences of sin in your own life or in your family history?

### Repentance is Directional

Repentance is the word we use for turning around the direction our life is headed in. When we repent, we are turning our back on sin and renewing our relationship with God, each other, and the world. The noun used for repentance in the Old Testament refers to the idea of going back to where we started. In the New Testament, it communicates the idea of doing a 180 degree turn.

3. What thoughts/ideas/images first come to mind when you hear the word "repent?"
4. Share a time in your life when you remember making a conscious decision to turn away from something you knew was wrong and you choosing a different way instead.

When we understand sin in this way, we are given new responsibilities. There are many decisions we have to make that are not necessarily "right" or "wrong." When our primary focus is on loving God and loving people, our decisions become based on how our relationships will be changed by our choices.

As Christ-followers, we are called to be obedient to God's word. However, the obedience talked about in the Bible implies a relationship based on love and respect, rather than on reward and punishment.

As a church, our mission is to bring people back to where they started, to restore the original, perfect relationship between God and humankind. We like to call it, "helping people find their way back to God."

### Repentance Requires a Savior

Those familiar with the 12-Step Program know that its purpose is to heal an addict's broken relationships with God and with others. Step one is about admitting that an insurmountable problem exists that will only end upon death, unless something happens to break the cycle. Step two declares that we can't solve the problem, in fact are powerless to fix the problem, and need God's help. The third step then, is to turn our will and life over to God...

Similarly, we need someone to reach in and save us from the consequences of our sins. Jesus is the one we believe can save us. All of our own effort will never be enough to save us and correct our behavior. That is why we trust Jesus for salvation from sin.

*"I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question? The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ **can** and **does**. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and*

*mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different."* - Romans 7:24-25, The Message

*"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8, NIV*

*"But if we confess our sins to God, he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away." - 1 John 1:9, CEV*

5. Few of us find "guilt" or "fear of punishment" to be very good motivators for anything. What could be a different motivator for us to stop making choices that lead to sin?

### Conclusion

We need to understand that repentance is not about just getting our act together. It is not about just trying harder to turn over a new leaf. It is also not about beating ourselves up to score points with God. Real repentance is a complete reorientation of life where God once again becomes our center as the One we serve and love, as we serve and love each other. But **this is not something we accomplish**; this is something that happens when we give ourselves to Jesus. It is Jesus whose Spirit then works in us to bring us back to God. That is the ongoing story of everything.

### What's Next

Hopefully our understanding of sin is changing from being just about broken rules to ultimately being about broken relationships. This week, think about what a difference a new understanding of sin could mean to you. Is there something in your life right now that God is calling you to confess and seek forgiveness for? If so, start by confessing it to God (today!) and thanking Him for His forgiveness (see 1 John 1:9 above). Then, if the sin led to a damaged or broken relationship, confess to the person who was hurt. Repenting from our sin involves a turning away from that which contributes to the breaking of relationships. When we reorient our life around restoring relationships and community, we begin live consistently within the story of everything where God is restoring His dream for the world.

### Questions

1. Euphemism: a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing. I.e.: downsizing for "cuts"
2. Effects of sin and consequences of sin can make for a good discussion. Sometimes sin happens to us and sometimes sin happens through us.
3. Repent can sometimes evoke strong negative emotions. What are some other ways you can talk about repentance without triggering these emotions?
4. This might be a good question to have your apprentice or host be prepared to talk about ahead of time. Give them the heads-up and have them write down some thoughts. It's a great way to get them thinking ahead of time about the group.
5. Ultimately, undeserved grace is the greatest motivator for living in a different direction. Proponents of 12-step program might suggest that people need to be aware of their problem before the Grace-filled power of God can become appealing. Being aware of the problems in our life that we are powerless to overcome can definitely lead us to want and need grace. Take some time to wrestle through this tension; being aware of that which we are powerless to overcome can quickly turn into guilt and fear of punishment.

"He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." - Romans 4:25

"For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." -Romans 6:6

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."  
- Luke 19:10

"I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne." - Matthew 19:28

"All sins are attempts to fill voids. Because we cannot stand the God-shaped hole inside of us, we try stuffing it full of all sorts of things, but only God may fill it."  
-Simone Weil

"Sin is not hurtful because it is forbidden. It is forbidden because it is hurtful." - Benjamin Franklin

### What's Next

Here are some great sin scriptures and a couple of quotes for your reflection as you prepare to lead:

"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God..."  
-Romans 3:23

"For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out." - Romans 7:18

"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" - Romans 7:24-25

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." -Romans 5:8

### Community Christian Church

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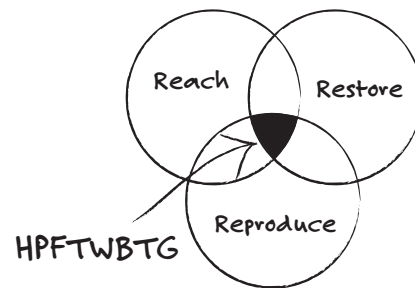
# Small Group Mission

Helping People Find Their Way Back to God



## Missional Practices: B.L.E.S.S.

- B - Begin with prayer:** We will pray for the people or place to which we are sent.
- L - Listen:** We will listen to the people or place to which we are sent.
- E - Eat:** We will share meals with those to whom we are sent.
- S - Serve:** We will respond to the needs we discover among those to whom we are sent.
- S - Story:** We will share the story of Jesus and what he is doing in our lives with those to whom we are sent.



## Type of Small Group On Mission

- One Mission:** The entire small group commits to going after the same mission. This can be a new idea originating from the group, or it can involve plugging into an existing ministry or program in the community.

The place or people our group has been sent to is:

- Multiple Missions:** Each member of the group has a specific mission they are following God in. The group provides a place to celebrate individual stories, wrestle through questions and challenges and provide support and encouragement.

The place or people our group members have been sent to is:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_

### Group Dynamics

- Confidentiality:** Everything shared in group stays in the group.
- Participation:** Everyone participates in our discussions and our mission.
- Empty Chair:** We always keep an "empty chair" as a sign of our openness to new people joining us.

### Group Leadership

Coach \_\_\_\_\_

Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Apprentice Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Host \_\_\_\_\_