

2023 Men's Retreat

Love and Brotherhood in 1st John

****Session 1: Understanding the Foundation of Love****

Objective: To establish a foundational understanding of love as a central theme in 1 John and how it relates to our relationships as brothers in Christ.

1. ****Welcome and Opening Prayer**** (10 minutes)
 - Begin with a warm welcome and an opening prayer to invite God's presence.
2. ****Introduction to 1 John and Chapter 2**** (15 minutes)
 - Provide an overview of the book of 1 John and its central themes.
 - [Video Link: Books of 1-3 John Summary](#)
 - Reflect on what was surprising about the book and what was meaningful.
3. ****Exploring the Concept of Brotherly Love**** (30 minutes)
 - Read 1 John 2:7-11 together.
 - What does it mean to "walk in the light" as mentioned in verse 9? How can we practically apply this concept in our daily lives as men and as Christians?
 - Verse 11 talks about the importance of loving our brothers and sisters. How can we foster a genuine sense of brotherly love and unity within our group and in our broader community? What are some practical ways to overcome divisions and conflicts among us?
 - In verse 10, John discusses the idea of "abiding in the light" and not stumbling. What are some common stumbling blocks or temptations that men face in their faith journeys? How can we support one another in avoiding these stumbling blocks and staying true to our Christian walk?
 - John emphasizes that those who hate their brothers and sisters are in darkness. How can we identify and address any feelings of hatred or resentment towards others within our hearts? What steps can we take to cultivate a spirit of love and forgiveness in our relationships, both within the group and outside of it?
4. ****Prayer and Closing Thoughts**** (10 minutes)
 - Conclude with a group prayer, asking for God's guidance in practicing brotherly love.
 - Provide some closing thoughts and instructions for the next session.

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****Session 2: Practicing Unconditional Love****

Objective: To delve deeper into the concept of unconditional love and how it aligns with Christian principles.

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)
2. Recap of Session 1 (15 minutes)
 - Briefly summarize the key points from the previous session.
3. Unpacking Unconditional Love (30 minutes)
 - Read 1 John 2:12-17
 - Facilitate a discussion based on the questions posed in the outline.
4. Scripture Sharing and Reflection on Pallet Wood (30 minutes)
 - Distribute pieces of pallet wood to each participant along with markers or paint for writing.
 - Instruct participants to choose a scripture that holds personal significance for them, write it on the pallet wood, and briefly share why this scripture is important or meaningful to them.
 - As each participant shares, encourage open and heartfelt discussions.
5. Small Group Sharing (20 minutes)
 - Reconvene in small groups to discuss the scriptures and stories shared on the pallet wood.
 - Encourage participants to reflect on how these scriptures relate to the concept of unconditional love and their own faith journey.
 - Discuss any challenges they may face in practicing unconditional love in light of the scriptures shared.
6. Personal Reflection and Journaling (10 minutes)
 - Provide participants with a few minutes for personal reflection and journaling on the scripture sharing activity.
 - Encourage them to think about how the scriptures shared by their fellow participants resonate with their own understanding of unconditional love.
7. Prayer and Closing Thoughts (10 minutes)
 - End the session with a prayer that incorporates the scriptures shared on the pallet wood and asks for guidance in loving unconditionally.
 - Emphasize the power of coming together as men, sharing scriptures and stories, and seeking God's wisdom in their faith journey.
 - Provide instructions for the final session.

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****Session 3: Living Out Love in Brotherhood****

Objective: To empower participants to live out the principles of love and brotherhood in our daily lives.

1. ****Welcome and Opening Prayer**** (10 minutes)
2. ****Recap of Sessions 1 and 2**** (15 minutes)
 - Summarize the key lessons from the previous sessions.
3. ****Practical Steps for Loving as Brothers**** (30 minutes)
 - Read 1 John 2:18-29.
 - Understanding the Context: Before diving into the steps for loving as brothers, let's explore the context of 1 John 2:18-29. What do you think John was addressing in this passage, and why is it relevant to us today as men striving to love one another as brothers?
 - Identifying the Steps: According to this passage, what are the key steps or principles for loving one another as brothers in Christ? How can we apply these steps in our daily lives and interactions with other men in our community and church?
 - Overcoming Challenges: John mentions the presence of "antichrists" in the world. In our contemporary context, what are some modern-day challenges or obstacles that can hinder our ability to love one another as brothers? How can we overcome these challenges and stay true to the teachings of this passage?
 - Accountability and Growth: The passage emphasizes the importance of remaining in Christ. How can we, as a group of men, hold each other accountable in our journey to love as brothers? What practical strategies can we implement to encourage each other's spiritual growth and commitment to these principles?
4. ****Group Activity: Acts of Love**** (20 minutes)
 - Engage participants in a group activity where they plan and commit to performing acts of love in their community or church.
5. ****Sharing and Commitment**** (20 minutes)
 - Allow participants to share their action plans and commitments for loving as brothers.
 - Encourage accountability within the group.
6. ****Closing Remarks and Prayer**** (10 minutes)
 - Offer final thoughts and express gratitude for the time spent together.
 - Conclude with a closing prayer for God's guidance and strength.
 - Share communion together.