

Love Them To Life

Facilitator's Guide

Congratulations on taking the step to become a Love Them To Life support group facilitator. In this busy world, you have agreed to let God use you in the lives of women who are experiencing emotional pain and trauma beyond what they ever imagined. Love Them To Life (LTTL) is designed to be a Christ-centered, grace-full support group with the following goals:

1. To provide a safe place for moms to share their pain.
2. To encourage healthy boundaries in family relationships.
3. To provide a place where it is safe to ask questions of other moms who have gone through or are currently going through similar experiences.
4. To teach that ultimately the answer to all of life's problems is a deep love relationship with Jesus Christ and to promote a personal walk with Him.
5. To help moms know that they are not alone in this journey and that each one is accepted unconditionally by the group.

A Group Based on Grace

For a group to be based on grace, we need to understand what grace actually is. We hear the word used repeatedly, but what does grace mean and how does it affect me? "God forgives humans of their sin and offers unmerited kindness and love to those who acknowledge their need for God" (McMinn, Ruiz, Marx, Wright, & Gilbert, 2006). Moms who have experienced the pain and shame of a child in addiction need to understand the grace that has been given to them so that they in turn can extend it to others. Until we understand our own brokenness, we can not fully share grace with others in their brokenness. How do we as group leaders communicate grace? By expressing caring, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, and acceptance to those in the group, we send out the sweet aroma of grace.

Safety

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:18 - 19 NKJV).

For a support group to function and be effective, there must be an atmosphere of safety for the members. Safety is rooted in grace, as each facilitator models and maintains an atmosphere of love and acceptance. A very important part of safety is to implement strong boundaries for the group. These boundaries need to be clearly stated often and lovingly enforced at all times. It is important that each group member agrees to abide by the boundaries.

Group Boundaries - Love Them To Life

1. Confidentiality - the identity and story of group members needs to stay within the group. No details should be shared with anyone outside the group.
2. There should not be any criticism or judgement of anyone during the group meeting. Matthew 7:1-5 talks about noticing the speck in someone else's eye and not noticing the log in your own. It is not our job to "fix" anyone else. That is the job of the Holy Spirit.
3. There should not be any advice giving during group.
4. Do your own work by focusing on your own situation and needs. Group meetings should not turn into judgement and critique of others and the way they are handling their problems.
5. It is okay to pass if you are not ready to share.
6. No one should dominate the group. Be sensitive to those who are not at ease in sharing and allow them time to talk.

If a group member violates a boundary, it is important that a group leader learns "blocking skills" so that the safety of the group is maintained.

1. It is ok to interrupt if a member is violating boundaries.
2. Reinforce the boundary that has been violated.
3. Redirect the discussion so that it is within the boundaries.

While it is not easy to interrupt someone, it is important to do so with grace and kindness. Ephesians 4:15: *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.*

It is so easy for a group to be disrupted by a facilitator or a member's flesh patterns and needs for affirmation and attention. It is so important that we bathe the group in prayer continually.

Having co-facilitators is advisable to maintain the continuity of the group if one leader has to miss a meeting.

Suggested Group Weekly Schedule

First 30 minutes - after opening prayer, ask the group something such as "How was your week?" This will allow group members to briefly talk about any issues that came up during the week with their child. It is okay to pass if someone does not wish to share. The facilitator will have to be very aware of time so that everyone has a chance to share. It is wise to go over the group boundaries frequently, especially if there are new members present.

Next 60 minutes - lesson time and questions. If there is a good discussion going on, the lesson can be continued the next week. This should be concluded with prayer. There may be people who need some one-on-one time after the meeting. It is important to be sensitive to those moms who are struggling and may need your support and encouragement.

You may find that it works better to do the lesson/question time first and then open the rest of the time up for sharing. There is no right or wrong regarding the order - just find what works best for your group. It is fine to switch it up on any given week also.

There are some excellent resources on groups dynamics that are recommended for you to read or watch:

1. *Getting Together, A Guide for Good Groups*. Em Griffin, InterVarsity Press, 1982.

2. LivingFree.org has demonstration training videos that can be an additional training resource for group dynamics. The videos can be viewed without charge online. While the groups demonstrated on the videos differ from an LTTL group, the principles can be implemented in any group. These eight videos can be found at [Living Free.org](http://LivingFree.org). Go to the “About Small Group Facilitator Training” and then to the “Concepts Found in the Eight Sessions.” Each section has a free video that includes helpful principles.

Questions

Chapter 1 - Anatomy of Addiction

1. Answers will vary.
2. When anything takes the place of God in our attention, it becomes an idol. Our own addictions can interfere with our relationship with God. Our children's addictions can consume us to the point of being an addiction, especially as we try to control them and "make" them get well.
3. Answers will vary.

Chapter 2 - Pathway of Addiction

1. God never changes. He loves us unconditionally and offers us His strength as we walk through our pain. Our circumstances change constantly and feel out of control - if we look to our kids for our identity, we will be destroyed. Only God can sustain us, no matter what.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Assisting them to brokenness means we take away our support of their lifestyle and addiction by not feeding, housing, or giving them money for anything. What that looks like exactly will vary depending on each person's situation.

Chapter 3 - King Baby

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary.
3. This depends on the situation. Some possibilities would be:
 - don't pay their fines
 - don't bail them out when they get arrested
 - don't pay for a private attorney
 - in general, let them feel the consequences of their choices

Chapter 4 - Codependency

Questions:

1. To nurture means the process of caring for and encouraging growth or development of someone. Codependency is based on need and control. Nurturing encourages healthy development of a person (your child), leading to mature functioning of that person. A person who is codependent needs to be needed, so he/she does not encourage growth and development of the dependent person. Nurturing is a healthy relationship. Codependency is a very unhealthy relationship.
2. 3 ingredients:
 - you have to care deeply about the person
 - you don't understand addiction and chemical dependency
 - you feel a sense of shame and inadequacy about yourself.
3. Shame = a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior. A painful emotion caused by a strong sense of guilt, embarrassment, unworthiness, or disgrace.

Shame could contribute to codependency due to lack of self worth. We seek our worth through others' accomplishments, as we don't feel we have any worth of our own. We also may have made choices that have caused pain to our children, so we try to compensate for that by "helping" them, even when that "help" is actually harming them.

4. A people-pleaser feels as if they are less than others around them and that they have to do whatever it takes to make others happy so that they can feel good about themselves. They allow others to treat them like doormats and say yes to things when they really want to say no. People-pleasing goes along with codependency in that the codependent person doesn't want conflict with the addict and wants to fix everything so that everyone is happy. Unfortunately, this enables the addict to continue their downward spiral and keeps the addict from reaching the point of brokenness.

5. Galatians 1:10 says, *For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

6. Answers will vary on this question

Chapter 5 - Enabling

1. Enabling and codependency can go hand in hand. Enabling takes place when we want to make someone happy at all costs. That desire to please and to avoid conflict is a major part of codependency.

2. Answers will vary. I would consider letting an addict live with you enabling if they are active in their addiction. Other things could be giving them money, loaning them your car, paying fines, making excuses for them, lying to cover what they have done, etc.

3. Answers will vary.

4. Isaiah 43:1-2 says, *But now thus says The Lord, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.* The courage and peace to stop enabling comes from knowing who I am in relationship to God. When I know that God loves me passionately, no matter what, and that I matter to Him, I can find the courage to make the hard choices, even if it makes me unpopular with my child.

Chapter 6 - Denial

1. - Minimization = to represent at the lowest level, amount, value, or importance. When you are in denial, it is easy to minimize the level of the problem.

- Rationalization= a defense mechanism by which your true motivation is concealed by explaining your actions and feelings in a way that is not threatening.

When we explain away our suspicions or evidence of our child's addiction because we don't want to face the issue, we are rationalizing.

- Justification - the act of defending or explaining or making excuses by reasoning. We can sound very logical and may even convince ourselves that what we see is not happening. By doing this we are harming our child and ourselves.

2. We don't deal with what we won't face. This allows enabling to take place because we refuse to face the facts.

3. Answers will vary.

Chapter 7 - Patterns of Addictive Behavior

1. Answers will vary.
2. It is important to confront your child with the objects. It is an opportunity to talk with them about what is going on and to urge them to get help.
3. Answers will vary. It is important to emphasize the concept of "speaking the truth in love," calmly and firmly confronting them. It is also important to set healthy boundaries and consequences.
4. Ephesians 4:15: *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.* The key points are that we tell the truth but that we say things in such a way that we show God's love for our child.
5. If someone will not get help, you can not force them to do so. If you try, you will cause more stress to yourself and to the rest of the family. It is important that you not allow someone who is actively in their addiction to stay in your home. When someone is in denial and won't face their addiction, they need to "hit bottom" before they will seek help.

Chapter 8 - Stealing

1. Answers will vary.
2. There is no hard and fast rule on this, but the theft of anything of value should be reported unless he/she is repentant and makes a concrete plan for restitution.
3. Answers will vary.
4. When our life is hidden in Christ (Colossians 3:3), we can face the heartache, loss, betrayal, and grief by knowing that we belong to Him and that He will never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:8). Isaiah 53:4a says, *Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*. Finding our joy and peace in God helps us face life in this difficult world, no matter what happens.

Chapter 9 - Legal Issues

- 1 - 4. These answers will vary depending on each mom's situation.
5. It is very important for you and your spouse to present a united front to your child. If there are areas which are difficult for you to agree on, it is wise to seek godly counsel. Protecting your marriage should be a major priority.

Chapter 10 - Relationships

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary.
3. It is important to make sure your other kids know how important they are to God and to you. Encourage them to do healthy things, such as church youth group, sports or other activities, and to develop their relationship with God. Pray with them for their addicted sibling and talk openly about addiction and the consequences that their sibling may face.
4. Following the biblical principles of love and respect is vital to a good marriage. Some suggestions would be: work together and not against each other in dealing with your child. If one of you feels that the other is enabling, listen and discuss the issue with each other. Find time to do things together as a couple to build your marriage and not have the focus totally on your child. Put your husband first in the home and encourage him.

Chapter 11 - Worry

1. It is difficult not to worry about physical harm from the drugs/alcohol, as well as rape and diseases such as AIDS and hepatitis.
2. Worry can affect us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. When we are consumed with worry, it is difficult to put any energy into our other children, spouse, and work.
3. Answers will vary.

Chapter 12 - Guilt and Remorse

1. When we feel guilty about choices we have made, it is easy to think that we have to "make up" for the pain we have caused our kids. This can lead to enabling their behavior because we feel sympathy for their pain.

2. We are only responsible for our own choices, not the choices our kids make. They are responsible for their own choices and must bear the consequences for them.

3. The most important relationship in our life is our relationship with God. Jesus died because He loved us. We can live our lives free of guilt. He took the penalty for our sin so that we no longer have to be identified by it. We are free in Christ. However, we have to accept that gift. When we do, we no longer have to live in guilt and remorse.

a. See appendix.

b. A healthy apology is one in which we are honest in acknowledging our wrongdoing and we ask for the person to forgive us. Whether they forgive us or not, we have done our part.

4. Romans 8: 1-2: *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.* When Christ is our very life, we are no longer under condemnation because He has freed us. We have a new past in that we are no longer identified by our past. We have peace with God for today, and we have hope for the future. We do not need to live in bondage to guilt and remorse because Jesus paid for it all with His life.

Chapter 13 - Fear

1. Matthew 11:28-30 says, *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.* If we trust God, then we can have the assurance that He will be with us, no matter what we face in this life. It does not mean that everything will be perfect. It does mean that we do not face it alone. Nothing touches us that is not filtered through the love of God. Just as the diamond cutter has to use a chisel to knock off the rough edges of the diamond in order to produce a thing of beauty, God allows tough, painful situations and great loss to mould us into His diamond. Does He do it to hurt us? No, He does it to draw us to Him so that we find our peace and security in His arms of love.

2. The pictures are:

- shelter of the Most High
- shadow of the Almighty
- my refuge and my fortress
- He will cover you with his pinions (feathers)
- under His wings you will find refuge

There are many more in the Psalm - it would be good to have the moms find and list them.

3. Answers will vary.

4. Reading the Psalms is a wonderful way to combat fear. Having an understanding of the character of God and His love for us is the best way to not allow the enemy to destroy us with fear.

Chapter 14 Disappointment

1. Answers will vary.

2. Answers will vary.

3. - James 1:2-3 says, "*Count it all joy, my (sisters), when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*"

Joy comes from knowing that God is working in me and should not be based on circumstances.

- "*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*" Romans 15:13. If our hope is based on people, we will be disappointed time after time. God never changes, so our hope in Him is based on His unchanging love and faithfulness to us. If He is the center of our life, we will still have pain and suffering in this life but those things do not destroy us.

4. It may be good to introduce this question by asking people how they would describe themselves to someone who doesn't know them. Often we describe ourselves based on what we do and not who we are. If our position in life is our identity, we can easily be crushed by changes in our circumstances or choices our family members make. Our primary identity needs to be as a child of God, a princess in the Kingdom of Heaven, daughter of The Most High. That identity never changes.

Chapter 15 - Brokenness

1. They don't know how to act when they are clean and sober. There is nothing to dull the pain and frustration they feel, as they have not developed their trust in God and the faith to work through things in a godly way. They have to face possible legal issues and start living responsibly, which seems very scary.

2. Don't bail them out, don't feed them or house them, don't pay their fines. We interfere when we don't allow them to face the mess they have made.

3. God loves our children more than we ever could. He created them and then sacrificed His Son so that they would have the opportunity to live forever with Him. He is willing to save them when they call out to Him. We can trust Him, no matter what.

Chapter 16 - Forgiveness

1. Answers will vary.

2. Forgiveness frees us from a prison of bitterness. When we truly forgive, we are able to love that person as Christ loved us.

3. Forgiveness is not the same as enabling. Just because I forgive him/her doesn't mean that I allow destructive behavior to continue, especially in my home. The most loving thing I can do for my child is to not enable the bad choices he/she is making but to instead allow them to feel the consequences of the choices he/she has made.

4. No. If we "rescue" our child so that he/she doesn't experience consequences, he/she will have no motivation to change. I can forgive without rescuing.

5. Forgiveness is something that takes place inside of me and is not dependent on what the other person does or says. It can happen whether or not your child apologizes to you for what he/she has done. Reconciliation means that a relationship is restored. This may not happen at the same time as forgiveness, especially if the person is still active in addiction. It is impossible to be truly reconciled to someone in that condition.

6. Answers will vary.

Chapter 17 - Body Care

1. These could be things such as lack of sleep, lack of exercise, overeating or under eating, constant tension which can cause headaches and digestive disorders, high blood pressure and cardiac issues, to name a few.
2. Answers will vary. Suggestions would be eating right, exercise, taking time for fun activities, getting regular checkups, relaxation, etc.
3. Transparency allows us to be honest with trusted friends who can share our burden. It helps us to not feel alone. There is a sense of relief when someone else knows what we are going through.

Chapter 18 - Spirit Care

1. Answers will vary. Having a love relationship with Jesus changes everything. He loves and cares about every detail of your life and loves your child more than you could ever love him/her. When Christ is on the throne of our life and we allow Him to live His life through us, we can go through problems with hope. We can surrender our dreams and desires for our children to God, knowing that He is the only one who can change them.
2. 2 Corinthians 5: 14-15, 21: *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised. For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

These verses mean that even though my body will someday die, my spirit will live forever because Jesus sacrificed Himself for me. I no longer have to pay the penalty for my sin because He did it for me. I am now free.

3. Romans 8:32: *He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously (freely) give us all things?* Our kids have free will. God is a very polite God (as my husband likes to say) and will not force anyone to submit. We can only make our own decisions to trust Him and pray for them. We need to pray that they will come to the end of themselves quickly and will seek God, as He is the only answer for their addiction.

Chapter 19 - Soul Care

1. People-pleasing goes right along with codependency and enabling. When we are afraid of the negative reactions of someone in addiction, we will choose to take the path of least resistance. A person in addiction will lie and manipulate you to get you to do what he/she wants. It is difficult going against him/her, especially if his/her reaction is negative and abusive. For those of us who want everyone to be happy, it is a huge stress to decide the right thing to do and then to follow through with it.

2. Answers will vary.

3. A healthy mom is better able to deal with the stresses of a child in addiction. If you have dealt with issues of guilt and remorse, anger, and so on, you can think more clearly and act rather than react. Having the Holy Spirit in you gives you an incredible resource of wisdom from God. Maintaining healthy relationships with others in your family is also important. Having healthy boundaries in your relationship with your child in addiction helps you make good choices that will help you to love them to life.