

IGNITION
POWERED BY SLU

MOMENTS

LEADER GUIDE



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Student Pastors, Small Group & Host Home Leaders,

I wanted to personally take a moment and thank each one of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to be a part of this incredible experience for the weekend. My team and I are extremely grateful that you would allow us to partner with you in an effort to help facilitate and cultivate a spiritual encounter between your students and Jesus. We honor you for dedicating your time and energy! **This weekend could not happen without you!** We have been diligently praying for your students. It is our hope this weekend will change their lives forever.

In planning for this weekend, we've worked methodically through the details to ensure your students will have the best two days of their life. It's our desire to intentionally create an environment where students can **exalt Christ, engage scripture, and be equipped** with the necessary tools to passionately pursue Christ. To help facilitate flow and synergy, we feel it is important that what happens in the large group setting carries over into the small group sessions. During each large group session, the Gospel will be clearly presented in an innovative and relevant way.

The small group sessions will consist of a list of discussion questions that will help you foster a healthy dialog with your students. Please know, these questions are only a **"guide"** for the weekend. **You know your students**, feel free to contextualize any of these questions as you deem necessary. We encourage you to take plenty of notes while listening to each message and ask God to give you a few points of discussion for each small group session. If you don't complete all of the small group sessions because the conversation is rich and eventful, it is totally okay. The goal is not to complete the questions for the sake of accomplishment, but instead, the goal is to create connections that will lead to application and transformation. Be open and receptive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As you spend time with your students, pray that there will be "God Moments" where you can engage them in spiritual conversations that will lead to discussions concerning their walk with Jesus.

Important Note: On Friday night, our communicators will extend a public invitation and give your students an opportunity to respond to the gospel message they just heard. Our desire is to inspire and encourage your students to experience a personal relationship with Jesus. We want every participant to experience a "moment" where they can REACH UP to Jesus. This invitation will not feel manipulative or come across as unauthentic. While the invitation is being presented, **please be prepared to receive your students and counsel them.** We want to make sure every student understands the decision they are making. Our entire team is praying to see God change lives forever this weekend! Thank you for allowing us to serve you and your students. It is my hope and prayer that every student has an experience this weekend that will change their life forever!

Praying for you always,

Jeff Wallace, Ph.D.

CSO of Student Leadership University

MOMENTS | THEME

God has granted us a gift that is infinitely valuable: **life**. And with this life, He invites us to take part in a grand adventure, a journey that has no comparison. Following Jesus is all about sojourning well through this broken world until, finally, we cross over from this life to eternal life and arrive on the shores of the heavenly country. The writer of Hebrews calls us **strangers and pilgrims on earth** or **transients in this world**. This year at **IGNITION powered by SLU**, our goal is to rediscover the heart of this sacred journey by retracing some of the most significant moments in the Apostle Paul's life...and thus focusing on the most significant moments in our own lives. As the psalmist wrote, "**Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage**" (Psalm 84:5). Therefore, throughout the weekend we will identify the four most important MOMENTS in our journey:

- **Salvation:** The moment we **reach up** to Jesus
- **Calling:** The moment we **reach in** to use our gifts
- **Community:** The moment we **reach out** to others
- **Home:** The moment we **reach home** to heaven

Practical Instructions for Facilitating Discussion:

- The purpose of the discussion questions is an opportunity for you to guide the students to discover the truths revealed in the passages. This is most effective when they are given the opportunity to answer the questions rather than being spoon-fed the answers.
- You can follow the curriculum just as it is laid out. 1) Encourage a student to read the passage aloud. 2) Present the discussion questions. Allow time for students to come up with the answer. If it's quiet at first, it's likely that they are thinking. This is what you want.
- After they have given their answers, you can share your own. Don't get caught up or waste a lot of time on a question they may not understand. Just go on to the next question.
- There is not necessarily one right answer for each question; however, you want to listen to the answers. This will help you get an idea of the level of understanding for each student who participates.
- Don't ignore wrong answers but do your best to be diplomatic in pointing toward the truth. You can say something like, "Hmmm, that's an interesting thought but what if we look at it this way..." You want to do your best not to embarrass anyone, but some in your group may not know the Lord as Savior. You want to listen carefully if their answers reflect that.

NOTE: If a question is in the student guide, there will be a notation of a book (📖) next to those questions. For more in-depth conversations, feel free to go off script as needed with additional questions. Please note that small groups are meant to make those in them feel safe. Set ground rules for the group before heading into the time. (For example: Put all phones in the center of the table—including you, group leader! Make sure to have a watch to stay on time though if you choose to do this.) We are excited about this year, and how God wants to use you in these students' lives. Remember, we don't know what these students are carrying in this weekend. We want to love them

with Jesus' love and support them with Christian truth. Please be in prayer for discernment and wisdom as we get closer to the event!

MOMENTS | Session 1

Grace has a name...

Salvation: The moment we *reach up* to Jesus

Intro Exercise to Start Conversation:

 **Go around the room/circle and share one or two of the most memorable moments in your life; it can be something funny or serious. What made those moments memorable?**

1. Grace exposes my brokenness and need

Now Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the high priest and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:1-2, CSB

Saul at the beginning of Acts 9: a person who “was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.”

Saul was hiding, but he was hiding in plain sight.

 **Do you ever feel pressure to live a “perfect, Christian life?” How do you think this thinking may lead to many people hiding in plain sight—even in our churches, schools, culture, etc.?**

Optional Questions:

What does it mean that following Jesus, being a Christian, is a journey or a pilgrimage?

How do we, sometimes, hide in plain sight?

2. Grace is God taking the initiative

As he traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul said. “I am Jesus...”

Acts 9:3-5, CSB

Before his conversion, grace was a concept of which Saul was thoroughly ignorant. If grace was oxygen, Saul was suffocating. But after that fateful day on the road to

Damascus, grace was transformed from being a foreign concept into a loving Savior. ***God's grace actually had a name, and it was Jesus.***

Read: *Have someone in the group read Ephesians 2:4-6 out loud.*

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus.”

Eph. 2:4–6, CSB

Ask the Group: *What does this verse mean to you?*

 ***How would you describe and define ‘grace’? What do you believe life would be like without the grace of Jesus?***

 ***How has God transformed a messy situation in your life and turned it around for good? In other words, have you had any “God” moments where God stepped in and transformed your situation by grace?***

Optional Questions:

Explain a moment in your life when you know you experienced Jesus’ grace in your life.

3. Grace shows how to love well in the journey

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for this man is my chosen instrument to take my name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for some time. Immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: “He is the Son of God.”

But Saul grew stronger and kept confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

Acts 9:15-16; 19-20; 22, CSB

- Grace cannot be earned or deserved. Grace teaches us to love because we have been loved.
- Grace teaches us to love unconditionally—with no strings attached.
- Grace teaches us to love completely—despite flaws and scars.

 ***What are three ways the grace of Jesus impacts our journey?***

 ***Think of one person in your day-to-day life right now that is hard to love. How can you begin sharing the love of Jesus with them—knowing that the grace of Jesus compels us to love?***

Optional Questions:

Why do you think it is difficult to love people in your life who are different than you?

When is the last time you extended grace to someone who had done you wrong? Keeping in mind that they didn't deserve your forgiveness or grace?

Do you love with no strings attached? Loving people without considering what they offer you in return?

MOMENTS | Session 2

'With God, all things are possible'

Calling: The moment we *reach in* to use our gifts

The world needs people who get lost in their own heads considering the forgotten and overlooked and think creatively toward answers.

Intro Exercise to Start Conversation:

 ***Spend a few moments identifying incredibly gifted people in our culture who are using their talents.***

1. Unshakable Belief: Do I Believe God Can Use Me?

"But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for this man is my chosen instrument to take my name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites... Immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: 'He is the Son of God.'"

Acts 9:15, 20, CSB

"I was made a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power."

Eph. 3:7, CSB

Paul was part of a growing list of characters in Scripture that God had chosen to demonstrate **His** sufficiency to accomplish **His** desired will for **His** creation. We can probably assume that Paul was in **good company** with those who believed deeply that God could use them:

Paul **had never** led a movement. He **had never** planted a church or gone on a missionary journey. He certainly **had never** been imprisoned or beaten for his beliefs.

God doesn't wait for our resume to be just right before He decides to use us for a specific task.

 ***Do you believe God can use you? Why or why not? What do you think is oftentimes the biggest obstacle that keeps us from identifying and using our talents/gifts in our journey's?***

Optional Questions:

How have you let feelings get in the way of you accomplishing what God has called you to do?

Do you ever feel like you aren't good enough? Smart enough? Talented enough to make a difference for Jesus in this world?

Read: *Have a couple of students in the group read these verses out loud.*

Ephesians 3:20: “Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us.”

Romans 8:1: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.”

1 Peter 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

Ephesians 2:10: “For we are His creation-- created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.”

John 16:33: “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”

2. Sacred Gifting: How Has God Gifted Me to Help Change the World?

Read: *Have someone in the group read Romans 12:3-8 out loud.*

“For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one. Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts.”

Rom. 12:3–6, CSB

“If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.”

Rom. 12:7–8, NLT

 **What are some of the gifts/talents that Paul mentions in those verses we just read?**

In the session today, we heard, “**You’re not one in a million; you are one in a creation.**” God didn’t “break the mold” when He made you because there was no mold. He made you infinitely unique and infinitely valuable.

 **What does the phrase: “You’re not one in a million; you are one in a creation,” mean to you?**

 **Take a few minutes individually and write down some of the ways God has gifted you. Think about it this way: what are you good at? Are you gifted musically? Can you draw? Are you a ‘jedi-knight’ at a certain video game? Are you good at taking and editing photos for social media? Is there a subject in school you enjoy and excel at? Maybe you are athletically gifted...etc.**

Optional Question:

Take a moment to now identify a person you know who is using his or her gifts in a way that honors the Lord.

3. Enduring Vision: How Will I Use My Gifts to Accomplish Change in the World for the Glory of God?

Paul never lost sight of the original vision God wanted to be accomplished through his life.

“Nevertheless, I have written to remind you more boldly on some points because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest of the gospel of God. My purpose is that the Gentiles may be an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I have reason to boast in Christ Jesus regarding what pertains to God. For I would not dare say anything except what Christ has accomplished through me by word and deed for the obedience of the Gentiles, by the power of miraculous signs and wonders, and by the power of God’s Spirit. As a result, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named, so that I will not build on someone else’s foundation.”

Rom. 15:15–20, CSB

What began on one road in Paul’s life would be carried down every road, impacting millions of lives in the years to come.

-  How would you use those gifts you wrote down earlier ***if you knew you would not fail?*** In other words, what would you do with the talents God has given you if failure wasn’t an option?
- If you had all of the money in the world? All of the resources in the world at your disposal?

Optional Questions:

Do you really believe “With God, ALL things are possible? Why or why not?

Do you really believe that God can use YOU to change the world? Why or why not?

How can you start redeeming the moment and begin identifying gifts God has given you in your everyday life? Have you ever asked your friends or family members what they think you would be great at—what they think your gifts are?

MOMENTS | Session 3

A Portrait of Togetherness

Community: The moment we *reach out* to others

Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, in one accord, contending together for the faith of the gospel, not being frightened in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of your deliverance—and this is from God.

Philippians 1:27-28, CSB

Intro Exercise to Start Conversation:

 ***Share with the group about some of the most positive and healthy relationships in your life. Why are relationships important?***

1. One Identity: Live like Citizens of Heaven

You may be on the outside of the Roman Empire, Paul was saying, but you are inside the kingdom of God. Paul challenged the idea of citizenship in the family of God.

Togetherness begins with understanding identity. We are all woven into the fabric of God's redemptive story and have thus been granted **heavenly citizenship**. The challenge becomes to...

- Live your identity
- Live worthy of the gospel
- And Live as a citizen of heaven.

 ***What does it mean to be 'citizens of heaven' (Philippians 1:27)? How does being a citizen of heaven impact our understanding of life as a pilgrimage or journey?***

 ***How can you reach out to friends or family in your community that may feel left out or feel like an outsider?***

Optional Questions:

How would you describe life (your journey) without community? Without a feeling of belonging?

Why is it important to be part of a community of people, church and student ministry, who are following Jesus?

How can being a part of this community impact my life and the journey of following Jesus?

2. One Spirit: Unity Begins with Attitude

The greatest danger for division will always be among the saints. Blame it on pride, individualism, or even the entrepreneurial spirit; we have to be humble and wise enough to realize the church's potential worst enemy is often the face staring back in the mirror. Christians can have the right attitude because they have been redeemed by the work of Christ and are indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

 ***What impact does/can attitude have on relationships and community? Think specifically of who you spend the most time with on a daily basis.***

 ***How can you be intentional about putting yourself in a healthy community that will lift you up rather than tear you down? Are you building up the people around you or have you found yourself tearing people down recently?***

Optional Questions:

What are some ways that we tear people down?

What are some ways that we can instead build others up?

3. One Mind: Unity Happens when the Desires of 'the people' Align with the Desires of God

The word that is translated ***mind*** can also be translated ***soul***. The idea here is that we be united not just because of a right attitude but also because of a united heart or mindset.

The Spirit and Soul are different from the body. Think of unity like a coin where one side is heads and the other is tails. On one side of the unity coin is "spirit" (attitude) and the other side is "mind" (soul or will).

 ***What is Paul trying to teach us when he writes about standing firm in one accord, or one mind in Philippians 1:27-28—the first verse we read in this section?***

Read: *Have someone in the group read Acts 2:44–47 and 4:32 out loud, in that order.*

Ask the Group: *Have you ever experienced a community like this? If not, how can you start and set the groundwork for a community in which people care deeply for one another—sharing in personal joys and trials together?*

MOMENTS | Session 4

'And Grace Will Lead Me Home'

Home: The moment we *reach home* to the heaven country

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is close. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing.

2 Timothy 4:6-8, CSB

Intro Exercise to Start Conversation:

 ***Spend a few moments identifying people who journeyed and finished the race well. They can be figures from history or from your personal life.***

1. A life that can be celebrated: "I have fought the good fight"

"My goal is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

Philippians 3:10, CSB

One theologian, William Barclay, said: "To suffer for a faith is not a penalty, it is a privilege, for thereby we share the very work of Christ."¹

We live in a world where the struggles of pain, tears, and death are a reality. **We live as those redeemed but not yet restored.** Paul had engaged the worthwhile struggle(s) that accompany the Christian pilgrimage in such a way that he could look back and know, **because of Christ's sufficiency, he was victorious.**

 ***Why is the end of our earthly journey something that shouldn't be sought nor feared?***

Read: *Have someone in the group read Revelation 21:4 out loud.*

 ***Do you see suffering as a penalty or privilege? What experiences in your past have led you to think that way? If you think of suffering as a penalty, how can you change your perspective to see the joy in the suffering?***

Optional Questions:

¹ William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, Electronic ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1975), 64.

How have you been able to overcome obstacles or tough moments in your life and come out victoriously?

2. A life that can be congratulated: “I have finished my course”

We live in a culture where there are plenty of people who are willing and excited to start the race, to initially engage what God wants to accomplish with their journey but stop short of the goal.

When God calls us to a task, He enables us to complete His mission.

Optional Questions:

Do you find yourself setting goals for yourself but not having the “staying power” to finish what you set out to do?

***If yes, how can you build up your endurance for the mission of God in your life?
If no, how do you think you built that diligence and passion for the mission?***

In a world of instant gratification, how do we practice sacrifice for the mission and dedication to our goals?

3. A life that can be imitated: “I have kept the faith”

“Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”

2 Timothy 2:13-14, CSB

Keeping/guarding the faith isn't for 'the professionals', it is entrusted to all pilgrims who responded when Jesus said, "Come, and follow me."

With Paul, God had taken the most unlikely of candidates and transformed him into a trophy of His grace. He had taken someone who was an enemy to the faith and made him a friend of God. With Paul, God had literally turned someone intent on evil into the greatest evangelist the world has ever seen! For all of us thousands of years later, God is showing us that **he can use anyone he chooses!**

 ***What does it mean that Paul had:***

- ***‘fought the good fight?’***
- ***‘finished my course?’***
- ***‘kept the faith?’***

Read: Have someone in the group read 1 Corinthians 11:1 out loud “Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1, CSB).”

 ***What does it mean to imitate Christ? What have you learned this weekend that applies to imitating Christ?***

 ***How has this weekend changed your perspective on capturing the moments of your life?***

Optional Questions:

What does the phrase “grace will lead us home” mean?

What is the key to an imitate-able life/journey, that inspires others to follow Jesus?

How has this weekend changed your perspective on grace in light of the journey that is your life?