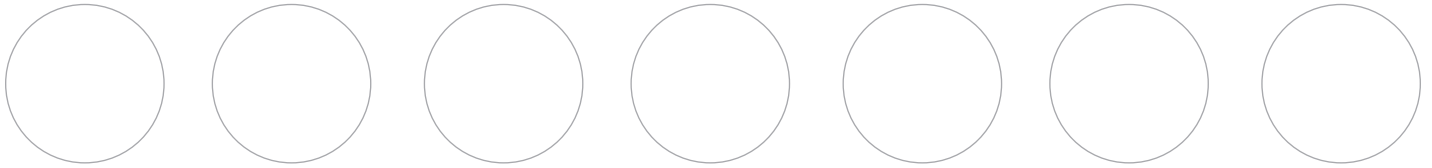


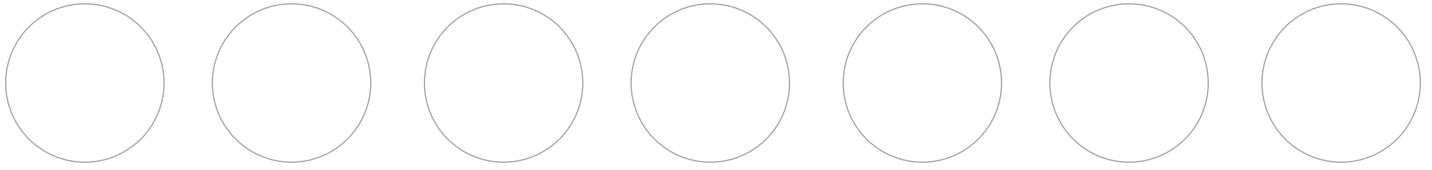
INTRODUCTION

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BEGINNING THOUGHTS



As youth workers, we know how important it is to find good material for your students that is also easy to use. Well, we really believe that what you're holding in your hand is both good material and easy to use!

The best way to see what this material is about is to look at the back cover of this notebook. It's all about God's healing—His part and our part. Really, it's about spiritual growth and helping students identify a process that will help them deal with life's hurts.

Where you have students, you have an audience for this curriculum.

THE HISTORY BEHIND LIFE HURTS GOD HEALS

The Life Hurts God Heals project began with the adults at Saddleback Church. In 1991 John Baker, one of our key volunteer leaders, began developing small groups for those in pain—which included everyone who had a pulse. John took the principles from the traditional 12-step recovery program, which he had been through, and developed an eight-step program that integrated God's Word as its primary foundation.

While many people were in small groups working through these steps, our pastor, Rick Warren, taught the eight-steps to our entire church body. The results were unbelievable—people poured into small groups like never before. It grew so large that John Baker was asked to move from a volunteer to full-time pastor of this movement. Since then, he has created a model that is being used by several hundred churches throughout North America. His book, *Celebrate Recovery*, was the instrumental work from which this material was developed.

After 10 years of teaching this to adults, John, Megan and I worked together to make these eight-steps more "friendly" to students. We took the 24 lessons that John teaches adults and created 13 lessons for students. The core steps and material are similar, but the questions, wording, and application are very different. (If you're currently using *Celebrate Recovery*, you'll immediately notice the differences.)

After teaching this Life Hurts God Heals series to our students at Saddleback Church, we launched small groups to get students to further process and discuss their individual issues. This series served as an overview to the G.O.D. H.E.A.L.S. steps and the small groups drove it deeper. [FYI: We also changed the name from Pain Hurts to Life Hurts. This information is only important if you listen to the audio messages, you'll hear me refer to the series by the old name, Pain Hurts . . . God Heals]. Currently, Life Hurts God Heals is used by over 7,000 churches, juvenile systems, public schools and treatment centers world wide. At Saddleback Church, we have Life Hurts God Heals happening on a consistent basis.

HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

We've put this material together to be flexible enough to be used however it fits your youth ministry context. Bottom line: There is no one way to use this curriculum.

Here are the two most common options of using this material:

Option #1

Teach the eight lessons provided on CD in an eight-week series. If you don't want to listen to the CD, a word-for-word transcript is included as part of this kit to make your preparation easy. Each week during this series, you will paint a broad picture of the eight steps. You can teach this during Sunday School, during your crowd program, mid-week, wherever it fits. As you read the transcripts (and/or listen to the CD), you'll realize that the crowd I taught was mixed with Christians and non-Christians.

At the conclusion of the eight-week series, break your students into small groups and use the 13 lessons from the leader's guide to re-teach the eight-steps in a more complete manner. Give each student a workbook to follow the eight-step process. Your schedule might look like this:

LHGH large and small group structure:

- 4:30-4:45 Hang-out, greet one another, and eat snack's.
- 4:45-5:15 Teach the material from the leader's guide.
- 5:15-5:45 Start small groups. Give students a workbook and read the introduction and guidelines. Allow 10-20 minutes for students to write out answers in their workbook.
- 5:45-6:20 Students share their written responses in their small group.
- 6:20-6:30 Hang-out and leave.

EXCEPTIONS: The first night and graduation

I actually have the first night and graduation in a 3-hour time slot, so we don't feel rushed. Here is the general breakdown:

First night: Have the large group teaching and then break off into small groups based on gender and grade. Then follow the instructions on the First Night of Small Group form. You will give the students in your small group a Me in a Snapshot form to fill out. Make sure they do this at the start of your small group, and then turn it into you after they have shared what they put on it.

WARNING: the first night will be a bit nutty. You may run out of time and not get through all the students. Don't worry! You can continue the Me in a Snapshot the following week.

Graduation: Refer to the Graduation notes after Lesson 13.

Option #2

Don't use the eight lessons from the transcribed material and use only the 13 lessons from the leader's guide and the student workbooks. Then use the same time format as mentioned under option #1.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LEADER'S GUIDE

Do I need to teach the material just as it is written in the leader's guide?

No. While this material has been taught several times, it isn't perfect. As with any curriculum, you know your group better than we do. Please use what is written as a guide and add your own illustrations, anecdotes, and applications to the written content. Basically, make it your own.

How complete are the teaching lessons in the leader's guide?

They are complete enough to help you communicate clearly, but not as complete as a 20-page chapter would be. Let's take the lesson on DENIAL for example—there's enough material to introduce the topic and give students some definitions for their small group. But there's not enough time to cover every element of denial in that lesson.

I like to tell youth workers that the leader's guide is filled with lessons that:

- (a) introduce the topic
- (b) give some basic information about the topic, and
- (c) stir up enough questions that there will be plenty to talk about in a small group.

How important is the teaching time?

It's important, but not as important as the small group time. The material in the leader's guide will introduce the step and give some "big-picture" thoughts before students go into their small groups. But the small group time is more important. So, when you're thinking through your teaching, save enough time for small groups.

How long should the teaching time be?

If you buzz through the material, you can teach it in 15 minutes and if you take your time, it could take you 40 minutes. Realize that the teaching time isn't intended to answer everyone's questions, but to present ideas and information that will move students to talk within their small group.

What's the deal with the outline at the end of each lesson?

We've included a fill-in-the-blank outline that you may choose to use for your teaching time. This is optional. You can photocopy these outlines and distribute them to your students to help keep them on track. If you choose not to use them, it's okay because all of the information is included in their student workbooks. We use them because it's another way to keep students focused on the teaching time. Typically, students fold up the outlines and take them home after the teaching time.

Why did you use acrostics for most lessons?

Uh . . . well . . . the best way to answer this is with the acrostic B.E.C.A.U.S.E.

Believe it or not

Every lesson in the adult curriculum that we copied called

Celebrate Recovery (written by John Baker)

Actually started the acrostic-craze and we decided to

Use the same teaching method

So there would be some similar

Experiences within the student and adult programs.

What you'll find within the leader's guide is that the acrostics are a simple way to give some action terms. Again, the leader's guide material is a prompter to get the students into their small group.

What exactly are the "eight-steps?"

Step 1 GOD HEALS

Get help. I admit that I am powerless on my own, and that I need help.

Step 2 GOD HEALS

Open your heart. I know that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He is the only One who has the power to heal my pain.

Step 3 GOD HEALS

Depend on Christ. I realize I need to turn my life over to Christ. I need to depend on Him in all the areas of my life, including all that I say, think, and do.

Step 4 GOD HEALS

Hear and speak. I agree to evaluate my life and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone that I trust.

Step 5 GOD HEALS

Embrace God's way. I will stop doing things my way and put my life on the path that leads toward God's way.

Step 6 GOD HEALS

Ask for forgiveness. I will offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me, and I will ask for forgiveness for any wrong I've done to others.

Step 7 GOD HEALS

Live for God. I will set aside some time for God each day to examine my life, read my Bible, and pray so that I have the power to live God's way.

Step 8 GOD HEALS

Support others. I will take the message that God heals to others in need and share it by my words and actions.

I noticed there is a Graduation at the end of Lesson 13. How do I know if a student should graduate?

In order for a student to graduate, my criterion is that they have to have been to 80% of the classes. For instance, they have to have attended 10 of 13 classes or 6 out of the 8 steps. I make sure they understand the concept of the step they missed before graduating. For those who showed up half way through, I ask them to repeat LHGH the next season it is offered.

Is it essential that I teach the bonus lesson at the end of this book?

No. Again, this is a very flexible program. Your students don't even know you have a bonus lesson because it's not in their student workbooks. John Baker developed this lesson for wrap-up time. If you want, when you've finished the 13 lessons, bring your group all together for sharing and then spend some time talking about the roadblocks we face when pursuing health (or seven reasons we get stuck).

In the leader’s guide I see [Teaching Tips]. What are those?

In each lesson in the leader’s guide, we use the [teaching tips] to give direction to whoever is teaching the material. All the content in the leader’s guide is to teach except for the few bracketed sentences. You can choose whether you want to follow those directions.

In some of the lessons I’ve noticed some different options. One is SONG SELECTION, the other is a VISUAL OPTION.

Basically each time you see the **SONG SELECTION** or the **VISUAL OPTIONS**, it means there is an illustration that can be used during the group teaching.

At the beginning of most lessons you’ll notice **VISUAL OPTIONS**, followed by a short list of visual items you can use for that lesson. The magnifying glass will be referred to later in that lesson with the exact visual item(s) suggested. For example, in lesson 6, you’ll notice “**VISUAL OPTIONS**: journal, band-aid, coke can.” When you see this, then you can use these visuals at that time if you choose. Sometimes you will only see **SONG SELECTION**. This is when we suggest a song to play. Again, it is optional. We did it at Saddleback and our students loved it, but each group is different. Do what works with your group.

I also noticed that most of the lessons use the word CHECKPOINT? What does that mean?

CHECKPOINT invites you to ask the group a pointed question. It is a time for students to check their hearts and write out or discuss what they find.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDENT WORKBOOKS

Does each student need his or her own workbook?

Yes! Provide student workbooks (SW) each week for new student and then provide a confidential box where they can leave their workbooks after each small group time. Make sure this is locked up safely. We do this because most students (not all, but most) forget to bring their SW back each week. If someone really wants to take theirs home, then let them.

When do students write their answers to the questions in the workbooks?

Again, there is no one right way to do this. At Saddleback Church, we give the students some reflection and writing time immediately following the teaching time. It might look something like this . . .

- 4:30-5:15 Begin large group teaching.
- 5:15-5:45 Start small groups: Give students a workbook then start with introductions, read guidelines then allow 10-20 minutes for students to write out their answers in their workbook.
- 5:45-6:20 Students share their written responses in their small group.
- 6:20-6:30 Hang-out and leave.

Even if you give them writing time, they may not get through all the questions. That’s fine. Even a few minutes alone will get them started with some brief answers to help with small group discussion. (They can fill out the rest during the small group.)

Don’t be afraid to challenge students to spend some time at home writing more complete responses (if you let them take their workbooks home).

What's the deal with the small group guidelines listed in the student workbooks?

We've learned that it's best to have the small groups look at these guidelines before EACH small group session. When you're dealing with pain, it's important that students respect one another and we often need to repeat the importance of confidentiality with sensitive sharing.

Where is the explanation of the Beatitudes in the workbooks?

In the student workbooks, verses from the Beatitudes serve as theme verses with no written explanation. We spend more time discussing the Beatitudes and the eight-steps during the teaching time presented on the CD.

Do small group leaders need to prepare before small group?

No and yes. As long as your leaders aren't teaching, all they'll need is a workbook (just like the students) and some ability to facilitate a small group. The only preparation is that which involves their heart, love, and passion for students. This process requires small group leaders to be loving, open, and honest.

Anything else I should know if I'm the type of youth worker who likes to "wing-it"?

Yes! Two things . . .

1. Be aware that the first small group meeting requires more time. I suggest a 3-hour time slot for both large group and small group combined.
2. Please note that lesson 7 mostly takes place in the context of small group and beyond. This lesson takes some time, thought and prayer. Please allow students time to answer honestly. If that takes them more than two weeks, that's great! It means they take this very seriously. Just make sure you follow up with their responses.

If you have *any* questions or would like a monthly newsletter about hurting kids, go to www.lifehurtsgodheals.com. Trust me, you are not in this alone!

God bless you as you put some time and energy into making this happen with your students and thank you for loving students and caring enough about them to help them in their pain.

Blessings,

Doug Fields and Megan Hutchinson

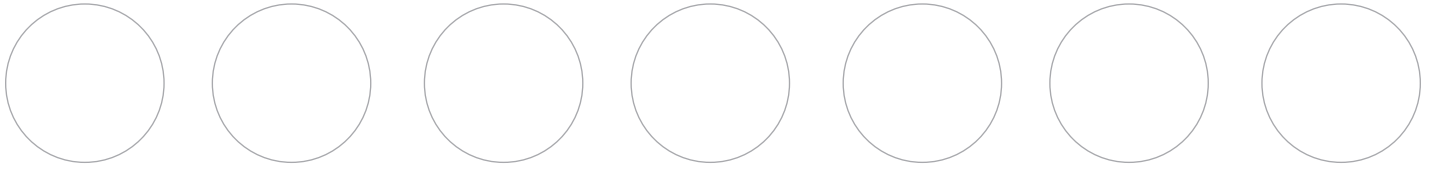
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Doug Fields has been in youth ministry since 1979 and is currently on staff at Saddleback Church in Southern California. He is Director of Purpose Driven Youth Ministry, the author of more than 40 books, including the best-selling *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* and *Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry*, and he's the founder of Simply Youth Ministry (www.simplyyouthministry.com). Doug is most comfortable hanging out with his family and drinking Diet Pepsi.

Megan Hutchinson has worked with students for over 18 years and is passionate about helping hurting students. She is a high school minister at Saddleback Church where she runs Life Hurts God Heals. She is a member of the Core training team with Youth Specialties and author of *Help! I'm a Woman in Youth Ministry* and *I Want to Talk to my Teen about Addictions*. Her monthly hurting kids newsletter can be found at www.lifehurtsgodheals.com.

John Baker serves as Pastor of Celebrate Recovery—a ministry he developed at Saddleback Church in 1991. His curriculum is used in over 700 churches worldwide where 50,000 hurting adults have completed the program and are seeking God's power to overcome their hurts, habits, and hang-ups. For more on John and his ministry, please visit www.celebraterecovery.com.

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