

ERWIN RAPHAEL MCMANUS

SOUL CRAVINGS

THE EXPERIENCE
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



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WELCOME

In the *Soul Cravings Prequel*, Erwin McManus shows readers how our need for intimacy, meaning and destiny point to the existence of God and our need to connect with Him. *Soul Cravings: The Experience* uses this dynamic booklet to introduce us to a new way of discussing our faith – a way that doesn't change the message, but changes how we engage with people.

In the course sessions, your group will enter into a *Soul Cravings Experience* that will take them on a very personal journey of discovery in four areas:

1. **Paradigm Shift:** Group members will discover a new way of approaching discussions about their faith – one that recognizes that our culture has shifted significantly in the last 30 or 40 years.
2. **Self-Discovery:** Group members will embark on a journey of self-discovery to help them understand and articulate where God has intersected their lives in any or all of the three cravings, resulting in the humility to interact with another person as a “fellow sojourner” with identical longings.
3. **The Art of Meaningful Conversations:** Group members will be equipped to engage unbelievers in meaningful conversations with genuineness and integrity, practicing effective listening skills, using the book as a tool to that end, if it is helpful.
4. **Intentionality:** Group members will be encouraged to be more intentional about having meaningful conversations, and to think about people they would like to approach using this strategy.

BEFORE YOU LEAD

Prepare for your group meetings by preparing yourself in the following ways:

- **Pray for the potential participants.** Your group members' lives will be changed by going through this experience with you. Pray now for those that will come to this group, that God will prepare them to adjust their approach so they can more effectively share their love for others.
- **Read the *Soul Cravings Prequel* booklet.** Becoming personally familiar with the content and tone of *Soul Cravings* is essential for facilitating a group discussion.
- **Review the *Soul Cravings Experience* DVD.** Get oriented to the teaching on the DVD so you can try initiating meaningful conversations before you facilitate a group meeting. Also, acquaint yourself with how the Experience stops for discussion and practice. Try starting and stopping the DVD so you can do this several times during the session without disruption.
- **Practice sharing the *Soul Cravings Prequel* booklet with someone** before you facilitate a session. Relying on the leading of the Holy Spirit, engage someone in a meaningful discussion and share the booklet with them. This makes the whole strategy much more real to you, and most importantly, you can share your own experience of being empowered by the Holy Spirit to encourage the group.
- **Be ready to demonstrate a meaningful conversation.** In one of the sessions, the group will watch you demonstrate how to roleplay having a meaningful conversation with an unbeliever. Select a group member to roleplay with you, then you play the part of the unbeliever who tells your friend about a situation or event in your life. Your partner asks you questions to look for the soul cravings common ground. The rest of the group will pair off and practice after seeing your demonstration.
- **Prepare the equipment you will need.** To play the DVD, set up a television and DVD player, OR a computer with projector and external speakers. Make sure everything is working before the meeting starts.

Prepare the materials for each participant:

- Provide a copy of the *Soul Cravings Prequel* booklet for every participant and at least one for them to give away.

WHILE YOU LEAD

Here are some important principles for facilitating an effective group experience.

How to lead the meeting:

- **Open with a prayer** that relies on the Holy Spirit to equip you all to be more effective at engaging people with God.
- **Read the Facilitator's Opening Remarks** to the group. This sets the stage for the session and prepares the group members for the new ideas they are about to learn.
- **Read the instructions** out loud to the group before they start a group or individual exercise.
- **Read the Facilitator's Closing Remarks** to the group. This application-oriented encouragement is important to read so that the session ends with a direct challenge to the group members to take action on what they learned in the session. Be prepared to go and take the challenge yourself!
- **Close with a prayer** that again brings the group back to dependence upon the Holy Spirit to apply what they have learned.

How to facilitate effective discussions:

- **Don't be afraid of silence.** During the discussions, people need time to gather their thoughts when a question is posed. Be prepared with your own answers, but don't jump in right away to fill the space, because then people may be more hesitant to contribute.
- **Don't pressure people to talk.** Draw out the reserved people without embarrassing them, using a non-threatening question such as, "Dean, have you had any experience with this?" If no one wants to answer a particular question, just move on.

How to handle the timing of the meeting:

- **Subgroup.** If your group is larger than 6-8 people, break up the group into subgroups of 3-4 for the discussions so everyone has a chance to participate.
- **Recap.** If you subgroup, take the last couple minutes of each discussion

period for the subgroups to recap their findings with the entire group.

- **Don't rush people.** Try not to make getting through the material more important than helping people. If needs come up during your discussions, don't rush things so you can finish on time. Either decide to postpone the rest of the material for another time, or invite people to stay afterwards to continue helping with the needs that have surfaced.

Your character is important:

- **Model honesty.** If you are not honest about your struggles, the group will not be either. The most effective group experience comes when group members can share genuinely and safely.
- **Be a learner.** Your personal journey through this training will be very important to the dynamics of the whole group. Your experience of reading the book, giving away the book, and engaging someone in a meaningful conversation will be more impacting to the group members than much of what they hear from the lessons.
- **Be encouraging.** Give each person a special word of affirmation during each meeting. This is especially important in a study such as this that stretches people to reach outside of their comfort zone.
- **Continue to pray** after your meetings for each member of your group, every day.

