

YEAR 7, MONTH 1

Part I. Prepare

Topic: Hope: God Uses All Things

Key Verse:

Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Key Take-Away: We have a plan for our life... and so does God. His dreams and plans are in the very fabric of our design, and yet there are moments in our journey that we never expect or anticipate. Pain, suffering, and hardship are part of life; especially when we do not feel prepared to live with them. Courage is about trusting God in the midst of all — both the good and the hard.

Important notes for this meeting: This is the very first session of the high school curriculum. If you have been doing CG for years, CONGRATULATIONS! You made it to this point and we pray that all the years you have invested in your daughter are paying off. If you are just starting the CG journey, welcome! We are so grateful you are jumping into the deep end. If your group is new, make sure you take time to get to know each other through a retreat or intentional social activity prior to your first meeting. We are helping our daughters navigate a tough world and preparing them for adulthood. These next few years are vital for open communication between moms and daughters. Even when teens act annoyed (as if they do not want you around), underneath that mask they are desperate for your leadership. Practice listening to your daughter and leaning into the tension that teenage brains can bring.

The premise of this year is to go through three books together: 1) *Hope Heals* by Jay & Katherine Wolf; 2) *Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers; 3) *Your Own Beautiful* by Chelsea Crockett. Leaders, look ahead at this year’s scheduled reading and send your first email at least one month before the first meeting to allow for time to find/check out the books and start reading. Encourage moms and daughters to read (or listen) to these books together (some may prefer to have separate copies while others may choose to share one copy). Remind everyone of the suggested reading plan several times before your gathering, but also emphasize that the main purpose is always RELATIONSHIP BEFORE TASK. You do NOT want people to avoid the gathering simply because they didn’t get through the reading. Avoid shame! If moms/daughters find themselves in a busier season and cannot read the entire book, remind them that their dialogue is most important, but the reading will provide substance for deeper and richer discussions.

Materials needed for this meeting:

- Bible
- CG Notebook: *Make new notebooks if your group is new or if your girls want to start a fresh one for the high school years. See Year 1, Lesson 1 for instructions.*
- *Hope Heals* book. Read Part 1 (p. 1- 92) before the first gathering.
- *Known* Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZE-wVvjo1k>
- Crayons/Markers/Paper

Mom Prep: Year 7 is a time where we hope the girls will be ready to lead more and participate. Lean heavily into smaller discussion groups if the larger group is difficult. There are always dynamics with teen girls, so allow God to move in the midst of the body changes, school dynamics, cultural concerns, and social awkwardness. Each daughter is at a different place and CG groups are meant to be a place to practice being oneself, without judgement, criticism, or rejection.

Daughter Prep: Take time to read through the lesson and the assigned reading selection. Find a section of the lesson you are ready to lead and prepare with your mom so you feel confident. Pray together prior to the meeting.

Part II. Lead

First 15:

Gathering time. Welcome everyone. Grab a snack if your group is providing that. Remember, water and a small snack are best; keep it simple! Gather your group together in a circle (or as close to a circle as you can make). Make sure there is room for everyone and that everyone can sit comfortably where they are. It is not necessary for you to be seated at a table, but you may choose that option. **If it's the first time back together after a summer break, have everyone share an experience from their summer to reconnect.**

Let's Go 70:

This is the heart of your gathering time. Use the following outline to help guide you in this process, but don't feel bound by it. Take some time with the material before you lead so that you can adapt things to best meet your group's needs. **The action steps are in bold.**

1. **Open in prayer.**

2. **Share:** We all have plans and dreams for our lives. Sometimes those plans do not go as we imagine they will. We are going to spend the next three months to read *Hope Heals* together, a story of hope through overwhelming loss. Katherine and Jay Wolf tell their powerful story and it will give us a way to talk about suffering in the world and how we can trust God, even when life looks totally different than we ever planned.

3. **Read and Highlight** the following verses in your Bibles:

- **Romans 8:28** *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose."*
- **Job 5:18** *"For he wounds, but he also binds up: He injures, but his hands also heal."*

4. Ask the Group (encourage moms to share too):

- ➔ Do you ever hear people say, “If God is a loving God, why is there so much suffering in the world?” Do you ever think about this?
- ➔ Why do you think there is suffering?
- ➔ Can you share a time when you suffered? (Parents divorced, physical illness, loss of loved one, shattered dreams, etc.?)
- ➔ What kind of suffering do you see in the world today? In your community? In your own family?

5. Pair/Share: Turn and talk to your mom about a specific time when you wondered what God was doing in the midst of pain you were experiencing.

6. Discuss: Let’s talk about Jay & Katherine’s story.

- ➔ Someone describe Katherine & Jay’s love story. How did they meet? What was their courtship like and when did they get married?
- ➔ What did you notice about how Katherine described Jay? What did you notice about how Jay described Katherine?
- ➔ p. 43 “She saw my heart, even when I had a hard time seeing it myself.” What does this mean? How do you find this kind of dating relationship? Have you seen this in real life?
- ➔ p. 44 What do you think Katherine means when she said their wedding was not just about them? (“This was a glorious day to honor our Lord for our lives and point our friends and family to the true Giver of all good gifts.”) Do you imagine your wedding day this way? Why or why not?
- ➔ What had Katherine & Jay dreamed their life would be about prior to Katherine’s stroke?

7. Update Bible verse notecards with this month’s new verse - *Romans 8:28*.

Remind girls and moms that memorizing scripture is a way to help them grow in their walk with God.

8. Watch *Known* video together as a group. (Link listed above in “Materials” list).

9. After the video, divide into smaller groups.

- ◆ **Ask groups to discuss the following questions together.** (Print these off to hand to each group so that they have something to guide their discussions):
 - ➔ How do you feel watching their story? (Sad, Angry, Anxious, Hopeful?)
 - ➔ What causes you to feel that way?
 - ➔ What stood out the most about their story or the video?
 - ➔ How did Jay & Katherine develop the community that rallied around them at the hospital? (See pages 49-56.) Why do you think Jay says this community was so important for this time?

- ➔ James, their son, was born just 6 months prior to Katherine's health crisis. They saw this as a miracle even though it was not their plan. Why do you think this was so important?
- ➔ Jay & Katherine had a beautiful dating and engagement story. Why do you think it's important to know that Jay & Katherine were fully committed to God and each other before this crisis hit?
- ➔ Be ready to have one person from your small group share a key take away with the large group once we resume.

10. Return to the large group together. Have one volunteer from each small group share a key take away discussed in their small group time.

11. Pair/Share: (Moms and Daughters together)

- ➔ How does this story feel similar or different to your own story thus far?
- ➔ Have you ever had something in your life happen that you thought was not ideal and then later realized it was God's plan to help you through something else?

*** Make the Point:** Our plans usually do not include hardships and suffering. It's hard for us to see suffering as something God can use in our lives. But He does and He will.

12. Creative Activity: Provide crayons, markers, & blank paper. Encourage moms and daughters to create an acronym with the letters from the word "SUFFERING" that will remind them of truth when hard things come their way. As an option, the group can develop the acronym together and then each mom/daughter pair can re-write it together on their own paper for themselves to take home and keep.

13. Pair/Share: Moms, take the time to share with your daughter how she came into the world. What plans did you have in your life at the time that were bypassed or put on hold by her arrival. Share how you saw God's plan for her life, and for your own life, when she came into the world. (This is an opportunity to remind your daughter of your love and her significance in your own personal story.)

👉 Getting to the HEART of the issue: God uses all things -- who we marry; when we marry; the community we are in; the timing of our careers, and even tragedies we never saw coming. Next month we will talk more about where suffering comes from and how a good God can be loving EVEN when suffering is real in the world, and in our own stories.

14. Play Sardines (inside or outside, time allowing): Play a game of sardines to remind yourself that even when you feel alone, the Holy Spirit is always present with you. Your flashlight is like the Holy Spirit; notice the difference you feel when you are with a group as compared to when you are all alone. This activity is a fun and a powerful example for moms and daughters to be reminded of the power of community and the importance of having God's LIGHT within us.

Final 5:

Gather everyone back together to wrap up the meeting. **Circle up and pray** over this sweet tribe that has come together. Make sure to dismiss on time; it is extremely important to honor everyone's time, especially those that desire structure and schedules.

Suggested Homework for the Month:

Memorize Romans 8:28 together with your mom (or perhaps your entire family). If you feel ready for a challenge, memorize the entire chapter (chapter 8 — like Katherine Wolf did as a kid). We never know when we will need scripture to remind us of who God is and who we are.

Put the SUFFERING acronym on your mirror or fridge and see how the Holy Spirit speaks to you this next month as you continue to read *Hope Heals*. We sometimes call things “hard” that may be “good.” We sometimes call things “good” that may be “hard.” In either case, Katherine Wolf calls this life a “good/hard life”. Together, we can see and experience the fullness of God and we need one another to do that. Keep reading. There is much to discover and help our girls understand. Courage grows as we face our sufferings, though vastly different, in all our stories.

Part III: Reflect and Connect

Email out the ‘Suggested Homework for the Month’ (printed above; do this even if you printed it out already for your group). Remind all the moms that this group is meant for them as well as their daughters and to be strong and courageous to ask for help, prayer, and an ear to listen when temptations to isolate themselves arise. Take time to collect your daughter's questions, observations, and remember that this time is truly a gift with her, as the days are numbered.

