# **Small Group Outline**

## **Theme: Courageous Love**

Encourage use of the Easter sermon material, to give ample information and background to enable discussion around the given questions.

Open in prayer, asking God to be present in the discussions and to speak to each member gathered.

1. The raising of Lazarus has been suggested as the catalyst leading to the arrest, trial and execution of Jesus, and the part played by the various people involved: Judas, the Pharisees and the crowd.
2. **While it is easy to blame any and each of those involved, how much is their behaviour reflected in our own?**

**Spend some time identifying those areas of similarity in your own life that could cause barriers in the outworking of courageous love.**

Jesus demonstrated the capacity to rise above the actions of those around him and pursue his purpose.

1. **Acknowledging the cost to Jesus, how far can we reflect his behaviour when faced with our own challenges from the behaviour of others, or when faced with difficult choices?**

**How can we be courageous in how we love others?**

1. It is not always easy to believe.
2. We approach Easter morning with anticipation and excitement.

**How does this compare to the mood on the *first* Easter morning?**

Doubt and unbelief are common themes in the Gospels.

**Was it intentional that Jesus chose to reveal himself in the way he did?**

**How can we overcome doubt and unbelief?**

1. Mary, the travellers and Thomas met the risen Christ and were thereby confirmed in their belief. Jesus said, ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’ (John 20:29).

**Can we believe in a risen Jesus without physically seeing him? In what other ways can we see Jesus?**

**What supports our faith and gives us the courage to be disciples in the 21st century**?

3. Jesus wants that we experience life ‘to the full’ (John 10:10) and that ‘just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life’ (Romans 6:4).

In this new life, Christ is able ‘to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us’ (Ephesians 3:20).

1. **How do we come to experience this?**

Jesus suggests he is more than a model to follow, but an enabler of our spiritual life and the giver of joy – ‘that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete’ (John 15:11).

Joy is also a fruit of the Spirit’s indwelling (Galatians 5:22).

Easter joy is born out of the suffering of Jesus and his fortitude.

1. **How do we demonstrate joy in our discipleship? Is it true that ‘the joy of the Lord is [our] strength’ (Nehemiah 8:10)?**

**Can we be joyful even though facing challenges in life, and demonstrate a model of positive discipleship and love for God’s people**?

1. Mary immediately ran and told the disciples of what she had witnessed, on two occasions. Jesus himself commanded her the second time to go and tell.
2. **Who in our own lives can we ‘go and tell’ the good news of Jesus to?**

In the three accounts – of Mary, the travellers on the road to Emmaus and Thomas – each had a moment of revelation of Jesus, through spending time in his presence, leading to a response of pure worship.

1. **When was the last time you had a revelation of/from Jesus?**

**What is the key to receiving revelation?**

Close in prayer, asking God to give you courage to live and love like Jesus.