













5. I especially liked this part because...
6. Now that I know more about shalom, I think I will do...
7. Because of these scriptures, maybe I need to change my thinking about...
8. I want to know more about...
9. After seeing this presentation, I need to speak to...about...

There are many other responses that you may have as a result of each presentation. Feel free to add to this list and share with others in your group.

**Notes:**

## **SUGGESTED READING**

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to those who have gone before us as followers of Jesus. Some have given everything, including their lives, in their service to God and God's people as they have lived gospel-centered shalom. One of the people who has inspired me is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He spent the troubled years during the rise of the Third Reich in Germany, and the propagation of the worst kinds of evil by the Nazis, living between the vision of God's shalom in Jesus and the unimaginable brokenness he saw daily in the world. He spent the last two years of his life in Nazi prisons before he was executed less than a month before World War II ended.

During his imprisonment, he wrote extensively, and those writings are compiled in a book entitled *Letters and Papers from Prison*. One of the selections in that volume is a poem entitled "Who Am I." Go online to find that poem and read it several times before the group gathers. In that poem, Bonhoeffer connects God's story and the theme of shalom with his own story. I think you will find his reflections helpful as we begin our studies together on shalom.

### **Notes:**



## **PSALM & PRAYER PARTNER**

Studying the scriptures is never an exercise in pure theology. The biblical story also encompasses our stories. I do not mean that each of us is mentioned in the Bible, because we are not. What I do mean is that the biblical story is so honest in its description of the way our world is and how we navigate in this world, that surely our minds and hearts will make connections with some parts of the biblical story.

In order to enhance those connections, I will include at least one Psalm in each study guide in order to prompt personal reflection in the biblical material. To connect your life with the overview in this first presentation, I am suggesting that you take the next 7-10 days and daily pray, read, reflect and discuss **Psalm 139**.

This prayer reminds us of God's intimate awareness of each of our stories. Read the Psalm in several different translations or paraphrases, and allow your memory to connect your life story to the four big themes: creation, fall, redemption and restoration. Journal your personal reflections using the questions provided above. As appropriate, share some your thoughts and feeling with your prayer partner and with your small group when you gather.

### **Notes:**

## **GROUP DISCUSSION**

As you gather, make sure you take time to develop personal connections. Gathering over a meal provides both the setting and the leisure for the group experience to be transformative over the next several weeks. Use your initial gathering to explore these prompts:

1. After seeing this overview of the biblical story of shalom, I am looking forward to...
2. The theme that most intrigues me here at the beginning is...
3. Praying through Psalm 139 helps me realize that God...
4. In this group I am eager to explore how [pick one of the themes] applies to our church.
5. How can we together in this small group & church community live out shalom in such a way that people in our community will see Jesus?
6. What is our responsibility to be the incarnation of Jesus' grace, truth and light in our world? How do we do that together?

## **HOMEWORK**

Before viewing session 2, Shalom Created, read Genesis 1-2 several times.

## **Notes:**