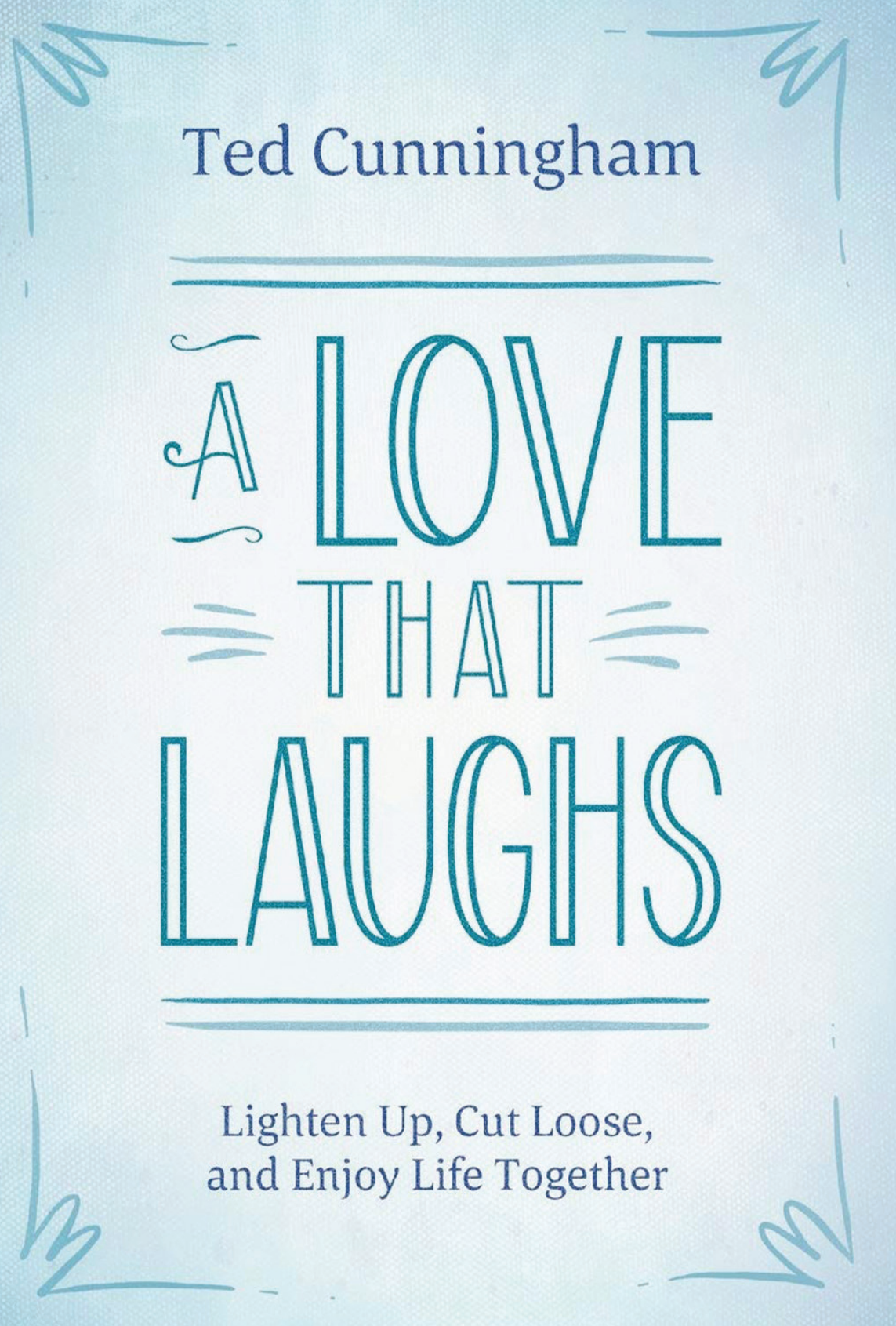




Ted Cunningham

A LOVE
THAT
LAUGHS

Lighten Up, Cut Loose,
and Enjoy Life Together

Discussion Guide

A Love that Laughs by Ted Cunningham

Leader Guide

This leader guide was created for use with our friend Ted Cunningham's book, *A Love That Laughs*. During your group time together, you'll be taking a break from all the important, but serious marriage conversations so you can start adding a little more fun to your routines. And if you're the competitive type, you'll really appreciate adding up your "laughter scores" as we take on the laughter activities at the end of each chapter of the book. You're sure to have some "Serious Fun!"

Get Ready!

- Mark your calendar for the five dates you plan to meet.
- Invite the couples in your group and share the link for them to order their book [A Love That Laughs](#).

Get Set!

- Read the chapters and Discussion Guide as you prepare each week before your group meets.
- Pray for your couples.
- Do the activities at the end of each chapter.
- Add up your Laughter Scores at the end of each chapter.

Go!

- Set the environment and...
- Prepare to laugh!

You may want to gather your group for an introductory get together before you dive into the book. This is a great time to get your calendars aligned, books ordered, and a reading schedule layed out. If you are a newer group this is also a great time to just spend some time getting to know each other, maybe share a meal or snacks together.

If you are not doing an introductory gathering be sure to communicate the important details (dates, book, chapters to read) with each couple before your first gathering. The Meeting 1 details below include discussion on the first 2 chapters of the book, so you will want everyone to come prepared by having read chapters 1 and 2 before this meeting.



MEETING 1:

CHAPTERS 1 & 2



“Enjoy life with the wife whom you love.” - Ecclesiastes 9:9

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

[15 minutes]

Ask couples to share their names, how many years they've been married and who is the funny one of the two of them; if it's your first time leading this group, introduce yourself first.

- Open in a brief prayer.

GROUP DISCUSSION

[30 minutes]

Use the following questions to guide the discussion on chapters 1 & 2:

- Did you or your spouse resist doing the activities at the end of each chapter? Why do you think that is?
- Share your laughter scores and a lesson you and your spouse learned from this activity.
- Did any of the 38 benefits of laughter from chapter 2 surprise you?
- What is your number one barrier to enjoying life together in your marriage?

CLOSING

[10 minutes]

- Give opportunities for couples to ask questions or share additional thoughts.
- Discuss the date and time of your next meeting and how to come prepared:
 - Read the next two chapters (3-4).
 - Keep tracking their Laughter Scores.
- Pray for the group and your next several weeks together.

*Group Leader Tip:

Discussion questions are meant to be a helpful tool - not a checklist to complete - so don't feel like you have to get through every question! As you're preparing each week, discern the top two questions you want to hit on and start with those. Then you can add more if time allows.



MEETING 2:

CHAPTERS 3 & 4



"If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame." - Proverbs 18:13

WELCOME & PRAYER

[5 minutes]

- Welcome couples back and take a minute to set the tone by opening in a brief prayer.
- As an icebreaker, share your pet names for your spouse with the group.

GROUP DISCUSSION

[35 minutes]

Use the following questions to guide the discussion on chapters 3 & 4:

- Ask couples to share how they are doing with their Laughter Scores.
- On a scale of 1-10 how funny are you? How about your spouse?
- Is there any inappropriate humor in your marriage that needs to be eliminated?
- Which type of listener are you: nodder, eye-roller, bored, distracted, eye-wanderer, watch-glancer, scroller, one-upper, one-downer, over-validator, bottom-liner, sentence-completer, interviewer, debater, or hijacker?
- Do disagreements over mundane issues sabotage the fun in your marriage? How has this played out for you over the past few weeks?

CLOSING

[15 minutes]

- Give instructions for next week.
 - Read chapters 5 & 6 & do the activities at the end of each chapter.
 - Challenge couples to create their own "Ten Commandments for Listening to My Spouse".
 - Practice using the "improv technique" for disagreements.
 - Come ready to share who their "backup singers" are and give some examples of marriage champions who have encouraged them.
- Pray for God to multiply the fun in each marriage.

****Group Leader Tip:**

At times, couples may be tempted to "throw their spouse under the bus." Use these moments to redirect and model building one another up rather than tearing down.

MEETING 3:

CHAPTERS 5 & 6



"For a marriage to sing and dance, for two people to make beautiful music together, they need to play, not work, at their marriage." -Leonard Sweet

WELCOME & PRAYER

[5 minutes]

- Welcome couples back and take a minute to set the tone by opening in a brief prayer.
- Share "Your Song" as a couple with the group. If you are really fun and brave, sing it to the group and see if they can guess the song.

GROUP DISCUSSION

[35 minutes]

Use the following questions to guide the discussion on chapters 5 & 6:

- Ask couples to share how they are doing with their Laughter Scores.
- When was the last time you laughed with each other over a household chore?
- Who are the "back up singers" in your marriage? Does the volume on their voices need to be "turned up" or "down?"
- Are you investing in any couples? Share some examples & encourage each other to look for ways to champion the marriages of those around you.

CLOSING

[15 minutes]

- Give instructions for next week.
 - Read chapters 7 & 8 and do the activities at the end of each chapter.
 - Challenge spouses to do something awkward or uncomfortable for their husband/wife as an act of love. [ex., pray together, do a shared activity...
- Pray for each marriage to have healthy back-up singers.

****Group Leader Tip:**

Some couples might not have healthy "backup singers" in their marriage. Help them understand the importance of inviting other couples to speak life and wisdom into their marriage. Explain how all the couples in your group can become those marriage champions for each other.



MEETING 4:

CHAPTERS 7 & 8



"Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." - Philippians 4:8

WELCOME & PRAYER

[5 minutes]

- Welcome couples back and take a minute to set the tone by opening in a brief prayer.
- Share your funniest moment together from this past week.

GROUP DISCUSSION

[35 minutes]

Use the following questions to guide the discussion on chapters 7 & 8:

- Ask couples to share how they are doing with their Laughter Scores.
- What are the activities you enjoyed doing as a couple when you were dating that you wish you could do again?
- What are the potential threats - "little foxes" - in your marriage that you need to "chase off?"
- Go around and have couples share a word of honor about their spouse.

CLOSING

[15 minutes]

- Give instructions for next week.
 - Read chapter 9 and do the "extra credit"
 - Challenge spouses to start an "Honor List" for each other that they can add to over the years. They can begin by using the fill-in-the-blanks on page 161 of the book.
 - Bring your total laughter scores next week to see which couple wins!
 - Decide as a group what your final week's activity will be.
- Pray for the strength and wisdom to chase off each of the "little foxes" couples mentioned earlier.

****Group Leader Tip:**

See next page for ideas for next week's activity.



Activity Ideas for Meeting 5

“Potluck” style dinner

- Have a “theme” - mexican, italian, etc...
- Everyone bring a dish to share
- Around the table, have couples answer one of the following questions -

If I could eat only one dessert for the rest of my life it would be_____.

If I could live in a foreign country for a year I would choose_____ because _____.

If someone made a movie about my life and I could choose the actor to play my part I would choose _____ because_____.

- After dinner - do the “60-second calorie burn” activity on page 192 in the book.

Game Night and Snacks

- Choose a game that doesn’t require a lot of strategy, i.e., “Spoons,” “Pit,” or “I doubt it”(card game).
- Have everyone bring a snack to share
- Using the list of “NST’s” on page 195 of the book, see which couple can get all 12 before the end of the night.

Destination Activity

- Do something together as a group - mini golf, boating, Escape Room, etc.
- Using the list of “NST’s” on page 195 of the book, see which couple can get all 12 before the end of the night.

MEETING 5:

CHAPTER 9



*"Laughter is the most beautiful and beneficial therapy God ever granted humanity."
- Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

WELCOME

[5 minutes]

- Welcome couples back and give instructions for this week's plan.
- Ask couples to share their total Laughter Scores.
- Give a small prize to the winning couple!

CLOSING

[15 minutes]

- Pray a brief prayer over each couple and then close
- Encourage them to pick up a "Crockpot" candle on their way home!
- Discuss ways to stay in touch.
 - Continue to meet as a group.
 - Meet occasionally after a weekend service to catch-up and encourage each other.
 - Create a group chat where you can continue to share laughter moment and be back-up singers for each other.

ACTIVITY

[1 hour]

- This week is about helping couples put their new laughter skills to practice by intentionally creating a fun, joy-filled environment.
- Look back at the activity suggestion page for conversation starters and questions to use during your activity.

