



It was St. Athanasius who said the cross was the only form of death he knew where you did with arms outstretched. See the cross as the story of a God who looks at you as he stretches his arms upon the cross and declares, “Want to know how much I love you? I love you this much.”

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Introduction: Watch Mark Powell discuss the Isenheim Altarpiece here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0SmKvjGSy0&ab\\_channel=NathanGuy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0SmKvjGSy0&ab_channel=NathanGuy)

Paintings:  
Ford Madox Brown, *Jesus Washes Peter's Feet* (1852)  
Masaccio, *The Holy Trinity* (1427)  
Grunewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece* (1516)

**THE UPPER ROOM.** Read **John 13:1-17**. How does the story taking place in the upper room remind us or get us ready for the story of the cross? Follow up: **Read Isaiah 53**. How does Jesus in the upper room reveal his role and identification as the suffering servant?

**A STORY OF LOVE.** Read **John 13:1 & Romans 5:8**. How is the cross a story of love? **Read John 3:16; 1 Jn 4:9-10; Gal 2:20**. The cross appears to be the main way God demonstrates his love. Do you see the cross more as horror or love? Discuss. How does the atonement theory of Abelard (“moral exemplar // emotive theory”) that the cross exhibits the greatest and purest love strike you?

**A UNITED STORY.** Read **John 13:3 & Romans 5:8**. Does it appear God is divided on the cross? **Follow up: Read Gal 2:20; Acts 20:28; Heb 9:14**. All three members of the Trinity are present/involved in the cross. Reflect on Masaccio’s 1427 fresco. **Reflection: Does God abandon Jesus?**

**SACRIFICED FOR US.** Read **John 13: 12, 15 & Romans 5: 6, 8**. Reflect on what Jesus does “for” his disciples. **Now read Gal 2:20 & 1 Pet 3:18**. What does it mean that Jesus died “for” us? Tim Keller says real love is “personal exchange.” What does that mean?

**SUFFERED WITH US.** Read **Jn 3:18 & Rom 5:9-10**. Reflect on the language of being “with” Jesus and Jesus being “with” us. At the judgment, we will be “with” him and be found “in” him. How is there assurance in Jesus’ solidarity with us?

**IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF US.** Read **John 13:4-5, 18, 26 & Rom 5:6, 8**. Think about how Jesus chooses to belong to a group that includes Peter and Judas to “share bread” (Jn 13:18). Jesus is killed as a common criminal. **Read Isaiah 53:9, 12**. List all the people or ways that Jesus “identifies” with humanity. Go through stories in the gospels. Who does Jesus “stand with”?