Discussion Guide
The Foolish Wisdom of God

GETTING STARTED

As you have grown older, what did you used to believe was wise, but now you consider it foolish? What happened?
What would happen to a church who centered themselves around the message of the cross? How would this change what we think is important/vital/necessary? What would become less important to you personally?

QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?
What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

What kind of categories do we put people in?
What categories does God put people in? Why? How does this inform us about what we value?
What divides these two groups?
What is it about "the message of the cross" that is divisive?
Now discuss how or what can Christians divide over today?
What kind of letter (or excerpt in a letter) would Paul write to the church today?
Why does Paul highlight 'two kinds of people' (those who think they are wise and those who are Jews or Greeks)? What do they get wrong about God's plan of salvation?
How has God "made foolish the wisdom of the world'?
How is pride a root cause that prevents people from surrendering their lives to the message of the cross?
What would it look like for you to be a "holy fool" in your life?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE DEEPER [1 Corinthians 1:18-26]

(Yes, these questions can seem silly, however, good discussion and interpretation of the Bible begins with having a proper understanding of the basic facts; who, what, when, and where in the text.) Work through this quickly, the answers are fairly obvious.

To whom is the message of the Cross foolishness? (1:18)
To whom is the message of the Cross powerful? (1:18)
How can people hear the message of Christ differently? (1:18)
What does God's message mean to the person being saved? (1:18)
How does the message of the Cross contrast with what most people consider wise? (1:18-19)
How does God get His message across? (1:19-31)
How does God's wisdom contrast with the world's wisdom? (1:20)
How did the demands of the Jews and Greeks contrast with the Corinthians' hope? (1:22-23)
How do God's attributes compare with ours? (1:25-26)

QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

Why do Christians and non-Christians value the message of Christ so differently?
What are some examples of the world's wisdom?
What common difficulties do people mention when trying to understand the gospel of Christ?
What are some doctrines of the Christian faith that are difficult for non-Christians to understand?
When have you heard non-Christians balk at the message of Christ?
How has God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
In what ways do God's commands seem like foolishness to the non-Christians you know?
What difference should it make in your life to know that God chooses the weak and lowly people of the world to do His work?
What unbelievers have you known who wanted miraculous signs or airtight philosophical proofs before believing in Christ?
Why do you think people demand signs, or proof, of God?
What's wrong with demanding signs, or proof, from God?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?
What do you need to stop, start or do differently as a result of reading this passage?
How can we pray for each other?