

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

MOODS

JANUARY 6, 2021

Week 1 of a 4-week series
about emotions

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus frees us from being
controlled by our emotions.

SCRIPTURE

*For it is from within, out of
a person's heart, that evil
thoughts come.*

- Mark 7:21a NIV

*Come to me all you who are
weary and burdened, and I
will give you rest.*

- Matthew 11:28 NIV

*Peace I leave with you; my
peace I give you. I do not give
to you as the world gives.*

*Do not let your hearts be
troubled and do not be afraid.*

- John 14:27 NIV

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To help students recognize
and name the emotions
they may be feeling. To
remind students that
trusting Jesus to lead
them is healthier than
being controlled by their
emotions.

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This Small Group Guide consists of five “Do This” activities and no “Discuss This.” That’s for a reason! Talking about feelings can be difficult, awkward, or just plain impossible for middle schoolers. Rather than asking direct questions, inviting them to participate in group activities or application exercises will help them express themselves more easily and without as much apprehension. Remember, they may not have the vocabulary yet to express how they feel. They may even become frustrated when trying to put words to their feelings! This Small Group time is a great opportunity to help them begin finding the awareness of what they’re feeling and the best words to describe it. As you move through these activities, make sure you reiterate to your group that this is a safe space for them to say what they want to say about whatever it is they’re feeling!

>> DURING GROUP

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

DO THIS:

- Scatter the provided emoji cards on the floor in the middle of your group and ask your students to select one card to represent how they’re feeling today. Then, go around the group and let everybody explain why they picked the card they did.
- Going around the group, students should name as many feelings as they can as quickly as possible. Each student will have 3 seconds to name a feeling that no one has already called out. If a student can’t name a feeling that someone else hasn’t, they’re out. (Note: Depending on your group dynamic, this can be a game of elimination or a game played just for fun.)
- Play the “Alphabet Feelings” game. As a group, brainstorm as many feelings words as you can for each letter of the alphabet. If you have extra time, let students pick their favorite word and describe a situation where somebody might feel that way.
- Introduce the provided “Feelings Wheel” to your group and explain that as you move from the center of the wheel outward, the feelings get more complex. Put the Feelings Wheel in the center of the group as a conversation aid.
 - As a group, assign the most appropriate word from the wheel to each of the provided emoji cards.
 - Ask students to tell about a time they felt one of the emotions in the center of the wheel. Then, challenge them to more clearly describe the emotion using the more descriptive words provided. (Tip: You may need to define some of the less familiar words. Feel free to Google them!)
- Ask this: “On a scale of 1-10 how comfortable are you talking about emotions?” Have your group stand and move around your space to show where they fall on the scale. Acknowledge how everyone picked different spots on the scale and that your group is a safe place for everyone to talk about their emotions if and when they’re ready.

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HIGH
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THINK ABOUT THIS: At this phase, students may be feeling complex emotions but not have the vocabulary to name what they're feeling beyond basic words like happy, sad, mad. Teaching the vocabulary to name emotions will be the first step to helping your group discover how to manage them. As the leader, be careful to not make assumptions about what a student does or does not feel based on how they express their emotions. Many factors can lead a teenager to mask or hide feelings rather than process or share them. Give each student the space to talk openly and discover how their emotions may be affecting them. Familiarize yourself with the emotions wheel prior to this week's meeting. You'll use this wheel to help students identify emotions for the next few weeks.

>> DURING GROUP

Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed and ask thoughtful follow-up questions as the conversation unfolds. Don't feel like you need to answer every question.

DISCUSS THIS:

Take some time to explain what the Feelings Wheel is and how to use it. Simply start in the center with primary emotions, then move outwards to more specifically describe the emotion.

- Using the Feelings Wheel, ask: Which of these emotions (in the center) did you feel this week? Which ones (in the outer circles) best describe the emotion you felt?
- What is something that most people believe about emotions and how they should be expressed by:
 - Guys
 - Girls
 - Older people
 - Younger people
- Have you ever seen someone being controlled by their emotions? On TV? At school? Online? At home? Describe what you saw.
- Do you usually share the emotions you are feeling, or do you hide them from other people? Why?
- Read Matthew 11:28 (Note: Try reading it first in the NIV version, then reread it in the Message version). Do you feel that what Jesus is saying is even possible?
- How do you take your emotions to Jesus? What does that look like practically?
- How would your life look different if you were confident that the emotions you feel no longer controlled how you treated yourself and others around you?
- What are some words that you can use to tell someone how you feel? What are some words that you can use to tell God how you feel?

TRY THIS:

- Have your students take a picture of the emotions wheel and this week, check in with them to ask where they are with their emotions.