

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE SCHOOL FOCUS

BEFORE I GO

APRIL 19, 2023

Week 3 of a 4-week series
about Jesus' last words

BOTTOM LINE

Be real with God.

SCRIPTURE

He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

- Luke 22:41-42 NLT

He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.

- Luke 22:44 NLT

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To help students be open and honest with God about what they're feeling and to choose to trust God no matter what

 **PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Middle schoolers feel a lot of feelings. In this phase of development, they're literally being bombarded with new and ever-changing feelings on a minute-to-minute basis. What makes that even more difficult is, while they're feeling all the feelings, they likely don't have the vocabulary yet to talk about them. Beyond the basics (happy, sad, mad, etc.), they may struggle to actually name what it is they're feeling as they're feeling it. That makes being honest with anyone about their feelings, including God, a challenge. Try breaking out the provided Feeling's Wheel during this week's conversation. It will not only introduce them to a broader vocabulary around their feelings, it will also give them more opportunities to be honest with you, others in their small group, and even God during the conversation this week.

>> 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.

DISCUSS THIS:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable are you talking about your feelings?
- What's one reason people might try to hide how they really feel from others?
- What's one reason people might try to hide how they feel from God?
- Do you think God really cares about how you feel? Why or why not?
- What might change about your faith if you chose to be honest with God no matter what?
- How might being honest with God help you trust God more?

DO THIS:

Pass out the provided "Getting Real With God" journal page and a pen to each of your students and ask them to fill it out during your time together. Have the provided Feelings Wheel available for students to use if they need help choosing a word to describe how they are feeling. When everyone is finished, ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote with the group.

If you have extra time, pick words from the Feelings Wheel and invite students to share about times they have felt that feeling.

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

HIGH SCHOOL FOCUS

BEFORE I GO

APRIL 19, 2023

Week 3 of a 4-week series
about Jesus' last words

BOTTOM LINE

Be real with God.

SCRIPTURE

He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

- Luke 22:41-42 NLT

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GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To help students be open and honest with God about what they're feeling and to choose to trust God no matter what

 **PRINCE
OF PEACE**
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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Remember that talking about what they're feeling will not come easily to all of your students. While some may jump into the conversation easily, others may struggle. That isn't because they don't have feelings or even because they don't know what they're feeling. It could be because of the context, community, or culture they've grown up in. For some, expressing their feelings is something they've been taught not to do. So, as you encourage them to work on expressing those feelings to God, be aware that you may have students in your circle who will find this not only challenging but also counterintuitive to what they've been taught their whole lives.

>> 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:

- On a scale of "I hate it!" to "I love it!", where do you land when it comes to talking about your feelings?
- Where do you typically feel most comfortable talking about what you're feeling?
- Share about a time you felt like you had to hide the way you really felt.
- Using the provided "Feelings Wheel," what words could you use to describe how you view God? Start in the middle of the wheel and move outward to more specific words.
- Have you ever felt like God wasn't on your side? How did that impact the way you interacted with or talked to God?
- What can stand in the way of being real with God about anything, including what you're feeling?
- Have you ever let your feelings convince you to believe something that wasn't necessarily true? Share about that experience.
- How might remembering what's true about who God is help us be consistently real in our relationship with God?
- What might change about your relationship with God if you started being real?
- What's one thing you can do to start being real with God about what you feel?

>> AFTER GROUP

Take a picture of the Feelings Wheel and text it to your group this week. While the vocabulary around our feelings may seem obvious to us, remember that your students may not have this language just yet. Using a tool like this can help them begin to develop a more robust vocabulary around their feelings as well as help them be aware of what they're feeling, maybe for the first time!