

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE SCHOOL FOCUS

I WONDER

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

Week 2 of a 3-week series
about the relationship
between science and faith

BOTTOM LINE

You can trust the WHO
as you explore the HOW.

SCRIPTURE

*The Son is the image of the
invisible God, the firstborn
over all creation. For in him
all things were created ... He
is before all things, and in
him all things hold together.*

- Colossians 1:15-17 NIV

*Jesus replied, "You must love
the Lord your God with all
your heart, all your soul, and
all your mind." This is the first
and greatest commandment."*

- Matthew 22:37-38 NLT

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students realize that
their questions don't have
to keep them from growing
in faith; being curious about
creation can point them
toward the Creator.

 **PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: As a small group leader, your job this week isn't to answer the questions your students ask about science and faith. It's simply to create an open dialogue that will subsequently create a safe space for them to ask their questions or express their doubts. Because so much of the conversation centers around how questions and why questions, take time to distinguish the difference between those kinds of questions and the value in each one. And again, try to avoid debate or lengthy conversations about potentially controversial topics here. While you want students to express themselves freely, heated debates or arguments can derail the safety of the group and the conversation you're trying to have. At any point, be quick to redirect however you can!

>> 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:

- Where did you see God today?
- What's one thing you've learned about science that taught you something really cool about God?

DO THIS:

Create two columns on a piece of copy paper. In the first column, have students list some of their how questions. In the second column, ask students to list some of their why questions. (Give an example to start things off like "How does gravity work?" or "Why do giraffes have such long necks?")

- How might asking both how and why help you discover more about God and science?

DO THIS:

Using the provided "creation fact cards," talk about how these scientific facts connect to God or help us learn more about God.

STUMIN

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HIGH SCHOOL FOCUS

I WONDER

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: If we believe in and follow God, we shouldn't struggle with doubt or grapple with questions that relate to our faith, right? We all know that's just not reality. This week, we want to encourage students to be comfortable with their doubts and questions and more than that, to see the search for answers as a process that can strengthen their faith overall. Let them talk about their doubts and encourage them to ask questions. Your role isn't to provide answers or conclusions, but to remind them that their faith and trust in God isn't threatened by either.

>> 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:

- Have you ever felt like you had to choose between thinking critically about big topics and being a person who is known for following Jesus? Tell us more about your experience.
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable do you feel asking questions:
 - ◇ At home?
 - ◇ At church?
 - ◇ At school?
 - ◇ With friends?
 - ◇ On social media?
- Who do you usually go to when you have questions? Why?
- When it comes to faith, what might make someone have doubts or questions?
- Do you think doubt and faith can exist together?
- What's one helpful way to deal with doubt when it comes to faith?
- "You can trust the WHO as you explore the HOW." How does that statement impact the way you feel about following God?

DO THIS:

Using the provided Feelings Wheel, how do you think God feels about your questions and doubts? Discuss why you chose the words you did.

TRY THIS:

Challenge your students to write down their doubts, questions or just some things they wonder about this week and to try talking to God about those things. The point isn't to get answers but to get practice with talking to God about the things we find confusing.