

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

NEVER GIVE UP

OCTOBER 12, 2022

Week 4 of a 4-week series
about resilience

BOTTOM LINE

Never give up on you.

SCRIPTURE

*No, in all these things
we are more than
conquerors through him
[Christ] who loved us.*

- Romans 8:37 NIV

*For our light and momentary
troubles are achieving for
us an eternal glory that
far outweighs them all.*

- 2 Corinthians 4:17 NIV

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to recognize their ability to be resilient in the face of challenges and difficult circumstances and to embrace opportunities to build resilience.

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: In a conversation about resilience, it's important to remind your students that choosing to be resilient in the face of struggles doesn't mean our struggles end. Difficult circumstances will always bring a certain level of stress and anxiety, and resilience doesn't necessarily change that. What it does change is the way students see themselves and their ability to respond to their setbacks. One of the best ways we make this change is to remember that in God's eyes, there is nothing we can't do, be, or conquer. We want students to believe that when setbacks come (and they will), they have what it takes to get through them. Guide your students by asking questions that help reframe how they look at their setbacks. Say things like, "What do you think you can do to handle that?" or "What have you learned from that experience?" or even just a simple reminder of "I know you have what it takes to get through this. Do you see that in yourself?" This will get their wheels turning to look at their difficulties with a different perspective, and to grow in confidence that they have the ability to be resilient in the face of them.

>> 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:

- What's one example of a setback a middle schooler might face?
- How might someone respond when they experience a setback?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how resilient do you think you are when setbacks happen? Can you share a story about a time you bounced back from a setback?
- Read Romans 8:37 NIV all together out loud. What are your thoughts about this verse?
- In your own words, what does it mean to be a "conqueror"?
- How might believing you are a conqueror change the way you face setbacks in life?

DO THIS:

Pass out the provided resource to remind your students of what God says is true about them no matter what. Practice looking up the verses in a Bible or on the YouVersion Bible app. Ask for a volunteer to read each passage out loud.

DO THIS:

Pass out copy paper and pens and encourage your group members to write a letter of encouragement to themselves to read in the future when they're tempted to give up on themselves.

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: At this phase, students may feel a lot of existential angst and in this culture, it is common to make mental health issues the punch line of a joke. If you see this happening in your group, make sure to ask clarifying questions, follow up with students, and be on the lookout for students who are showing signs of feeling hopeless. Seek out StuMin leadership if you think a student may need a little extra support or is in danger of harming themselves or others.

>> 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:

- If you could pick a word to describe the way you normally see yourself in the face of troubles, what would it be?
- If you could choose a word to describe the way you want to see yourself in the face of troubles, what would it be?
- Practically speaking, what do you think it means to “not give up on yourself”?
- Why do you think it’s tempting for us to give up on ourselves at times?
- What are some small things (like cleaning your room, self-care, going for a walk, etc.) that could help you change your outlook in challenging seasons?
- Are you facing a challenging or seemingly hopeless circumstance right now? If you’re comfortable, tell us about it. What would resilience look like for you in this specific circumstance? How can our group support you with this challenge?

DO THIS:

Have your students brainstorm 2 or 3 things they can incorporate into their routines this week to level up their hope. They may choose things like picking a day to all clean their rooms, curating a “pump up” playlist on Spotify together, or finding time to study together in the class they want to give up in.

DO THIS:

Work together to look up and read some of the scripture passages referenced in the message about how God sees us. Challenge kids to pick a favorite and memorize it this week.

Created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27); Fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14); Known (Jeremiah 1:5); A new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17); Alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-5); Righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21); Forgiven (Ephesians 1:7); Holy (Hebrews 10:14); Blameless (Colossians 1:22); Loved (Romans 8:31-39); Deeply loved (1 John 2:12-14); Made right with God (2 Corinthians 5:18)