

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

STEP BY STEP

OCTOBER 26, 2022

Week 1 of a 5-week series
about transformation

BOTTOM LINE

The Holy Spirit is our guide.

SCRIPTURE

*The thief comes only to steal
and kill and destroy; I have
come that they may have life,
and have it to the full.*

- John 10:10 NIV

*But the fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, [patience],
kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness
and self-control.*

- Galatians 5:22-23a NIV

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To introduce students to
the way the Spirit works
in their lives

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This week's conversation introduces two potentially new and/or hard-to-grasp concepts to your group: the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. You may have students who have grown up in church and heard these terms before, or you may have students who are hearing them for the first time. Keep in mind that while these are foundational truths to our faith, they are also abstract concepts that some middle schoolers may struggle to understand. You're planting the seeds now for a conversation that will grow not just over the next five weeks in this series, but also as your students grow and develop an everyday faith. Students will be encouraged to shift their perspective to start looking for evidence of God and the Holy Spirit at work in their daily lives. Ask concrete questions to facilitate this such as: "Where did you see God's love today?" or "Where did you see someone show patience today?" or "Where did God give you self-control today?"

>> 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:

- Tell us about a time you noticed something cool that nobody else noticed.
- Explain the Holy Spirit in your own words. Explain what the fruit of the Spirit is in your own words.
- Why do you think it's important to actually look for how God is working in our daily lives?

DO THIS:

Give each student a couple of sticky notes and a pen. Take a few moments to talk about where they may have seen God this past week through the fruit of the Spirit. Have them answer one or two of these questions on a sticky note and place it in the middle of your small group circle:

Where did you see _____ this week? (Fill in the blank with each of the nine fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)

DISCUSS THIS:

- Was it easy or hard for you to think of things to write? Why?
- What makes it difficult to see what God's doing in or around you?
- Go around the circle and have everyone answer the following questions using one word. Challenge them not to repeat words!
 - How does it feel to know God is working, even when we don't realize it?
 - How does it feel to know that because of the Holy Spirit, you're not alone?

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Remember that the idea of “the good life” means something different to everyone—the rich life, the productive life, the influential life, the free-spirit life. Students may hear that phrase and immediately think it means the promise of good grades, great circumstances, and everything to work out the way they want. We don’t want to leave students assuming that following Jesus is the key to “the good life” in terms of what the world promises. Rather, we want to make the distinction that this “good life”—the real “good life”—is about the work the Spirit does in us as we follow God with our 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:

- What are some areas in your life where you tend to operate on auto pilot?
- Describe getting ready for school on auto pilot. Now describe how you would get ready for school if you were fully present, and aware of everything around you. What are some of the main differences?
- What are some things going on in THE world and/or YOUR world that make you think “There has got to be more to life than this...”
- How would you describe what it means to live the good or fully-alive life?
- How has the way you define the good life changed since you’ve been in high school? How do you imagine it might change after high school?

Leader Note: connect students back to the idea of the Holy Spirit here. Say something like, “Everything we’re talking about today is connected to the Holy Spirit. Let’s talk a little bit more about that together.”

- When you hear the term, “Holy Spirit,” what comes to mind?
- How might the Holy Spirit help you pursue the good life?
- Look back at Paul’s list in Galatians 5:22-23. Which of these things do you wish you were experiencing more of in your life?
- How might those things contribute to helping you live the good life?

TRY THIS:

Challenge your students to pick a routine part of their life where they are prone to living on auto pilot and have them discuss with one another the details they don’t usually pay attention to in that circumstance. Challenge them to live “fully aware” the next time they have that experience and report back to the group via a group text what that was like. (Leaders: Facilitate this experience by asking good follow-up questions to encourage engagement. Whenever possible, link their experiences back to the Holy Spirit.)