

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE SCHOOL FOCUS

NEVER GIVE UP

OCTOBER 5, 2022

Week 3 of a 4-week series
about resilience

BOTTOM LINE

Never give up on others.

SCRIPTURE

*Get Mark and bring him with
you, because he is helpful to
me in my ministry.*

-2 Timothy 4:11b NIV

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To remind students of the
value of inviting others
into their lives when they
face challenges, and to
encourage them to be a
support to their friends and
loved ones who are facing
challenges.

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This week's message teaches students the value of vulnerability. It's all about encouraging them to be open with their struggles and finding the language to invite others into what they're going through. It's designed to help them not only see that they can trust others with their difficult circumstances or hard times, but that there is value in opening up about those things. It's essentially helping them see the difference between choosing to push people away and choosing to let people in. But as you well know, vulnerability isn't natural or easy for most of us. It requires a level of self-awareness and humility that middle schoolers are still developing. It also requires the ability to recognize who can be trusted to help them through their struggles and who simply won't be a healthy or helpful resource to them in that specific instance. Some students may have been raised to resist trusting others at all! For them, even taking the smallest step toward opening up to someone could be a huge deal. The expectation isn't that you'll help your students develop all of these skills at one time. Rather, it's that you will encourage them to take a step toward vulnerability with themselves, others, and God.

>> 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 thing that's better with friends?
- On a scale of 1-10, how important do you think it is to have other people help you through challenges?
- Why do you think some people pull away from their friends and families when facing challenges?
- How can other people help us through challenges we might go through?
- How can we help someone else when they're going through a challenge?

DO THIS:

Scatter the provided cards in the middle of your group. Ask everyone to pick one card with a challenge of how they're going to not give up on others this week.

DISCUSS THIS:

- Who is one person you can ask for help when you're going through something challenging?

DO THIS:

Pass out the provided conversation guide to your group members. Tell them to use it when they want to share something difficult they're going through with someone else.

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HIGH
SCHOOL
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To remind students of the value of inviting others into their lives when they face challenges, and to encourage them to be a support to their friends and loved ones who are facing challenges.

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This week, as you talk about not giving up on others, make sure students understand that this doesn't mean they shouldn't have boundaries, nor should they tolerate abuse. You can do this by helping students distinguish between healthy and unhealthy patterns in relationships. For those students who express loneliness or cannot name someone they trust, be sure to follow up with them during the week and consider how you can help your small group become a safe place for them.

>> 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 needed the help of a friend? Tell us what that was like.
- What's one reason you might want to give up on accepting someone else's help?
- What makes it difficult to invite other people into the messy parts of our lives?
- Who is one person in your life that you go to for help when life is overwhelming?
- What is it about that person that makes you trust them in those moments?
- What's the benefit of choosing resilience in your relationships?
- Think about the qualities you'd look for in an ideal friend. List as many as you can.
- Of those qualities listed, which ones do you see in yourself? Which ones do you need to work on?
- Think about the people in your life on a regular basis (at school, on your team, in your neighborhood, at church, in your family, etc.). Who could benefit from your help and support in the face of hard things right now? What is one action step you can take to be a supportive friend to that person in that situation?

DO THIS:

Encourage your group to brainstorm nice things they could do for a friend or fun things they could do with a friend this week. Challenge them to pick a specific idea, a specific friend, and a specific time and commit to doing it.

>> AFTER GROUP

Start a text chat with your group members asking them to report back how their "DO THIS" activity turned out.