

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

CHEAT CODES

MARCH 8, 2023

Week 2 of a 4-week series about the relationship between wisdom and faith

BOTTOM LINE

Your character matters.

SCRIPTURE

Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

- Proverbs 4:25-27 NLT

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand what good character is and why it's valuable to their lives, and to encourage them to see how the choices they're making now can impact their character

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This week, we're talking about how wisdom helps us build character. Though they may be familiar with the word, be sure to define what you mean by character as you begin the conversation. Character is who we are, even when no one is watching. It's the way we choose to live and treat others. And good character comes with the help of God's wisdom in our lives! As you talk this week, focus the conversation around what good, strong character looks like instead of talking about what makes bad character. You don't want to inadvertently shame or call out a student who may not be applying wisdom to their own character just yet! So, focus on the good to encourage them in who they can become as they walk with Jesus. And who's the best example for good character? Jesus Himself! So, point your group to the character of Jesus as a model for them to look to. It's not so much about changing their behaviors to try to become someone different. Instead, it's about letting the wisdom of the Holy Spirit into their hearts to make them more like Jesus.

>> 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:

- If you had to list three qualities about yourself on your social media bio that describe your character, what would you choose? Do you think the people you know well would choose the same qualities to describe you? Why or why not?
- In your own words, how would you explain "character"?
- How does someone build good character?

TRY THIS:

- Scatter the provided scenario cards in the middle of your group and ask your students to talk about how they'd respond with character/wisdom in each situation.
- If you have extra time, talk about some favorite movies or TV shows and ask, "Where did someone show good character?"
- End by discussing things they know about Jesus that model good character.

DISCUSS THIS:

- Why do you think character matters?
- How are wisdom and character connected?
- How might the choices you make impact your character?
- What's one thing you can do today to build good character?
- Share about a recent choice you made that showed good character.

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Reputation may be a tricky subject for your students. For some, the reputation they have is the one they want. For others, their reputation feels unfair, undeserved, and unchanging no matter what. There's a tension here for students in that, for better or for worse, they have little control over what others think of them. Instead of focusing on the reputation they have, focus the conversation on character. Developing character is one thing they can control. Encourage students to develop character not so that others will notice but because they want to be the person God made them to be—a person who chooses wisdom and walks in integrity no matter what!

>> 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:

- In your own words, tell us what "reputation" means to you.
- What things might make up a high schooler's reputation?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how much control do you think someone has over their reputation?
- In what ways can the reputation you have feel frustrating or unfair?
- In today's message "character" was defined as "who we are, even when no one is watching." How would you describe "character" in your own words?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you think about the choices you make on a daily basis?
- How might being more intentional with your day-to-day choices impact your character?
- How might focusing on developing a good character impact your reputation?
- What's one way you can work on developing character this week through
 - the way you treat other people.
 - the way you show up and work hard at practice or at school.
 - the choices you make that impact your life and the lives of others.
 - the friends you let influence your life.
 - the way you connect with and look to God for wisdom.