

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

FAMILY MATTERS

OCTOBER 21, 2020

Week 3 of a 4-week series
about family

BOTTOM LINE

When your family changes,
God's promises matter.

SCRIPTURE

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every
activity under the heavens ...*

- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

*When you pass through the
waters, I will be with you; and
when you pass through the
rivers, they will not sweep
over you. When you walk
through the fire, you will
not be burned; the flames
will not set you ablaze.*

- Isaiah 43:2 NIV

*So do not fear, for I am with
you; do not be dismayed,
for I am your God. I will
strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my
righteous right hand.*

- Isaiah 41:10 NIV

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students navigate
changes in their families
by knowing and trusting in
God's promises.

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Change is inevitable for every family. As your students talk about this, remember that if they haven't experienced or recognized a major change in their home yet, they will soon. Encourage them with the truth that not all change has to be bad. And keep in mind that in this phase, every change will feel like a big deal. Though it may seem small to you, even the slightest changes in their home can feel as if their entire world has shifted. Be quick to encourage your small group members to keep the right perspective when faced with change, but be careful not to downplay or dismiss the changes anybody is experiencing, even if they don't seem that significant compared to others.

>> 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:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable are you dealing with any kind of change . . .
 - ◊ In your friend group?
 - ◊ At school?
 - ◊ On your team?
 - ◊ With your family?
- Share one example of something in your family that's currently changing, either for the positive or negative. (For example, a new baby, a sibling going to college, a dad losing his job, moving, divorce, re-marriage, etc.)
- How might knowing God never changes help you deal with changes in your family?

DO THIS:

Spread out the provided scenario cards face down in the middle of your circle. Have a student grab one and read it out loud to the group. As a group, discuss one thing that could be good about that situation and one thing someone in a family experiencing that change might be feeling about the situation.

- What's one thing that's helpful to remember when your family is going through a change?
- This week, what's one step you can take to show your family you care about them, even as things may be changing?

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: In this phase, any change for students can feel sudden and unexpected. And given where students are developmentally, they are likely to only see change through the lens of how it affects them, and no one else. Encourage them to consider how change in families affects everyone differently and to try and see the change not just through their own eyes, but the eyes of others in their family as well.

>> 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 is your favorite season? What do you love most about it?
- What is one of the best changes that has ever happened to you?
- Share about a change in your life that was totally unexpected?
- How do you typically respond to change? How does your family as a whole typically respond to change?
- What is one big change you or your family has experienced in the past year? How did you handle it?
- Why do you think changes within our families typically feel extra difficult?
- Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. Share a story about a time you have experienced one of the "times" listed in the verses.
- Read Isaiah 41:10. How many promises are listed in this verse? What are they? Share about a time in your life when God was faithful to you in keeping one or more of these promises.
- How can this group help you work through change in your life and in your family?

>> AFTER GROUP

This week's topic may have brought up a lot of emotions for your group members because of family changes they have experienced, or are currently experiencing. Think back on the conversation you had during small group this week. Follow up with students you think may need help further processing your small group time. You can also reach out to each student individually for prayer requests regarding family changes, as some students may not be ready to share such personal topics in a group.