

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

FAMILY MATTERS OCTOBER 28, 2020

Week 4 of a 4-week series
about family

BOTTOM LINE

Belonging to the family of
God matters.

SCRIPTURE

*And Jonathan made a
covenant with David
because he loved him as
himself.*

- 1 Samuel 18:3 NIV

*And let us consider how
we may spur one another
on toward love and
good deeds, not giving
up meeting together, as
some are in the habit of
doing, but encouraging
one another – and all the
more as you see the Day
approaching.*

- Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To show students that not
all families are the same.
To encourage students to
connect with non-biological
families and the family of God.

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This week will be key for those of your students in unique family situations. Those who are adopted, living in foster care, surrounded by dysfunction, being raised by someone other than their parents, spending most of their family time with friends—this conversation will be especially important for them. Not only are you creating space for them to open up about unique family dynamics or situations they may be in, you're also giving them the reassurance that they're not alone in however they may be feeling about their family. And on top of that, you're giving them a place to belong and connect to a family within your Small Group. Belonging is important for all students in the middle school phase!

>> 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 friendship portrayed on TV, in a movie, or in a book is your favorite? What about that friendship is appealing to you?
- What's one way a friend can be more like family?
- Why do you think it's important to have friends who feel like family?
- Who is one person outside of your family that feels like family to you?
- How can we create a small group that feels like the family of God?
(Note: After your group thinks about this, dig deeper by doing the "Do This" activities.)

DO THIS:

- Lead your students in creating 5 values that are important to your Small Group. Think about how you want to treat each other, how you can feel more like family, and what's important to your group. To help you do this, scatter the provided cards on the floor and rank them as a group in order of importance. Let the students debate these; it will help them verbalize their values.
- Brainstorm some ideas for a "Small-Group-family" fun time. This could be anything from getting ice cream together, to playing cornhole at a park, to hosting a Netflix Party. Get creative and have fun planning a Small Group activity!

>> AFTER GROUP

Follow up with the second "Do This" activity by communicating and coordinating your chosen Small Group "fun time activity" with your group members' parents.

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: In this phase, students' relationships with their family, as well as those they consider to be like family, can be complicated by things that may have happened in the past. It is important to make an effort to understand not just what may have occurred, but also how your students feel about it. This is also an opportunity to encourage your small group to grow closer by listening compassionately as they share personal stories and feelings with one another. Doing this well over time will ultimately lead your small group to become a close-knit and caring family of God.

>> 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:

- Who, outside of your biological family, is like family to you? Can you name 5 people? More than 5?
- Share a story about an experience you have had with a friend who is like family to you.
- Do you have an adult in your life who is like a parent to you? In what ways, specifically, do they fill that role in your life? Can you share something they have taught you? Or a way they make you feel loved and cared for?
- What did you learn from hearing the story of David and Jonathan today? Which character did you most relate to?
- Read Hebrews 10:24-25. Who is someone that you need to encourage and invite into your family?
- Do you have a friend that you have "given up meeting together?" Why has that happened? What can you do to reconnect with this friend?
- David and Jonathan "made a covenant." Sometimes, if we want people to be involved in our lives, we have to ask them. Who would you like to add to your circle of family-like friends? How do you plan to accomplish this?
- God created us to do life with each other, like a family. How can this Small Group act like the family of God?

TRY THIS:

Encourage your small group members to think about someone, whether it is a person in their family or someone else who is like family to them, that they can encourage with a note. Take a few minutes of your group time to compose and send a text of encouragement. If your group members don't have phones with them, still take the time to think about what they would want to say, and then encourage them to write a note or say those words in person as soon as possible.