

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

LET'S TALK ABOUT... SUICIDE

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Week 3 of a 3-week series
about important conversations

BOTTOM LINE

Choose hope today and life
tomorrow.

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*

*The Lord is close to the
brokenhearted
and saves those who are
crushed in spirit.
- Psalm 34:18 NIV*

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To give students a safe
space to talk about suicide,
to encourage them to find
help from both God and
others in their life, and to
rest in the hope of knowing
that God is with them in
whatever they're walking
through

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: The conversation this week is about suicide, so you'll want to be prepared for a variety of responses and discussions. Do your best to be sensitive to and considerate of every perspective in your group. This is a great week to make yourself available to talk to students more in depth in a private, one-on-one conversation. You may have students who experience a strong emotional response to the message this week. Your job isn't to fix their feelings or see immediate resolution to their situation. Rather, your role is to be a safe space to listen, encourage, and point students back to the truth that God is there to bring both help and hope in whatever they're walking through. Just be sure to connect with StuMin staff and follow their guidance on what to do should a student share they're having suicidal thoughts.

>> 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 1-10, how comfortable do you feel talking about suicide? What thoughts or feelings came to mind during today's message? [Feel free to break out the provided Feelings Wheel to help your students put words around their feelings.]

DO THIS:

Using the provided cards, work together as a group to match the terms and definitions. This will help give you a common vocabulary for the remaining discussion questions.

DISCUSS THIS:

- What questions do you have about these words and definitions?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you think God cares about what you're feeling?
- Does knowing God is with you when you feel brokenhearted give you hope? Why or why not?
- In your own words, what do you think it means for a "spirit to be crushed"?
- How might someone feel about telling an adult they trust that they're having suicidal thoughts? [Use Feelings Wheel as needed.]
- What do you think an adult might do or say if someone shares that they're having suicidal thoughts?
- Who's an adult in your life you could go to for help if: you are having suicidal thoughts? your friend needs help? you want to talk about your feelings of loss?
- What's one way you can start a conversation with an adult you trust if: you are having suicidal thoughts? your friend needs help? you want to talk about your feelings of loss?
- What does it look like to be a good friend to someone who is struggling with thoughts of suicide or feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness?
- What was the most helpful part of today's conversation for you?

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: As you lead the conversation this week, be prayerful for the students in your group. Statistics show that, in this phase, they've all likely been exposed to the topic of suicide in some way. Some may struggle with suicidal thoughts, some may have lost someone to suicide, and others may be hearing about it at school, online, or in the media they consume. Choose your words wisely as you guide them through the conversation. You want to be careful not to dismiss, diminish, or oversimplify anyone's experience. Avoid putting a spiritual Band-Aid of sorts on their struggles with suicidal thoughts. Instead, point them to the hope they have in Jesus along with the resources God has provided for them to find the help they need: like counseling, support groups, medication, family and friends, prayer, and more.

>> 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's one random, out-of-the-blue thought you've had this week? Tell us about it!
- In what ways do our thoughts influence...
 - Our behaviors or choices?
 - The way we see ourselves?
 - The way we see God?
- What do you think might lead someone toward thinking suicidal thoughts?
- How do you think a person struggling with suicidal thoughts might feel when those thoughts cross their mind?
- What are some ways a high school student might try to deal with suicidal thoughts?
- In what ways might our suicidal thoughts be lying to us?
- John 10:10 reminds us that Jesus wants us to have a full life. What does that truth mean to you?
- What is the difference between "just life" and "full life"?
- What does it mean to have hope? How can hope help us have a full life?
- What's one lie you find on repeat in your mind? What's one truth you can replace it with?
- Who is one person you can talk to when you need to be reminded of truth and hope?