

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

THE BIG QUESTIONS

NOVEMBER 29, 2023

Week 4 of a 4-week series
about identity, belonging &
purpose

BOTTOM LINE

You matter more
than you think.

SCRIPTURE

*After all, who is Apollos?
Who is Paul? We are only
God's servants through
whom you believed the
Good News. Each of us did
the work the Lord gave us.*

- 1 Corinthians 3:5

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To point students toward
finding their purpose
in God's bigger plan
and to encourage them to
take a step to join in on
what God is doing in the
world right now

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Remember that purpose can feel like a big, abstract idea for middle schoolers. Rather than encouraging them to think about their purpose in a grand or far-away sense, remind them to think about the purpose they have right now, as middle schoolers. For some, this will be easy to answer as they feel more self-aware or in-tune with what they're good at, what they like, and even who they want to be. But for others, this may be the first time they've ever considered the fact that they can have a purpose, right now, or at all! Pay particular attention to the kids who say they feel like they have no purpose in life. While this could just be a reflection of the fact that they've never thought about this before, it could also be a sign of some deeper struggles with their self-worth. It's important for you as a leader to speak truth and affirmation into those students in particular and to follow up outside of group to check in with them.

>> 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 could create an imaginary world, what would yours absolutely have to include?
- Tell us about a time when you felt like you mattered.
- Have you ever thought about God having some kind of purpose for your life? Tell us what you think about that.

DO THIS:

As a group, brainstorm all the ways you saw God making the world better this week.

DISCUSS THIS:

- Of all the ways we saw God making the world better this week, which one would you like to be a part of?
- What's one way you can join in on that purpose this week?

DO THIS:

Give your students the "This Week's Challenge" handout. Ask them to take it home, tear off a challenge for each day, and complete it. At the end of the week, they will have completed seven challenges that will help them join in on God's work. Follow up with them next week to see how it went.

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HIGH
SCHOOL
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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: At this phase, students feel the pressure to figure out their plans for college, decide on a career, or just figure out what's next. However, not all students have the same opportunity to choose a career that is their passion. And purpose is so much bigger than what career they choose. Try to steer the conversation away from just vocation, but instead remind your students that no matter what their profession, they can make a difference in our world.

>>> 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:

- How do you feel about the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?" How do you typically answer it?
- Do you think most teenagers feel pressure to have a "perfect" plan for their future?
- What do you think it means to make a difference in the world?
- Why do you think God made people with different talents? What's one thing you're good at?
- Read Matthew 22:36-40. Jesus said the most important things we can do are love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. How can you use the talent you mentioned above to show love for God or others? How might you use your talents to take one step toward solving a world problem (racism, hunger, poverty, etc.) that you care about?
- Jesus said that your purpose is to love. What's one thing you could do to love others more?
- From today's message: "God is at work making the world better and you can be part of that." How does it make you feel to know that God is doing this work? How does it make you feel to know you're being invited to participate?
- How could you use your talents to participate in what God is already doing in the world now? Which skills could you work on now to be prepared to participate even more in the future?

DO THIS:

As you wrap up small group time, say "Sometimes people develop a vision statement for their life. That's just one sentence that reminds them WHY they exist and who they want to be. Creating a vision statement isn't complicated. This week, think about and pray over how you want to fill in the blank of this statement: This year, I will be part of what God is doing to make the world better by _____."