

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

START THE PARTY!

SEPTEMBER 27, 2023

Week 3 of a 3-week series
about abundant life

BOTTOM LINE

An influencer knows that
there is always something
to learn from others.

SCRIPTURE

*Jesus grew in wisdom and
in stature and in favor with
God and all the people.*

- Luke 2:52 NLT

*"Ask and it will be given to
you; seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be
opened to you."*

- Matthew 7:7 NIV

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students
see the benefit
in learning from others

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: For most middle schoolers, many "answers" they hold on to in this phase come from their peers or their desire to fit in with them. While that isn't always a bad thing, it's important to help your students see that this approach can cause them to miss out on the chance to be open minded, learn from others, and discover new things or perspectives. They can often feel forced to listen to or learn from others (especially adults!) in this phase, so help your students see that learning from others doesn't have to be a negative thing. The opportunity is for them to recognize the potential they have to learn from others (for better or worse) and to help them use discernment to think about who they can learn from in their lives right now.

>> 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.

DO THIS:

Spend some time learning something new about one another by going around the circle and completing this sentence: "Did you know that I ... ?" Encourage kids to share something about themselves that they think most people in the group don't already know.

DISCUSS THIS:

- Have you ever felt like you had to pretend to know the answer to something? Tell us about it!
- What's the difference between having an opinion and having an answer? Take turns sharing an opinion you have about something. Does anybody in the group have a different opinion about that thing?
- What's one reason a middle schooler might not want to learn from others? Who is somebody you don't particularly want to learn from? Why do you feel that way?
- Does knowing that even Jesus learned from others change anything for you? Why or why not?
- What's one way learning from someone else can be good for you?
- Who is one person you are looking forward to learning from this year? What do you hope to learn from them? What qualities do they have that make you think they're worth listening to?
- What is something you are curious about when it comes to your faith? How can you learn more about that? How can our small group be a place where we can learn from one another?

STUMIN

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HIGH
SCHOOL
FOCUS

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Your students likely feel pressure to have an answer or take a firm stance in some spaces. For many, that space may be their faith! It's easy to think following Jesus is about never having doubts, but we all know that's just not real life! One of the best things you can do for your students this week and beyond is to debunk that myth. Real faith is formed in asking questions, being curious for answers (even if we don't always find them), and looking for wisdom as we learn from others. So, do your best to make your group a safe space to do just that!

>> 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:

- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt pressured to have an answer for something? Tell us about it!
- What's the difference between having an opinion and having an answer? Take turns sharing an opinion you have about something. Does anybody in the group have a different opinion about that thing?
- Share about a time when you made up your mind about something and refused to listen to or learn from any other viewpoints. Then, share about a time that you changed your mind about something. What new information made you change your mind?
- What is something you are curious about when it comes to your faith? How can you learn more about that? How can our small group be a place where we can learn from one another?
- What is one way you can be like Jesus this week by
 - being curious?
 - having humility about what you know and what you don't know?
 - looking for answers?
 - listening to the wisdom of those around you as you learn, and grow, and maybe even change your mind?

>> TRY THIS:

Leaders, remember that you are likely one of the primary people your students are looking to and learning from on a regular basis right now. Don't take that on as pressure! Instead, take it on as a privilege. You get the chance to not only speak into the lives of your students, but to model for them the value in asking questions, learning, and being curious. Share some of the ways you're still being intentional about learning and the people you look to for wisdom in order to encourage your group to do the same.