

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

How to Friend / Week 2

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

The friends you choose impact the future you will have.

SCRIPTURE

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray (Proverbs 12:26).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help teenagers recognize the value of choosing their closest friends wisely.

THINK ABOUT THIS

This week's conversation isn't about asking students to abandon friends who aren't making wise choices. It's not about asking them to walk away from friends who are different from them. Rather, it's about learning how

to recognize the way those friends might be influencing their own actions or thoughts. Be careful to avoid language that talks down about friends who aren't making the best choices. Instead, ask questions that help your few reflect on the friends they have and the life they want. Help them to come up with their own solutions for how to shift their friend's ability to influence them—whether that's setting boundaries, inviting wise voices closer, or working on having a vision for their future. Sometimes making choices about friendships isn't as clear-cut as good and bad or right and wrong. Instead help students see how a lens of wise and unwise can help them make great decisions about their friendships.

Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

DURING GROUP

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Leader Note: *Be mindful of the way students talk about specific friends and friendships in this conversation. Remind them to avoid using names or sharing too many specific details. The goal isn't to put their friends on blast, but rather, to focus on how to build the right kinds of friendships.*

1. Who is one friend that makes your life better? What is it about them that makes your life better?
2. What characteristics do you think make a good friend?
3. What's one way you can know you're building the right kinds of friendships in your life right now?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how easy is it for you to see God as a friend?
5. In what ways do you see God as a friend?
6. What might be different about your friendships if you invited God into them? How can God help you be a better friend to others?
7. What's one step you can take this week to build the right kinds of friendships in your life?

TRY THIS

Challenge your students to do an individual friendship inventory. (They shouldn't share this with the rest of the group.) Have your students create a note on their phone or write down on paper three categories "closest friend", "close friend", "other friends." For as many years as they can reflect have them list the year and how their friends fell across these categories. Challenge them to compare the shifts in their friendships year to year to see any patterns, defining moments, friendships to rekindle, or friendships that may need to shift in the next season.