

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

The Hills / Week 1

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

God created you to shine.

SCRIPTURE

... will shine...like stars in the sky (Philippians 2:15 NIV).

God is light; in him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5b NIV).

"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14 NLT).

"...Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:16 NLT).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To point students toward embracing the fact that they were created to shine God's light into this world and to give them a few ideas on how they can do that right now as high schoolers.

THINK ABOUT THIS

This series is all about the way we can shine the light of Jesus with our lives. As you talk about this concept with high schoolers, be quick to point out that this isn't just some abstract command or call God gives us. Rather, it's part of the way God made us. We were designed to shine. That being said, be sure to remind students this isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. Just as they're uniquely made to be who they are, the way God calls them to shine light into the world will be unique to them. For some, this may mean big platforms, strong voices, and stepping into roles of leadership. But for others, it may mean encouragement offered to a friend, the quiet way they serve others that no one even knows about, or the simple way they care for their family. One isn't better or brighter than the other. It's just part of the distinct way God made each of us to shine.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the content as needed, and don't feel like you need to complete everything listed.

DURING GROUP

DISCUSS THIS

1. What do you think of when you think of the word "shine"?
2. As a follower of Jesus, what do you think it means to "shine"?
3. Have a student read Matthew 5:14-16 out loud. What does this scripture mean?
 - a. Do you need live in the light first, before you shine it with others? In other words: can you talk about Jesus when you're living as a hypocrite?
4. How can you "shine"...
 - a. At school?
 - b. Online?
 - c. In your relationships?
 - d. At home?

5. Have you ever felt like it's challenging for you to "shine" in those spaces? What are the biggest reasons?
6. It can feel difficult to do when you feel like you're doing it on your own. As a group, brainstorm a few ways you can shine by:
 - a. Being compassionate.
 - b. Encouraging others.
 - c. Praying for others.
 - d. Serving others.
7. Of the things on this list, which one do you want to try this week?

TRY THIS

Commit to having your group try the same thing from the last question and plan for how you'll all stick with it. Then, take it a step further and plan a small service activity for your group to try together. Ask your Ministry Leader where your group can serve at your church this week and set up a way for your students to step into that opportunity together. It's a simple and accessible way to practice shining your light as a group.
