



# Small Group Leader Guide

## BEFORE GROUP

### BOTTOM LINE

Be wise about the friends you choose.

### SCRIPTURE

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

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students recognize the value in choosing their friends wisely.

### THINK ABOUT THIS

This week, be mindful of the students in your group who may feel like they don't have close friends—or any friends at all. Some of them may not show it, but they're carrying that feeling quietly. Middle school can be a tough time for figuring out where you belong, and your group has the chance to be a safe, welcoming place for every student. Encourage your group to think of each other as a circle of real friends—a place to find connection, practice kindness, and grow together. For students who need friends, this group can be where that starts. And for students who want to be a better friend, this is the perfect place to practice. Finally, as you talk about friendship, remind students not to use real names when sharing stories. A good rule of thumb is: don't talk about someone like they're not in the room.

## DURING GROUP

### JUST FOR FUN

Is there anything you want to be sure you accomplish in your lifetime? What's on your bucket list?

### DISCUSS THIS

1. Who are the kind of people that influence most middle schoolers? (*For example, friends, influencers, YouTubers, athletes, coaches, etc.*)
2. What's one way that a middle schooler might influence their friends in a negative way?
3. What's one way that a middle schooler might influence their friends in a positive way?
4. What's one great thing you've done because a friend encouraged you to do it?
5. Have a student read Proverbs 12:26:
  - a. What are some ways you can be careful with who you choose as a friend?
  - b. How can a "friend" lead you astray in today's world?

### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

Scatter the provided "friend profile cards" on the ground in the middle of your group. Ask students to take turns choosing and discussing who they'd be friends with and why.

6. What's one thing you can do when you realize someone isn't a positive influence in your life?
7. What's one way you can be wise about the friends you choose?