



# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

NOW/ WEEK 4

## BEFORE GROUP

### BOTTOM LINE

Run your race with purpose.

### SCRIPTURE

#### **1 Corinthians 9:24**

*"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize."*

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

Help students name where they need momentum (school, friends, home, team, faith), choose one concrete step to take in the next 24 hours, and set simple

accountability. Remind them: no one claps at lap one—but God sees it.

### THINK ABOUT THIS

Keep it encouraging and pressure-free. No shaming for grades, fitness, or performance. Protect privacy—no naming classmates in negative stories. Participation is voluntary. If a student shares anything that indicates harm or danger to self/others, follow your ministry's safety plan immediately.

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

## DURING GROUP

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Warm-up: What's something "easy" you nearly failed (gym mile, participation grade, simple chore)? What did you learn from it?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24 out loud. In your own words, what does "run to win" mean for a middle-schooler (without beating other people)?
3. Where are you at lap one right now—school, team, home, friendships, or faith? Keep it general and kind (no names).
4. What makes you want to quit or compare in that area—distraction, embarrassment, perfection, someone else's highlight reel?
5. If "no one claps at lap one, but God is watching," what changes about how you'll run this week?
6. Define one step in the next 24 hours (tiny and concrete): study 10 minutes, email a teacher, apologize, show up to practice, text "can we talk?", set an alarm and actually get up. What's yours?
7. Who will check in with you (friend you trust, leader, parent/guardian), and when will you tell them your step?

## TRY THIS

Challenge: Every day this week, take one real step in your race and mark it on a calendar (or drop an emoji in the parent-approved group chat). Keep it simple, keep it daily, and watch small steps add up.