



# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Real Friends / Week 1

## LEADER PREP

### BOTTOM LINE

Be the friend you want to have.

### SCRIPTURE

*So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him (John 13:4-5 NLT).*

*"Do to others as you would like them to do to you" (Luke 6:31 NLT).*

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to take the first step in their friendships by treating their friends the way they want to be treated.

### THINK ABOUT THIS

Leaders—before you start this week's conversation with your students, remind them to talk about others the way that they want others to talk about them in today's discussion. Remind them that if they need to talk about an issue with a specific friend, they can bring that up with you privately after group ends.

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

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

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you could pick one famous person to be friends with, who would it be and why?
2. What about friendship in shows or in movies looks easy but isn't easy in real life?
3. What are some of the unspoken expectations we put on our friendships, maybe without even realizing it? (e.g. *always be available, show up at our events, text back immediately, have my back when someone says something about me, etc.*)
4. How do you typically respond when a friend lets you down?
5. What would it take from a friend for you to think, "Wow, that's a real friend"?
6. Practically speaking, what would it look like for you to start being the friend that you want to have?

### TRY THIS

Leaders—this is a great week to start emphasizing the importance of small group hang out time outside of your weekly gathering, with or without you (their leader). Remind them that getting together weekly in small group is great, but spending time together outside of group is an important part of discipleship and growing healthy friendships with one another. If your students are struggling with things to do with others in their group, brainstorm a few ideas with them of things they can do outside of small group to help them build relational equity with one another.



# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Real Friends / Week 2

## LEADER PREP

### BOTTOM LINE

Guard your inner circle.

### 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 encourage students to consider the importance of which friends we allow to influence us the most.

### THINK ABOUT THIS

Leaders—keep in mind that in this phase, peer relationships influence teenagers more than any other group of people. Because so much weight is put on friend acceptance, approval, and belonging, it's more important than ever to encourage students to pursue healthy friendships that will positively influence them in this stage of life.

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

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

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's the most ridiculous thing you've done because a group of friends was doing it or encouraged you to do it?
2. How would you define or label the different levels of friendship in your life? (e.g. *best friends, acquaintances, Instagram friends*)
3. How have you seen your friends influence your choices?
4. How have you seen your choices influence the decisions your friends make?
5. What does it look like for your "inner circle" friends to have your best interest in mind?
6. What does it look like to shift people in and out of your inner circle? What qualities do you think your inner circle friends should have?
7. How can we as a small group help each other guard our inner circle and make sure we have the right people around us?

### TRY THIS

Leaders—pass out one "Guard Your Inner Circle" handout and one pen to each student. As a group, brainstorm and answer the first question on the handout about the qualities they're looking for in their friends, good friends, and best friends. List out those qualities in the top half of each circle on the handout.

At this point, the "group" part of the handout is done; your students should complete the rest of the handout—the part that asks students to name and "categorize" certain friends—at home. Do NOT allow students to write any names on the handout during group. We want to avoid any situation where a student feels excluded from a friend group or embarrassed because they may not have as many names to list as others.



# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Real Friends / Week 3

## LEADER PREP

### BOTTOM LINE

You can be friendly without being friends.

### SCRIPTURE

*They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches (Acts 15:39-41 NIV).*

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students realize that, when faced with the end of a friendship, they have the choice to be friendly even if they don't remain friends with a particular person.

### THINK ABOUT THIS

Leaders—in this phase, it's normal for some friendships to end and others to form. And while it may be tempting to help a student repair a broken friendship, what may be more important this week is helping them figure out what it looks like to live out their faith in the wake of a relationship that might not be repairable. As you lead this conversation, be particularly sensitive to students who are going through the end of a friendship right now—especially if it's a friendship within the group.

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

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

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What reasons typically cause friends to go separate ways?
2. Out of these three following choices, what's your go-to move when someone hurts you or makes you angry?
  - a. Blow up at them.
  - b. Be passive aggressive.
  - c. Be nice to their face and talk behind their back.
3. Why do we sometimes feel like we have to mistreat people we're no longer friends with?
4. What are some ways we can show respect to people even when we're no longer friends with them?
5. What are some ways you can assume the best of someone you're no longer close to?
6. What's one way you can choose to do what's right the next time you run into someone you're no longer friends with or the next time they come up in a conversation?

### TRY THIS

Leaders—as we wrap up this series, this might be a great time to check in with your students individually sometime this week to find out if you can help or encourage them to move the right people in or out of their friend circles.

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