

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

I WONDER

FEBRUARY 1, 2023

Week 1 of a 3-week series
about the relationship
between science and faith

BOTTOM LINE

As you explore science,
your faith can expand.

SCRIPTURE

*In the beginning God created
the heavens and the earth.*

- Genesis 1:1 NIV

*“Love the Lord your God with
all your heart and with all your
soul and with all your mind.”*

- Matthew 22:37 NIV

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To give students the space
to wonder and process
their views about faith and
science, and to encourage
them to see how learning
about one can help them
understand the other

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Remember that a conversation about the relationship between faith and science may be controversial to some. This may not be the case for most of your students, but it very well could be the case for the voices speaking into their lives—voices like parents, teachers, guardians, influencers, siblings, and more. Because of that, be careful about the way you speak about any viewpoints or perspectives on the subject. A simple comment about something that doesn't make sense to you could be interpreted as a direct hit on a viewpoint held by one of their family members, friends, or loved ones. Consider this a safe space for everyone to listen to one another and process aloud rather than a place to convince or defend.

>> DURING GROUP

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

DISCUSS THIS:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you enjoy learning about science?
- What's the most interesting or mind-blowing thing you've learned in science class?
- What's the coolest thing you've ever seen in creation?
- Give everyone 2-3 minutes to think about one thing they've seen in nature during the past week that they think is really cool. Then, ask everyone to share what they thought about and discuss where they saw the creativity of God in it or how it points to a Creator.
- Did anyone share something they appreciated about God's creativity today that surprised you? Tell us about it.
- Before today, what have you thought about how science and faith can go together?
- How might asking questions about science help you grow in your faith?
- As a group, brainstorm questions you have about science and faith.

TRY THIS:

- Using the provided Feelings Wheel, how do you think God feels about science? Discuss why you chose the words you did.

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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: While we certainly believe learning about science can benefit the way you understand faith (and vice versa), keep in mind that you may have students who believe or have been raised to believe that the two are at odds. Be aware that there are likely a variety of viewpoints on this topic represented in your small group. You never want to talk down to, speak poorly about, or argue with a student's take on the topic. Choose your words wisely and use them gently, encouraging your students to do the same as they contribute to the conversation and process their understanding of science, faith, and the relationship between them.

>> DURING GROUP

Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed and ask thoughtful follow-up questions as the conversation unfolds. Don't feel like you need to answer every question.

DISCUSS THIS:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable are you with not knowing the answer to something?
- What makes having to live without an answer uncomfortable at times?
- What types of questions have you felt could be too big or too small to ask God?
- What do we think having answers to some of our biggest questions will do for us?
- Have you ever felt tension between science and faith? Tell us more about that.
- What are some ways you have seen science and faith work together?
- How might science help your faith expand? And how might faith increase your interest in exploring science?

TRY THIS:

- Using the provided Feelings Wheel, how do you think God feels about science? Discuss why you chose the words you did.