

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE SCHOOL FOCUS

EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE

MARCH 6, 2024

Week 1 of a 3-week series
about stress

BOTTOM LINE

When you're carrying a lot,
remember that God
cares a lot.

SCRIPTURE

*Give all your worries
and cares to God,
for he cares about you.*

- 1 Peter 5:7 NLT

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To help students recognize
stress in their lives and to
encourage them to let God
carry the weight of it for
them

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: In the middle school phase, students can have a ton on their plates, so it's no surprise that they're stressed out about things like relationships, family, school, extra-curricular activities, and even their faith. In fact, research shows this is one of the most stressed out generations to date! That means your middle schoolers are feeling the weight of stress emotionally, physically, and spiritually in real ways. Be open to your students if they come to you when they're feeling overwhelmed. While you can't take their stress away (as much as you might want to!), you can provide a listening ear, encourage them to give their worries to God, and offer tips on how to manage their stress. As you lead this week and beyond, remember that you know your group best. Create a space that welcomes and encourages your students talk about what feels like a lot to them!

>> 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:

- What's the most stressful scene you've ever seen in a movie or TV show?
- What's one thing that stresses a middle schooler out?
- Ask your students to put the following in order from most stressful to least stressful. Let them talk it out and debate it as they go!
 - A big test • Time with family • Being grounded
 - Keeping a secret • Staying at home by yourself • Being late for school
- What are some physical symptoms you experience when you're stressed?
- What makes you feel better when you're stressed?
- How did you feel about doing the breathing prayer during today's message?
- What's something else that might help when you're stressed? (Give them some ideas to get started, like identifying people they can talk to, journaling, listening to worship music, etc.)

DO THIS:

Pass out the 1 Peter 5:7 take home card to your students and talk through the following questions as a group:

- Do you feel like you can trust God with your stress? Why or why not?
- What might make believing these verses difficult for you?
- Which translation stands out to you the most? What do you like about it?
- Based on these verses, what do you think it might look like to trust God with your stress?
- What might change if you chose to trust God with your stress?

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

HIGH
SCHOOL
FOCUS

EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE

MARCH 6, 2024

Week 1 of a 3-week series
about stress

BOTTOM LINE

When you're carrying a lot,
remember that God
cares a lot.

SCRIPTURE

*Give all your worries
and cares to God,
for he cares about you.*

- 1 Peter 5:7 NLT

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To help students recognize
stress in their lives and to
encourage them to let God
carry the weight of it for
them

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This generation of students has a ton on their plates! It's no wonder they're stressed about things like relationships, family, school, the future, sports, clubs, social media, and even their faith. They're feeling the impact of stress emotionally, physically, and spiritually in very real, often consistent ways. Be careful not to downplay their stress or attempt to fix it for them. This week isn't about finding the solution to stress. Rather, it's about leaning into the truth that God is not only willing but able to carry our stress with us. That's the best option we have in managing life when it just feels like a lot!

>> 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 well would you say you deal with stress?
- What things in your life tend to cause the most stress?
- What does stress typically look or feel like for you? How do you react to it?
- How would you describe a healthy reaction to stress and an unhealthy one?
- What does it look like to let God carry your stress for you?
- Do you think actually giving your worries and stress to God could help? Why or why not?
- What's a healthy way you can respond to stress in your life going forward?

TRY THIS:

One of the biggest ways you can help your students navigate stress is by pointing them toward healthy coping mechanisms. Brainstorm together a list of things that may help them manage stress in more helpful ways. Come up with a list your group can come back to when they need it, and encourage your group to try a few of the ideas listed to discover what helps them individually when it comes to stress.