

STUMMIN

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
FOCUS

YOUR NEW PLAYLIST

APRIL 3, 2024

Week 1 of a 4-week series
about mindset

BOTTOM LINE

You create your playlist.

SCRIPTURE

*"Today's trouble is enough
for today."*

- Matthew 6:34b NLT

*"Come to me, all you who
are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest."*

- Matthew 11:28 NIV

*When doubts filled my
mind, your comfort gave me
renewed hope and cheer.*

- Psalm 94:19 NLT

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to
see the power they have to
recognize and change the
thoughts running through
their minds

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: The soundtrack of the world and the culture your students live in now is getting louder and louder around them. All that noise—all those voices and messages telling them who to be—is leading to a lot of things like pressure, stress, and anxiety for middle schoolers. That's why this is such an important time to give them a new soundtrack and a louder truth to listen to. You're teaching them several skills here: how to recognize a negative or unhelpful thought, how to redirect their thinking toward a new, more helpful thought, and how to replace the lies they may be thinking with the truth of God's Word. In essence, you're giving them the tools to create their own playlist by empowering them to see they have power over their thoughts. Even as middle schoolers, they can choose what and, more importantly, who they let influence the soundtrack that plays on repeat in their minds.

>> 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 was the last song you had stuck in your head for days? (Bonus points if you're willing to sing it for us!)
- On a scale of 1-10, how much do you tend to overthink: your grades, your friendships, your relationships, your faith, your future?
- What's one thing you're overthinking right now? Is it true, helpful, and/or kind? If not, what's a healthy and helpful thought you could replace that with?
- How can negative thoughts impact you over time?
- After hearing this message, do you think it's possible to change your thinking? Why or why not?
- How would your life be different if you created your own playlist?
- How do the thoughts that play in your mind compare to what Jesus says about you?

DO THIS:

Hand out the provided journal page and pens, and give your group time to work on completing the journal during your time together.

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HIGH
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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This series is all about changing the playlist—replacing the negative, unhelpful thoughts with new, true, and healthier thoughts. This requires two things of your students: self-awareness and self-discipline. Both are possible in the high school phase but both will take some practice! Students first have to pay attention to the thoughts taking up space on their playlists. Then, they have to apply the discipline required to replace it with a new truth. Be quick to remind students that this won't happen overnight; it's not a one-and-done deal. Instead, it's something that requires practice, effort, and the help of God's Spirit.

>> 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:

- What's one song right now that you could listen to on repeat?
- What's a thought you've had on repeat lately?
- What does it look like to overthink something? Tell a story about a time that you overthought something.
- How can overthinking (especially negative thoughts) impact you over time?
- Has what you overthink changed as you've gotten older? Tell us more!
- Do you think it's possible to change your playlist? Why or why not? Have you ever successfully done it? Tell us about that.
- How might listening to Jesus' voice help change your playlist?
- What are some ways to listen to Jesus in your everyday life?
- What's one unhelpful thought you've got on repeat right now?
- What's a new, more helpful truth you can think on instead?

TRY THIS:

Have your group work to create a playlist together throughout this series. Focus on any kind of music that encourages positive, healthy thinking as well as truth and wisdom to put in their minds. Use a service like Spotify to create a shared playlist that students can add to during the duration of this series and come back to when they need a new and improved mindset.