

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE SCHOOL FOCUS

START THE PARTY!

SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

Week 1 of a 3-week series
about abundant life

BOTTOM LINE

You have what it takes
to be an influencer.

SCRIPTURE

*"The thief comes only to
steal and kill and destroy;
I have come
that they may have life,
and have it to the full."*

- John 10:10 NIV

GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand
what it means to live the
full life Jesus came to give
us, and to encourage them
to see they can start living
that life right now

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: The themes covered in this series are important parts of our faith, but they can also be challenging for middle schoolers to grasp. That's primarily because students think literally in this phase. Abstract concepts have to be made more concrete in order for them to take hold of them. For example, when students hear the word "party," they're likely going to take it literally at first. So, be sure to continue to define what is meant by "party" in this series (any effort to celebrate, serve, or be in community with others in a way that adds value to life), as well as being an "influencer" (being someone who tries to make that happen however they can). This will help make something abstract a little more concrete for your group. It will also give them the framework through which they can view this conversation and the rest of the content in this series.

>> 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:

- If you were planning your dream party, what would it look like?
- In your opinion, what's the best part of a party?
- What's something fun about following Jesus?
- What doesn't always feel fun about following Jesus?
- What do you think it looks like to have a full life? What do you think Jesus meant when He said He wanted us to have a full life? Based on how your group answered these questions, what similarities and differences do you see?

DO THIS:

One-at-a-time, read each provided profile card out loud. As a group, talk about how that person started the party.

DISCUSS THIS:

- Who in your life would you consider to be an abundant-life influencer? Tell us about them!
- What would it look like for you to be an abundant-life influencer . . .
 - ◇ At school?
 - ◇ At home?
 - ◇ With your friends?
 - ◇ In your community?
 - ◇ On social media?
 - ◇ For yourself?
 - ◇ At StuMin?

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HIGH
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>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: Do your best to make the full life Jesus offers us come to life for your group in this conversation. Be sure to differentiate what culture tells us a full life is—things like wealth, success, possessions, relationships, and more—from what the full life Jesus is offering actually means. Rather than give your students the answer for what God's full life for us really means, guide them toward discovering the truth of that together in this conversation this week.

>> 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:

- In your opinion, what elements make a great party?
- In what ways does following Jesus not always feel like a party?
- What do you think it means to live the full life Jesus talked about? How does that life differ from what culture tells us a full life looks like?
- Think about someone in your life who you'd describe as an abundant-life "influencer." What traits do they have that make them an influencer?
- We are saying, "You have what it takes to be an influencer," meaning you have what it takes to be the kind of person who sees, celebrates, and serves others. Do you believe you have what it takes? Why or why not? Share one way you've been this kind of influencer in the past.
- How might knowing God sent Jesus to give us this full life change the way you see your faith?
- What's one step you can take toward living the full life Jesus came to give us?

>> DO THIS

Collect cell phone numbers and create a StuMin small group chat. Make it a goal to send weekly texts to your students throughout the course of the year. Remind them of what you talked about in small group that week, tease what's coming up next week, and make sure they are always aware of upcoming events and opportunities. When appropriate, follow up with individual students to encourage them or provide support. The more you invest in your students, the more likely they'll be to keep showing up (and even invite a friend to join them)!