

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Into the Unknown / Week 4

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

God can use the unknown to make you stronger.

SCRIPTURE

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let [your endurance] grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing (James 1:1-4 NLT).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To see the good that can come from dealing with change, and to begin developing the endurance to make positive changes in their lives.

THINK ABOUT THIS

A middle schooler's self-confidence in their own abilities drops significantly between 5th and 6th grade. Because of that, their confidence to take on anything new—including change—is lower than it may have been before. They're not just scared of the change itself; they're scared they won't actually have what it takes to handle the change when it comes. Your encouragement in their ability to handle and take on hard things in this phase will be huge. You're helping them develop resilient thinking, a tool that will shape not just how they see themselves now, but also how they consider handling change in the future. Rather than looking ahead and thinking, "I can't do that," resilient thinking encourages them to say, "That will be hard, but because of God, I will get through it."

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.

DURING GROUP

ICE BREAKER

Play your own quick round of "Change My Mind" with your students. Have them share an unpopular opinion and see if the others can convince them to change their mind!

DISCUSS THIS

1. Have you ever made a change in your own life? Tell us about it.
2. What's one example of a positive change a middle schooler might want to make:
 - a. At school?
 - b. At home?
 - c. With their friends?
 - d. In their faith?
3. What's one reason making a change in your life can be hard?
4. What do you think of when you hear the word "endurance"?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

To introduce the word "endurance," have your few do a wall sit or hold their arms out to their sides for as long as possible.

5. When it comes to change, why do you think endurance could be helpful?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 2)

Using the provided journal page, help your few make a plan for change in their lives.

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 3)

If you purchased an astronaut or space-themed keychain, sticker, pin, pop socket, or magnet, hand out the provided take home as a reminder that God can use change to make us stronger.

NOTE TO MINISTRY LEADER: *One of the XPs this week is a take-home that reminds students of the truth that God uses change to make us stronger. Before your meeting time, decide on what that take-home will be and order or make it. We suggest an astronaut or space-themed keychain, sticker, pin, pop socket, or magnet. We think this will work best since it was a thread through all four weeks of this series and will serve as a visual reminder of what they learned about change.*

MAKING A CHANGE

Working toward change can help you build endurance for when you face change in the future. Even when it's difficult or uncomfortable, God can use change to make you stronger. Take the first steps in making a change in your life by creating a plan!

This is the area in my life where I need to make a change . . .

STEP 1

[Blank white box for Step 1]

This is one step I can take toward making that change . . .

STEP 2

[Blank white box for Step 2]

This is when I'll take that step toward change . . .

STEP 3

[Blank white box for Step 3]

This is one thing I can do to remind myself to keep trying to make that change . . .

STEP 4

[Blank white box for Step 4]

This is one trusted adult I will talk to who will support me in making this change . . .

STEP 5

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