

# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

## The Big Questions / Week 1

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### BEFORE GROUP

#### BOTTOM LINE

Knowing Jesus changes everything.

#### SCRIPTURE

*One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” And they left their nets at once and followed him (Matthew 4:18-20 NLT).*

#### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to think about their big questions about following Jesus, and to help them take one step toward following Jesus with their lives.

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

Pay attention to the way your students engage in this conversation. It will give you an idea of where they are when it comes to following Jesus in their own lives right now. Remember also to talk about the disciples and Jesus as real people—because they are! Humanizing the disciples, especially for your middle schoolers, will help them understand that these were real people, with real struggles, who had to make a real decision to follow Jesus. In other words, they were a lot like us! An important thing to note as well is that the disciples were invited to follow Jesus before they even really believed or knew Him. And the good news is the same is true for us! It's important for your middle schoolers to know that they can ask questions, learn about, and get to know Jesus before they believe. They can belong in your group before they have a faith of their own.

*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.*

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### DURING GROUP

#### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

As your group's leader, sit in the hot seat and tell your students that they can ask you anything they want! No question is off limits, but you can choose whether or not you want to answer.

#### DISCUSS THIS

1. What does it look like to follow someone or something?

#### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 2)

With a bold marker, draw a line down the middle of a poster board. Give your students one minute to make a list in the left column with what they think it means to follow Jesus. In the right column, give them a minute to make a list of questions they have about following Jesus.

2. What's one reason someone might not want to follow Jesus?
3. What's one thing the disciples probably did every day that we don't think about? (*For example: Did they drink coffee? Did they use the restroom? Did they laugh at jokes?*)
4. How do you imagine the disciples felt when Jesus told them to follow Him? (*Note: You may have to answer this first to get them started. Think about words like special, nervous, confused, etc.*)
5. Do you think knowing who Jesus really is would make you want to follow Him? Why or why not?