

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

In Charge / Week 1

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus is the example of good authority.

SCRIPTURE

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18 NLT).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help middle schoolers think about how they view authority and to help them see the good in the people in charge by looking to Jesus as the example of good authority.

THINK ABOUT THIS

The subject of authority is naturally going to cause your middle schoolers to feel a little tension. It's normal for them to buck up against the idea of authority in this phase as they want to be in charge in their own lives. Keep in mind that if they seem to talk about authority in

an overly negative way, that's likely coming from a place of longing for more freedom of their own. This can happen specifically when they're talking about a parent. Be careful not to talk down their parents or give them permission to do the same. You want to be a partner to the parents in your group and that can start in conversations like this one! While it would be easy to take their side in the conversation, do your best to help them see another point of view when possible. Be sure to pay attention to the answers they're giving you about specific experiences with authority figures in their lives. Those answers may give you some insight into experiences with difficult or even abusive authority figures your few may be dealing with that you didn't know about. It's important to make note of the things they say that raise red flags for you and follow up with them one-on-one.

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

If you could make one rule that everyone in the world had to follow, what rule would you make?

DISCUSS THIS

1. What's one reason someone might want to be in charge?
2. What do you think of when you hear the word "authority"?
3. What's one example of an authority figure that most middle schoolers have?
4. What's one reason it might be difficult to deal with authority figures?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

Ask your few to anonymously (meaning, don't write their names!) write down their answer to this question on a piece of paper: *"Why is it so hard to follow authority sometimes?"* Collect their papers and give them to your ministry leader to use in next week's talk.

5. What's one reason you're thankful for authority figures?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 2)

On a posterboard, ask your students to write down what they know to be true about who Jesus is. (They can do this in pairs or as a group.) Use what they wrote to help guide the rest of your discussion.

6. What do these characteristics tell us about Jesus as a leader?
7. Pick one characteristic on this list that you think a good authority figure should have.
8. Is there a person in charge in your life who uses their authority in the same way?