



Connect the Dots / Week 1

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Actions can grow your faith.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 7:24-25 NLT

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage middle schoolers to take a step toward developing a faith of their own and begin applying some of the things they've learned about following Jesus in their own lives.

THINK ABOUT THIS

The focus this week is helping middle schoolers understand how God wants them to grow a faith of their own. For some, this may be the first time they've heard this is even an option! Most students think about growing or developing their faith based on what they see or hear from

a parent, an older sibling, a grandparent, a pastor, or another influential adult in their life. In this series, we want them to begin thinking about it for themselves. To take ownership over what growing in faith looks like for them as middle schoolers and as individuals. We also want to distinguish the difference between knowing God and knowing *about* God. While learning about God is a key step in understanding and developing their faith, it's not where the story ends. Knowing and having a real relationship with God is the goal. Be sure to encourage students to keep coming back for the duration of this series so that they're part of the conversation as you unpack different points about growing in faith that may come up in the initial conversation this week.

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

DISCUSS THIS

1. What's one random thing that you want to learn more about?
2. What's one thing you could do to start learning about it?
3. On a scale of 1-10, how important do *you* think it is to grow in your faith?
4. How do you know if someone is growing in their faith?
5. What's one thing that might make growing in your faith difficult?
6. What's the difference between knowing about God and knowing God?
7. How might knowing God help you grow in your faith?
8. What's one step you can take to learn about or get to know God?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 1

As a group, start the YouVersion devotional plan for this series and follow up with your students in the coming weeks.

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 2

Pass out a colored rubber band to each of your students and ask them, "What's one dot you connected this week about your faith?" Tell them that the rubber band represents their answer and to use the rubber band to "connect the dots" on the peg board in your meeting space. You'll do this each week of this series!

NOTE TO MINISTRY LEADER:

This *Connect the Dots* series has an XP that runs for all five weeks. Small group leaders will ask students to use colored rubber bands to "connect the dots" (nails!) on a peg board. The rubber bands will represent what they learned about their faith each week. At the end, you'll have a great visual representation that you can hang in your ministry area to remember the ways your students connected the dots in their faith during this series. We recommend that you create one large peg board for your entire youth ministry to use; however, if you have a very large ministry, consider creating a board for each small group.

For a budget-friendly option, use a piece of white poster board instead of a peg board. Draw dots on the poster board and have students use different colored markers to connect the dots each week.

If you subscribe to the Media Package, you'll find a video tutorial on this XP there!