



Connect the Dots / Week 3

SO HOW DOES THIS WORK?

You've probably noticed the whole world has changed in different ways. And, your group time may be changing, too. This adaptation is a tool to help you integrate teaching time with small group time so that the message is broken up and discussed along the way.

USING THE TEACHING VIDEO

The speaker will pause at key moments and a cue will appear on the screen. Remember, to pause the video and give your group time to discuss. Your church may give you a specific amount of time or leave it up to you. When the conversation is ready to transition, start up the video again.

For this video, you will pause for small group conversation at the following times:

15:12

15:22

15:32

After the video, be sure to wrap up with more discussion if needed or prayer time.

DON'T FORGET

READ AHEAD

No matter where or how you lead your group, it's important to spend a few minutes preparing. Take time to read the THINK ABOUT THIS section which will set you up to meet your students right where they are. And don't forget the GOAL OF SMALL GROUP which will point your conversation in the right direction.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Remember, nobody knows your group quite like you. Just because a question appears on a piece of paper or on screen doesn't mean you have to ask it or use the same words. Ultimately, YOU are guiding the conversation for your group. So feel free to add, delete, or adapt questions to meet their needs.

LET THEM KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING

Chances are, your few are curious what group will look like if you're changing formats. At the beginning of group time, give them an idea how the format may have changed so they will know what to expect.



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BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Serving can grow your faith.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 2:2b-12 NLT

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students view serving others as a way to grow in their own faith and to take a step toward giving or doing what they can to serve someone else.

THINK ABOUT THIS

For many of your middle schoolers, serving may feel like a big concept. To them, it's a huge act that makes a major impact in a real, noticeable way. So when they don't see

the potential to do something on that scale, they may count themselves out altogether. As middle schoolers, they may think they don't have the time, energy, money, or ability to make a big difference through serving. That's why it's important to define serving for the context of this conversation. Serving is simply seeing a need and meeting it, and that can happen in big and small ways every single day. Framing it that way makes it something accessible and doable for them, right now as middle schoolers.

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

After the first break, complete this activity:

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 1

As a group, come up with a way to serve in your church environment using the provided items. Then actually do it during group time today!

After the second break, discuss these questions:

DISCUSS THIS

1. What did you love the most about serving today?
2. What makes it hard for you to serve like this all the time?
3. What's one need you see around you?
4. What's one step you can take to meet it this week?

After the third break, complete this activity:

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!

NOTES TO MINISTRY LEADER:

XP 1: Small groups will serve in your church environment during group time today, so provide each group with 5 items that can be used to complete the service activity they choose. We recommend things like trash bags, sticky notes, \$5 bills, paper towels, cleaning supplies, candy, etc.

XP 2: 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!