



SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Circles / Week 1

LEADER PREP

BOTTOM LINE

Be the kind of friend you want in your circle.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 6:27-31

John 13:3-5, 12-15

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students become better friends to the people in their lives.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Self-awareness is still developing in this phase. Because of that, your middle schoolers may struggle to identify the ways in which they can be better friends to others. What they'll easily be able to do is list the ways in which their own friends are falling short! Though we don't want them to focus only on the negative things about their friendships, giving them space to think outwardly before looking inwardly will help them see the way they could improve as friends more easily.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

JUST FOR FUN

Who is your favorite pair of friends from TV, movies, or media?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's one thing you really like about your friends?
2. What's one thing that can make friendship difficult in middle school?
3. How have you seen your friendships change over the years and what was the reason they changed?
4. What's one thing you think most middle schoolers hope to get from friendships?
5. What is value? Why do you think we all want it so badly in our friendships?
6. **Read Luke 6:27-31.** What might change about your friendships if you started treating others the way you want to be treated?
7. Why do you think it's easier to focus on what you *aren't* getting in your friendships rather than what you *are* getting?
8. **Read John 13:12-15.** What's one example of what it might look like to serve your friends first?

XP (EXPERIENCE)

Pass out the provided worksheet and work together to brainstorm the qualities they admire and look for in a close friend. As qualities are called out, your students will write them down in the designated space on their worksheet. After everyone has discussed the qualities of a good friend, ask your students to independently underline the top three qualities they feel they have in themselves. They'll then draw a circle around three qualities they want to work on in themselves. They'll finish their worksheet by making a plan for how they'll take a step toward living out these qualities in their friend group this week.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A FRIEND

Jesus demonstrated for us what true friendship looks like by showing us how to be the kind of friend you want in your circle. While it's important to seek out friends that have positive, encouraging qualities, it's equally important for you to focus on the type of friend you are to others. It's important to be the kind of friend you want to have.

In this space, write down all of the qualities you think a good friend should have. Keep writing down qualities until you run out of ideas! Then, underline the top three qualities you think you have as a friend. Finally, draw a circle around the top three qualities you want to work on in yourself.

This is one step I'll take this week to demonstrate what it means to be a good friend:
