

MIDDLE SCHOOL FAITH



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR SGLs

... for intentional conversations with students

It might not seem like your middle school small group will ever focus enough to really talk about faith although they could probably talk about You Tube videos and who-likes-who all day. Don't worry. There will be moment where you talk about faith that you might think they didn't pick up on, but they are listening. And how you talk about faith with your group matters! Your group is going through a lot of changes, and growing in their faith is one of them. Middle schoolers are transitioning from a time where their faith has been a byproduct of their parent's faith. But these are the years when they take initiative and create a faith of their own. The best thing you can do is be a coach, not a teacher. Cheer for them from the sidelines, and affirm them in the personal faith journey. As you have this ongoing conversation about faith with your few, here are a few words to say and not to say. Remember, your goal is to...

PROVOKE THEIR DISCOVERY
so they will own their own faith and value a faith community.

WHAT TO SAY:

- "If you have doubt or questions, that doesn't mean you are doing faith wrong. It's actually good! Because that means you're making this your own."
- "I'm glad you asked me."
- "I don't know the answer to that. Let's work together to see what we can figure out."
- "Now is the time to begin creating good habits to grow your faith. Want to pick out a Bible or a devotional together?"
- "I can see how God has given you this ability/talent/characteristic and you are going to do amazing things with it."
- "What do you think?" "How is that true in your own life?"
(Ask open-ended questions that help them personalize their faith.)
- "One of the best things you can do for your faith is to come to small group and be connected to other people working through their faith, too. I'm so glad you're here."
- At times, the best thing is to say nothing. Let your student see you model what a "grown up" faith looks like. That will speak louder than any directive.

WHAT **NOT** TO SAY:

- "Have you had a quiet time yet today?" *(In other words, don't treat time with God as an assignment.)*
- "Don't ask/say that. You just need to believe more."
- "If you really had a relationship with God, you wouldn't do/say/think that."
- "When you have a relationship with God, everything just works out. If it feels like it's not working out, just pray more."