



## Connect the Dots / Week 2

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### BEFORE GROUP

#### BOTTOM LINE

People can grow your faith.

#### SCRIPTURE

*Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm (Proverbs 13:20 NIV).*

*As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend (Proverbs 27:17 NLT).*

#### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students identify the people who are influencing their lives and their faith.

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

This week, you're helping your few recognize the positive influences in their lives and in their faith. This is so important because the stakes are high in terms of influence in this phase. The people who are influencing your middle

schoolers right now can impact the course of their lives, for better or for worse. That being said, it's important to keep in mind that middle schoolers have little to no awareness of who might be influencing them right now. They know who they spend time with and who they might listen to more than others, but they aren't always able to connect the dots between those people and how their beliefs, choices, or behaviors might be changing because of them. The conversation this week will help you raise awareness for students when it comes to influence. It will also help them develop the skill of recognizing who they might want to influence their faith and how to ask that person to be a part of their faith journey. Even if they don't take the step to have the conversation right now, you're helping students develop the skill of seeking out mentors in their faith as they grow up.

*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.*

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### DURING GROUP

#### ICE BREAKER

If you could hang out with anybody for one day (dead or alive, fiction or real), who would you hang out with?

#### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 1

Ask your students to talk about someone who is influencing their life in a positive way. (This could be anyone—even if they don't know them personally!) If your middle schoolers have phones, ask them to show a picture of this person as they share about them.

#### DISCUSS THIS

1. How do you know if someone is a positive influence in your life?
2. What's one way you can tell if someone is impacting your faith?

#### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 2

Give each student an index card. On the front side ask them to write down what they remembered from the talk. (This should be hard for them to remember!) Ask them to flip the card over and write 1-3 names of people who have influenced their faith in a positive way. (This should be easier and can include a small group leader, parent, coach, older sibling, pastor, friend, etc.) The goal is to show your few that while information is important and helpful, it's usually easier to remember people who positively influence our faith.

3. Tell us about one person you wrote down. How have they helped your faith grow?
4. If you could ask one person you know to help you grow in your faith, who would it be?
5. What's one step you can take to get to know that person this week? (*Note: Brainstorm how to do this as a group.*)

#### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) 3

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!