

## SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

### In Charge / Week 2

## BEFORE GROUP

### BOTTOM LINE

You can always choose to be honorable.

### SCRIPTURE

*So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe (1 Samuel 24:4b NLT).*

*May the Lord judge between us. Perhaps the Lord will punish you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you. As that old proverb says, 'From evil people come evil deeds.' So you can be sure I will never harm you... May the Lord therefore judge which of us is right and punish the guilty one. He is my advocate, and he will rescue me from your power!' (1 Samuel 24:12-13;15 NLT).*

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students recognize and practice ways they can be honorable to the authority figures in their lives—even the ones who aren't always deserving of it.

### THINK ABOUT THIS

It can be difficult for your middle schoolers to distinguish the difference between authority figures who are using their power to abuse or harm, and those they simply don't get along with or whose rules they don't like. While it may seem obvious to us as adults, that isn't always the case for your few! When they hear the phrase "negative authority," they might picture their mom asking them to take out the trash every night, or the coach who makes them do extra laps, or the teacher who won't let them get away with anything in class. Those are very different than the people in charge whose actions abuse or harm. Help your students try to navigate the difference in your conversation this week. This is also an important week to recognize students who may be in abusive or harmful situations with authority. For those students, be quick to note that being honorable means speaking up, getting help, and not staying in a bad situation.

*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

### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

Have each student write down a phrase that middle schoolers say on a piece of paper. They'll then fold up the paper and put it in a bowl. In round one, students will randomly pick a paper from the bowl and explain what the phrase means. In round two, students will pick a paper and say the phrase using three different types of punctuation: once as a question, once as a statement, and once as an exclamation. This will help students realize that sometimes, it's not the words they say that have an impact, but the tone they use that can change the meaning.

### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 2)

On your phone, pull up photos of two different types of movie/tv characters (a Disney character, superhero, etc.) who your students are familiar with. As a group, talk about how each character changed as their story unfolded. Ask students to identify what made them develop new attitudes toward each character. Ask questions like this to guide the conversation:

- What kind of leader was this character in the beginning?
- What kind of leader was this character in the end?
- What happened in the middle that changed the way this character led?

### DISCUSS THIS

1. Without naming names, have you ever had to deal with a difficult authority figure in your own life?
2. What was it that made them hard to deal with?
3. What do you think it looks like to honor our authority figures even when they're difficult?
4. Do you think it's possible to honor someone but not obey them? Why or why not?
5. Which of these do you want to focus on when it comes to honoring the authority figures in your own life?
  - a. Think about what you say and how you say it.
  - b. Remember they're human.
  - c. Do what's safe for you.