

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Break It Down / Week 2

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

When you know the whole story, things make more sense.

SCRIPTURE

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13 NLT).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To show students the importance of finding and understanding context when it comes to reading the Bible and to give them the tools to start finding that context as they read.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Middle schoolers think very concretely, and that means they take things like the Bible quite literally as they read it. Looking for context—finding more of the story—won't come naturally to them, but it will help make the Bible clearer. That's why the goal of your conversation this week is simply to walk them through how to do this as a group. They'll learn by both example and practice, and you're doing both for them this week. Looking for and discovering context as a group will empower them to try this and understand it on their own.

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 pause, discuss questions 1- 2

1. Have you ever read something in the Bible that didn't make sense to you? Tell us about it.
2. If parts of the Bible don't make sense to you, do you think that means it isn't important for your life?

After the second pause, do the activity below and discuss question 3

Sometimes, when it comes to the Bible, we just open it up and start reading some random verse. Then we get frustrated when we have no clue what it's talking about. For instance, open up the folded slip of paper I gave you earlier and go ahead and read it. Does that make any sense to you? Probably not. Anyone care to read their verse aloud? What if I told you that these verses were all written by a man named Paul who was literally under house arrest, not allowed to leave while he awaited trial for his crime of telling people about Jesus. He was writing this in a letter to the people of a town called Philippi to warn them against listening to false teachers. So, now that you understand who was writing those words, what it was like for him, and why he was doing it, does it help you understand the verse a little bit more?

3. How might knowing more of the story help us understand more of the Bible?

After the third pause, discuss question 4 and check out ideas below to help students find out more

4. What's one way you can find out more of the story when it comes to what you read in the Bible?

- Share a study/student Bible with students that shows the who, what, when, where, and why at the beginning of the book.
- Reading before and after the verse to try to learn more about what's going on
- Google: "Who wrote Philippians?"

After the fourth pause, discuss question 5

5. Who is one person YOU can go to when you need help understanding more of the story?

At the end of video, DO THIS (EXPERIENCE) with your few

Of all the verses your few heard during large group, decide on one verse your group wants to learn more about. Pass out the provided handout and together, discover the context of the verse. End your time by encouraging your few to keep reading along in Week 2 of the YouVersion Daily Devos with your group.

DISCOVERING THE WHOLE STORY

When reading the Bible, discovering the whole story helps things make more sense. You can learn more of the context—the background information—of what you're reading by finding answers to these questions as you read.

This is the verse we're reading together in my group:

1. Who wrote this verse?
2. Who was the writer writing to?
3. Why was this verse written?
4. What about this verse is helpful to me now or may be helpful to me in the future?

The Bible may not have been written TO you, but it was written FOR you. God makes sure there is something helpful and purposeful in everything you read!

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