

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

It's Personal / Week 5

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

It's personal because Jesus knows your potential.

SCRIPTURE

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV)!

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students recognize that, because of Jesus, anyone can radically change – including them.

THINK ABOUT THIS

As humans, we are naturally tempted to believe we can predict the future. As leaders, that temptation is even more powerful. It's easy to look at a kid and assume we know how they'll turn out. The truth and the beautiful message of Jesus is that WE DON'T KNOW. A lot can happen in four years and even more can happen in a lifetime. No matter how a teenager behaves now, we can't see the end of their story and it is our job to speak and behave and interact as if there is always hope they can change...because there is. Conversations about change can be tricky, while talking about bad habits/behaviors, be mindful of the struggle that your students may be facing and direct your conversation to be understanding and helpful—for example, talking about body image, mental health, or life with family.

Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

DURING GROUP

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's something you've changed your mind about over time? Food? TV shows? Music?
2. Think about 6th grade. What's the biggest difference about yourself?
3. What is something you would like to change about yourself but don't think you can? What is a bad habit or behavior you've tried to change but haven't been able to? Why can making a change in our lives be a struggle? (Note: You may get different answers – try to be sensitive what your students share.)
4. Do you think that the people in the crowd ever thought that Zacchaeus could change? Why or why not?
5. Zacchaeus didn't change to make Jesus love him or accept him; Zacchaeus changed because Jesus showed that He loved Him and believed in Zacchaeus. What would it look like in high school to treat someone like they can change? How can we encourage others and believe the best in those around us?
6. As we close this series, think about this story if it happened in your life. Imagine Jesus showed up at your school or your neighborhood, walked straight past the religious crowd to go and hang out with the kid nobody expected. How would that change the way people see Jesus? How would it change the way people saw the person he walked up to?
7. What would you do differently if you believed that anyone could change? What does it mean to believe you can change? What does it mean to believe that others can change?
8. Who's someone in your life that has seen potential in you? How did it make you feel when they have invested in you? How can you do that for someone else?
9. Who is someone you can reach out to and encourage this week?

TRY THIS

Remind your small group to invite their friends back next week to the “Let it Glow” Christmas Party.
