

# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Popular / Week 3

## BEFORE GROUP

### BOTTOM LINE

Jesus doesn't allow our mistakes to be the end of our story.

### SCRIPTURE

*A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said (Luke 22:56-57 NIV).*

*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15 NIV).*

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To show students that there are steps they can take to gain back any influence they feel they may have lost and to remind them it's never too late to take those steps.

### THINK ABOUT THIS

It's important to speak in broad terms when talking about what it looks like to lose influence. For starters, middle schoolers are more comfortable talking about others than they are speaking personally about themselves. With that, their self-awareness is also still in development. While they may be able to recognize how other people have lost influence, many might not see the same thing happening in their own lives. Be quick to shut down any conversation that attempts to name specific names or scenarios. And be even quicker to remind your few that no matter what they've done or how others perceive them, God offers forgiveness and a chance to begin again!

*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

### ICE BREAKER

Share your most embarrassing moment with the group.

### DISCUSS THIS

*Transition: There's something so funny about embarrassing moments—at least when they're happening to someone else! When the attention is suddenly on something we did wrong or awkwardly, then we don't like it as much, do we?*

1. What's an example of something a middle schooler might say or do that would cause people to look at them differently?
2. Share an example from a movie, book, or TV show where a character lost their influence or was looked at differently because of a choice they made.
3. How might a middle schooler lose influence with...
  - a. Their parents?
  - b. Their coaches?
  - c. Their friends?
  - d. Their Small Group?
4. Do you think influence can be lost forever? Why or why not?
5. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus doesn't allow our mistakes to be the end of our story?
6. If someone has lost influence, what's one step they can take in the right direction to gain it back?

### DO THIS (EXPERIENCE)

Pass out paper and pens and ask your few to write a letter of encouragement to themselves. They'll put this letter in a safe place that they can pull out and read when they make a mistake or do something that causes them to lose influence. Be sure to guide your students on how to write this letter. Some things they could include are:

- Jesus doesn't see our mistakes the way we do, and our sins are forgiven when we come to Him with an open heart.
- Jesus sees us as more than our mistakes.
- Because we're forgiven by Jesus, we can move forward, step-by-step, gaining back the influence we may have lost.
- How our story has gone in the past doesn't have to be the way it goes in the future.
- Jesus doesn't allow our mistakes to be the end of our story.