



Big Picture / Week 2

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

When you can't see the bigger picture, remember God is with you.

SCRIPTURE

They saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him (Genesis 37:18 NIV).

So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it (Genesis 37:23-24 NIV).

The Lord was with Joseph . . . (Genesis 39:2a NIV)

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to believe and see that God is with them during their difficult circumstances.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Understanding that God is with them may be a difficult thing for your middle schoolers to grasp in this conversation. For starters, it's a very abstract idea, and their thinking is very concrete in this phase. Along with that, they base what they believe to be true on what they can see happening in their circumstances and how they feel because of that. So, when their circumstances don't change or they simply can't feel God's presence with them, they tend to lean toward believing He isn't there at all. Remember that even if they don't fully believe or take hold of the idea that God is with them after this week, you're planting a seed that will grow as their faith develops.

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

What's the craziest thing you've seen someone do when they lost a game?

DISCUSS THIS

Transition: Those are some pretty crazy ways to react to a loss! But honestly, haven't we all wanted to do that sometimes? I think that's because we all know what it feels like to experience a loss in life!

Questions:

1. Have you ever felt like something happened that was totally out of your control?
2. How does it feel when something not so good happens that's out of your control?
3. Have you ever felt like God wasn't with you in a difficult circumstance?
4. Why is it sometimes difficult to feel God's presence when you're walking through something difficult?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE)

This week, you'll continue to help your middle schoolers create a piece of their "Big Picture" puzzle. Pass out the provided worksheet and highlighters to each of your students, ask them to complete it during group, and then collect the sheets before they leave. Be sure to keep the papers organized and in a safe place as students will assemble all of their sheets to reveal a puzzle in Week 5 of this series.

5. How does knowing God promises to be with you no matter what change the way you see...
 - a. Your circumstances?
 - b. God?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE #2)

As you end your group time, pass out the paper bracelets. Ask your few to write the word, "WITH" on it as a reminder that God is always with them.

**WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE,
REMEMBER GOD IS WITH YOU.**

Because it can be hard to see or feel God's presence in our difficult circumstances, He gives us promises to remind us that He is there. Read the provided verses twice together out loud with your Small Group. Then read them silently on your own and highlight the one that most reminds you that God is with you, even when you can't see the bigger picture. Memorize the Scripture you choose and think about it throughout the week when you need a reminder of God's never-ending love.

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."
(Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV)

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."
(Matthew 18:20 NIV)

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.
(1 John 4:16 NIV)

... because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."
(Hebrews 13:5b NIV)

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.
(Psalm 16:11 NIV)

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
(Matthew 28:20b NIV)

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.
(1 John 4:12 NIV)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
(Isaiah 41:10 NIV)

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.
(Jeremiah 29:13 NIV)

The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
(Exodus 33:14 NIV)

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."
(Joshua 1:9 NIV)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.
(Psalm 46:1-3 NIV)