

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare. Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Conversation Starter
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Application Activity: Take a Snapshot
2. Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions
3. Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You
4. Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Devotionals for Kids
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.



THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Daniel and the Lions' Den

Daniel 6

Conversation Starter

When have you felt alone?

Bottom Line

God is always with you.

Memory Verse

"Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak"

Isaiah 40:31 (NirV)



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro tips.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity



What You Need

- ☐ Offering Container
- ☐ Blindfolds or bandanas
- ☐ Cones or various obstacle course objects
- ☐ Floor tape



Inclusive Pro Tips

Keep the obstacle course safe, spaced out, and easy to navigate (no running or jumping required).

Allow kids to participate as the one who gives instructions if the obstacle course and blindfold make them anxious.

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for your group before they arrive. Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that He goes with you through every moment of your life. Ask God to help the preteens know that He is with them, and to walk confidently into all situations fully aware of His presence. Ask God to raise up a generation of preteens who love Him more than approval, status, or likes. Pray that they'd become aware of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to give them boldness to hear Him and follow Him in every tough moment—online and in person.

1. Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a high-five, fist bump, or a wave.
2. Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
3. Before you begin:
 - Mark a start and finish line in your group area.
 - Set up the cones or various obstacle course objects in between the lines.
4. Divide the kids into teams of 4-6.
5. Explain the game:
 - "For the first part, one kid from each team will be blindfolded. When I say 'go,' they will try to walk through the obstacle course (alone and without any help or guidance) for the first half of the course."
 - Once they reach the halfway point, their team can walk alongside and use only their voices to guide them through the rest of the course.
6. After each turn, swap roles so that each kid experiences both "alone" (no guidance for a few steps) and "not alone" (with a guide).
7. After every kid who wants a turn to be blindfolded gets one, gather the group to discuss.

② What You Say

"Great teamwork, friends! How did it feel trying to walk the course on your own? **(INVITE RESPONSES.)** That was pretty tough, right? I mean, you couldn't see or hear anyone!

"How did it feel to have someone with you, guiding you through it? **(INVITE RESPONSES.)**

"Today, we'll hear a true story from the Bible about Daniel, who faced something WAY scarier than this—but he kept putting his confidence in God and discovered he was never alone. Let's find out why Daniel could have so much confidence. C'mon!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

GROUPS 1/5

Take a Snapshot

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Opaque cups
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils



① What You Do

1. Give every kid a cup, an index card, and a pencil.
2. Ask: "When have you felt alone or nervous at school, home, or anywhere else?"
3. Invite the kids to write (or draw) their answer on one side of their card.
4. Ask: "What's something you discovered about God through Daniel's story?"
→ Kids might say, God is always with me, God is trustworthy, God is in control, etc.
5. Invite the kids to write (or draw) their answer on the other side of their card.
6. Instruct them to fold the card and drop it in their cup.
7. Gather in a circle. Let kids share what they wrote (if they'd like).

Talk Together

1. Hold up a cup. Say: "We can't see what's inside the cup. In the same way, we can't always see God, but He is always with us, just like He was with Daniel. Daniel trusted God, even when he couldn't see Him, and God heard his prayers."
2. Say: "The same God who shut the mouths of lions for Daniel is the God who listens to you, walks with you, and goes with you everywhere you go."
3. Ask: What is some evidence that shows that God wants to be close to you and with you all of the time?
4. Say: "God wants to be your friend so much that Jesus came and gave His life to pay for your sins so that nothing could separate you from Him. Then, when you choose to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God's very Spirit, comes to live inside of you. God is closer than close! God has done all of this to be close to you!"
5. Ask: What can you do to remind yourself that God is always with you? (It can help us remember that God is with us if we talk to Him all the time throughout our day, about everything.)
6. Ask: There are a lot of times when we don't feel like God is with us. How can we remind ourselves that He is?
7. Say: "When it doesn't feel like God is with us, sometimes it helps to remember the times when He was with us in the past, even when we didn't feel Him. If we look back on our lives, we will see that He has been with us every minute!"

GROUPS 2/5

Bible Story Extension

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Clear plastic cups
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Large, clear storage bin filled with water
- ☐ Plastic tablecloth

Inclusive Pro Tips



If some kids prefer not to get their hands wet, let them be the observers or helpers who cheer on and report results.

① What You Do

Before you begin → Watch this video for an example of the experiment: bit.ly/46hx5QX

1. Lay out the plastic tablecloth. Set the bin filled with water in the center.
2. Give every kid one paper towel and one clear cup.
3. Invite them to gather around the tablecloth.
4. Kick off with these Bible Story Review questions:
 - Why was Daniel thrown into the lions' den in the first place?
 - How did Daniel respond when he knew he could get in trouble for praying?
 - What happened in the morning when the king went to check on Daniel after Daniel had spent the night in the lions' den?

Explore Together

1. Direct the kids to wad up the paper towel and firmly wedge it into the bottom of the empty cup so it won't fall out or fall down when the cup is turned upside down.
2. Ask, "What do you think will happen if I push this cup straight down into the water, upside down?"
3. Say: "Push your cup straight down (don't tilt!) into the water until it's fully submerged. Then, remove the cup and pull out the paper towel—it will be dry!"
4. Invite every kid to take turns giving it a try.
5. Ask: "Why do you think the paper towel was able to stay dry?"
 - Explain that the air trapped in the cup acts like a barrier, protecting the paper towel from getting wet.

Talk Together

1. Explain that Daniel was surrounded by danger, but God protected him, like the air protected the paper towel. Daniel walked out of the lions' den untouched because God was with him!
2. Ask:
 - Why do you think Daniel wasn't touched or hurt by the lions? Who protected him, even when it looked impossible?
 - If God can keep Daniel safe in a den full of lions, what does that tell us about who God is when we're facing scary or impossible situations?

Make It Personal → Share about a time when you faced a scary situation, but how remembering that God was with you helped you get through it. How did you remind yourself that God was with you?

Preteen

Small Group

November — Week 3

GROUPS 3/5

Discussion Questions

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed



① What You Do

1. When have you felt alone?
2. When have you felt like you were standing alone for something you believed was right? What did you do?
→ How can you remember that God is with you in moments like that?
3. Why do you think God allowed Daniel to go through something so hard? What good came out of it?
4. What can you do to help remind yourself throughout the day that God is always with you?

Inclusive Pro Tips



Be sensitive to kids who may need extra time to process their thoughts and respond. Be patient and create a safe space where everyone has a chance to share when they're ready.

Frequently check for understanding during discussion by asking questions like, "Can someone share in their own words what we're talking about?"

GROUPS 4/5

Verses to Take with You



Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31
- ☐ Key rings (like these: bit.ly/3TNmfuA)
- ☐ "Isaiah 40:31 Tags" Activity Page
- ☐ Regular hole punch
- ☐ Clear packing tape
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Prepare 2-inch cardstock circles

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Pre-assembled key chains



Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer a few pre-assembled key chains for kids who need extra support or get overwhelmed by steps.

Pair kids up for buddy support—one can hold, the other can stick or punch.

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids in a circle.
2. Call on a kid to read Isaiah 40:31 from the Bible out loud.
3. Ask if there are any words that are unfamiliar to the kids in the verse.
4. Repeat the verse together.

Create Together

1. In the center of the circle, set out the:
 - Packing tape
 - Scissors
 - 2-inch cardstock circles
 - "Isaiah 40:31 Tags" Activity Page stickers
2. Invite the kids to create their very own key chain using the following steps.
 - Step 1: Grab a 2-inch cardstock circle.
 - Step 2: Select two stickers from the "Isaiah 40:31 Tags" Activity Page.
 - Step 3: Place a sticker on each side of the cardstock circle.
 - Step 4: Fully cover both sides of the circle with packing tape.
 - Step 5: Use scissors to cut the excess tape from around the edges.
 - Step 6: Use the hole punch to create a hole at the top of your circle.
 - Step 7: Attach the circle to a key ring.

Talk Together

1. "What's something that feels hard for you? How does this verse remind you that God is with you?"
2. "How could this key chain help you remember to pray or trust God in tough moments?"

→ *NOTE: Look for opportunities to have conversations about what it means to make a decision to follow Jesus! (If you need help with what to say, ask your ministry leader.)*

Finding verses with 4th-5th graders

- ① Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for.
- ② When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers.
- ③ Once they find the chapter, explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

GROUPS 5/5

Make It Personal with Prayer

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together.
2. Ask: "How does praying out loud make you feel?"
 - Some kids might say nervous, weird, or shy.
 - Say, "Daniel wasn't afraid to talk to God even when everyone could see him. He prayed with his windows open! (Daniel 6:10) Daniel was confident in God and knew that praying to God was nothing to be ashamed of."
 - Encourage the kids to close their eyes or look down to help focus.
3. Prompt the kids to pray for themselves out loud. It's okay if they want to pray silently.
 - Explain that it might feel awkward to pray, but focus on God and trust that He is listening!
 - Prayer suggestion: "God, help me trust You today. Help me be confident. Help me know You are always with me."
4. Then, prompt the kids to pray for someone else out loud.
 - It could be a friend, family member, teacher, or anyone who needs help or encouragement.
 - Prompt suggestion: "God, will You help [name] with [what they need]? Remind them that You love them and are always with them."
5. Close in prayer together. Thank God that we don't have to hide our prayers, that He hears us, and that He is always with us!

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Blindfolds or bandanas, one for every four kids
- ☐ Cones or various obstacle course objects, enough to create an obstacle course
- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group

Groups

Take a Snapshot

- ☐ Opaque cups, one for every kid
- ☐ Index cards, one for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid

Bible Story Extension

- ☐ Clear plastic cups, one for every kid and Small Group Leader
- ☐ Paper towel, one for every kid and Small Group Leader
- ☐ Large, clear storage bin; one for each Small Group
 - *NOTE: The storage bin must be large enough to submerge a cup.*
- ☐ Plastic tablecloth, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Before group time:
 - *Fill the clear storage container with water (enough water to submerge the cup).*

Discussion Questions

→ No Supplies Needed

Verses to Take with You

- ☐ Bible marked at Isaiah 40:31, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Key rings (like these: bit.ly/3TNmfuA); one for every kid and Small Group Leader
- ☐ Print "Isaiah 40:31 Tags" on Avery #22807; two stickers for every kid and Small Group Leader
- ☐ Regular hole punch, one for each Small Group
- ☐ 2-inch circle hole punch, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Clear packing tape, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ Scissors, one pair for every kid
- ☐ White cardstock
- ☐ Before group time: Use the 2-inch hole punch to cut one circle out of the white cards for every kid.

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Before group time: Use the supplies to pre-assemble several key chains.

Make It Personal with Prayer

→ No Supplies Needed