

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

Esther

Esther 1-10

Conversation Starter

When has someone stood up for you?

Bottom Line

God can help you stand up for others.

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
- ☐ Floor Tape



① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that He sees and values every voice, no matter the age! Recall an age-appropriate story about a time when you were able to stand up for someone who needed help or speak up with love and courage. Ask God to help preteens understand that they don't need to wait until they're older to be used by Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to help them see the people around them who need to see God's love, kindness, and truth, and to act on what He shows them.

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:
 - Create a large circle or square with floor tape.
4. Divide the kids into two teams (or more, depending on your group's size).
5. Explain: "Each team will choose a kid whom they'll protect. That kid's identity must stay a secret!"
6. Direct the teams to secretly choose a kid to protect, and then stand on opposite sides of the tape zone you created.
7. On your "go!" the teams will walk (no running!) toward the zone, trying to get as many teammates—including the selected kid—inside as possible.
8. In the zone, the teams must try to protect their selected kid from being tagged by the other team.
9. Each opposing team can try to gently tag three people from the other team.
10. If they tag a regular player, that player steps out for one round. If they tag the real VIP, the round is over!
11. Play several rounds, switching selected kids each time.

② What You Say

"That was so fun! How did it feel to be protected by your team? **(INVITE RESPONSES.)**"

"Standing up for others can feel hard and complex. Sometimes we don't know who needs us to stand up for them, or what will happen if we do.

"Today, in our true story from the Bible, we'll discover a woman named Esther who stood up for others even though it was risky for her. Let's go hear more and discover how God can help us stand up for others too!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Remind the group to use gentle tags if tagging and to include everyone.

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

☐ Floor Tape


① What You Do

1. Mark a start line in your group area.
2. Invite the kids to stand behind it.
3. Stand a few feet away.
4. Explain that you will read scenarios one at a time.
→ Everyone who thinks they could do that challenge for someone with God's help will take a step forward.
5. The kids will continue to take steps forward after you read each scenario.
6. Frequently ask kids to share why they would or wouldn't do it, and how God could help.

Challenge Scenarios

1. Invite a new kid to sit with you at lunch.
2. Stand up and say something when someone is being teased.
3. Share something important about your faith with someone.
4. Say "I'm sorry" first, even when it's hard.
5. Include someone who is often left out.
6. Pray for a friend, out loud.
7. Start a lemonade stand to raise money for a good cause.
8. Help a kid on your basketball team who is having trouble with their free throws.
9. Join someone who is eating lunch alone in the cafeteria.
10. Pause your game to go check on a classmate who is upset at recess.

Talk Together

1. How does it make you feel when someone stands up for you?
2. Explain that we aren't meant to do life alone, which means we are to help each other when we need help. God wants to help us live confidently in Him so we can stand up for others—so that more people will come to know Him!
3. Explain that we don't have to stand up for people alone. When we choose to follow Jesus, God's very Spirit moves inside of us. Throughout the day, He will say to our heart, "Hey, do you see that lonely kid over there? Let's go sit with him." God will show us what to do and help us do it!

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

☐ "Block Sort" Activity Pages


① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into two teams.
2. Instruct each team to sit together in a circle.
3. Give each group a set of cards from the "Block Sort" Activity Page.
4. Say, "You'll work as a team to sort these cards! Think about which words describe someone who is putting their confidence in God, like Esther from our Bible Story. As your team chooses a word, use it as a 'block' to help build a castle or tower in the middle of your team!"
5. Remind the kids that some words describe someone whose confidence is in God, and some don't.
6. As they finish, review the chosen words and discuss why each one fits (or doesn't).
7. Discuss why the other words do not fit.

Make It Personal → Share about a time you stood up for someone, or for a group of people who needed help, even when it felt tough. Explain how God helped you do it!

Inclusive Pro Tips



Create smaller groups for kids who might want a more personal conversation.

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 has someone stood up for you?
2. Why do you think it's important to stand up for others, even if it's risky or uncomfortable?
→ What might happen if no one stands up for someone who needs help?
3. Just like Esther, God has placed you to live exactly where you are at this exact time—in your family, in your class, on your team, in your church. Since He has placed you exactly where you are to help, who do you think He wants you to help? What do you think He wants you to do?
4. What do you think it sounds like or feels like when God is guiding you to help or stand up for someone?

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

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils



Inclusive Pro Tips

If a kid doesn't want to write or read their fear, let them draw a picture or keep their card private.

① What You Do

1. Give every kid a Bible.
2. Invite them to look up Isaiah 40:31 using the Bible Navigation Tips.
3. Ask if there are any words that are unfamiliar to them in the verse.
4. Repeat the verse together.

Connect Together

1. Give each kid an index card and a pencil.
2. Invite them to write down one fear, worry, or doubt they sometimes have without putting their name on the card.
3. Collect all the cards, shuffle them, and place them in a pile.
4. Then, let each kid draw a random card (making sure they don't pick their own).
5. Take turns reading each card aloud. As a group, brainstorm words of truth from God's Word (Isaiah 40:31 or other encouraging promises) that could help with that fear or doubt.
6. Repeat until all of the cards have been shared.

Talk Together

1. Encourage the kids that God can give them the strength and confidence to stand up for others!

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.

Preteen

Small Group

November — Week 4

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

☐ Small playground ball



① What You Do

1. Instruct the kids to sit with you in a circle.
2. Say, "We all need confidence and courage, just like Esther—and God wants to give it to us every day! Today, we will pray for each other. When I toss you the ball, you can pray out loud or silently for God to give us the confidence to stand up for others. Ready?"
3. Start the prayer, and pass the ball to a kid in the circle.
4. Continue passing the ball around until every kid gets a chance to pray.
5. Close in prayer together.

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.

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group

Groups

Take a Snapshot

- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group

Bible Story Extension

- ☐ Print "Block Sort" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, two sets for each Small Group

Discussion Questions

→ No Supplies Needed

Verses to Take with You

- ☐ Bibles, one for every kid
- ☐ Index cards, one for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid

Make It Personal with Prayer

- ☐ Small playground ball, one for each Small Group

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**