



SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

The Comeback Kid / Week 4

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

Living for Jesus means living like Jesus.

SCRIPTURE

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24 NLT).

"If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it" (Matthew 16:25 NLT).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand what it looks like to follow Jesus' example in their actions and words.

THINK ABOUT THIS

This week's discussion is about helping students understand that living for Jesus means living like Jesus. It's not about labels, habits, or following certain rules; it's about following His example. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus says following Him requires giving up our own way and taking up our cross, which means putting aside what we want and putting Jesus first. It's not about external things, but living out the love and service Jesus demonstrated. Encourage students to start by doing what Jesus did: showing kindness, patience, and standing up for what's right. In this phase, middle schoolers have a hard time thinking outside of themselves and what's happening in their world right at that moment. The goal as you wrap up this series is to help them take a big concept, like faith in Jesus, and start incorporating it into their daily lives by living like Him.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the content as needed, and don't feel like you need to complete everything listed.

DURING GROUP

JUST FOR FUN

Are you a big fan of anything? What do you do to show your support for that influencer, artist, team, or show?

DISCUSS THIS

1. How do you think being a big fan of something makes us act differently?
2. What are some things people might assume about how Christians are supposed to act?
3. What do you think it means to live like Jesus?
4. Do you think that's an easy or difficult thing to do? Why?
5. Jesus said, *"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way."* What do you think this means for a middle schooler who wants to follow Jesus?
6. If living for Jesus means living like Jesus, what are some things Jesus did that we could do in our everyday lives?

7. To get more specific, what's one way you could live more like Jesus...
 1. At school?
 2. At home?
 3. With your friends?
 4. With people you disagree with?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE 1)

Tape an index card with the words "LIVE LIKE JESUS" to the wall where your Small Group meets. Give each student a few blank index cards and ask them to write down what the words "LIVE LIKE JESUS" mean to them and how they can do just that. When everyone is done, have them tape their cards on the wall around the "LIVE LIKE JESUS" card. Then, have them choose one or two action steps they can take this week to live by Jesus' example.
