



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

STUDENT TAKEOVER

Sarah and four student communicators · Weekend of August 29 and 30, 2026

SCRIPTURES

MARK 10:13-16 · MATTHEW 18:1-5 · PROVERBS 3:5-6 · TITUS 3:4-5 · 2 CORINTHIANS 3:17

THE MESSAGE

Four students preached this weekend, and the reason the church hands them the stage is that the next generation is not the church of tomorrow, it is the church right now! Somewhere between 63 and 84 percent of people who follow Jesus give their lives to Him before they turn eighteen, and over 500 kids and teenagers went to camp with Eastside this summer, the largest number in the history of the church. The teaching landed in Mark 10, where parents are bringing their children to Jesus and the disciples try to shoo them away because the Lord has more important things to do. Jesus is indignant, which is to say genuinely angry about it, and then He does four things in a row. He corrects the people blocking them, He invites the children in, He holds them up as the example of how everybody should come to God, and then He takes them in His arms and blesses them physically and publicly. The invitation for the rest of us is an all skate, not a parents only skate. Advocate for them, include them, learn from them, and pray for them by name.

BEFORE YOU START

Two things can quietly derail this one. The first is that everybody agrees, and a room that agrees stops thinking, so keep pushing past kids are great and toward what each person is actually going to do this week. The second is the drift into treating the next generation as a problem to solve, comparing them to

how things used to be, which is the exact posture Jesus corrected in the disciples. If that starts, bring the group back to what they heard from the four students who preached.

Adjust for who is actually in your group.

You may have parents of teenagers, empty nesters, grandparents at a distance, single adults, and people with no kids in their life at all, and this conversation lands differently for each of them. It was called an all skate for a reason, so do not let the people without children at home spend the night listening to parents talk. Every person in your group is being watched by somebody younger, whether that is a nephew, a neighbor, a student they coach, or a kid who sits in the row behind them every weekend.

You are not going to get through all eight questions, and you are not supposed to. You choose which ones fit your group, and you choose the order you take them in. Spend your time where the conversation is actually alive rather than trying to cover everything.

ICEBREAKER

Think back to when you were the age of the students who preached this weekend. Who was the adult who took you seriously, and what specifically did they do?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Five here, and three more in Go Deeper. Take whichever ones fit your group, in whatever order you want. Nobody is grading you on covering all of them.

1

MARK 10:13-16

The disciples were not being cruel, they were being efficient. Children had no standing in that culture, Jesus had a schedule, and shooing the kids away looked like protecting His time for the important work. *Where do you catch yourself making that same call, treating the kids and teenagers around you as an interruption to the real thing you are doing?*

Somebody will feel convicted quickly here, especially parents. Do not let it turn into a guilt spiral, move them toward what they want to do differently.

2

Jesus was indignant, which means He was not mildly annoyed, He was deeply grieved and angry enough to correct His disciples in front of everyone. Sit with the fact that this is one of the few times we see Him react that way, and it is over children being kept from Him. *What does that tell you about how He feels toward the kids and teenagers at your campus, and who is being hindered from Him right now that you could actually do something about?*

3

MATTHEW 18:1-5 · TITUS 3:4-5

Jesus held children up as the example and told the adults to receive the kingdom the way a child does, pointing at humility, trust, openness, and dependency. Listen to what came off that stage. One student said you do not earn God's kindness and love, you just have to show up for it. Another said what finally broke her cycle was not better habits or trying harder, it was letting Jesus lead. *Which of those two do you need to hear more, and what did adulthood talk you out of?*

This is where the group learns from the next generation instead of talking about them. Ask what people heard in the students that they recognize as something they used to believe more easily.

4

One of the students talked about growing up without a good father in her life, and then named the people God did put there, her mom, her grandma, her stepdad, and her Papa. None of them set out to be the answer to that, they just kept showing up. Jesus blessed the children physically and publicly rather than only speaking kindly about them. *Whose list are you on, and what are the young people in your life learning about following Jesus from watching you rather than from anything you have told them?*

5

The declaration this weekend was to bless, encourage, and build into the next generation, and four ways to do it were named: advocate for them, include them, learn from them, and pray for them. There are prayer prompt cards and wristbands with the name of an Eastside kid in every lobby this week, and there are open spots in Next Gen classrooms at every campus. *Which of the four are you taking, and what does it look like on your calendar?*

Do not let anyone leave with an intention instead of an action. Grabbing a wristband, asking the lobby about a Next Gen opening, learning one student's name. Something with a day attached to it.

GO DEEPER

Three more, for groups that move quickly or want to push further. The first one is built for the people at your table who love to dig into the text itself.

GD1

MARK 10:1-31

Read the whole chapter around the children rather than the four verses on their own, and watch what Mark has placed on either side. Just before it, Jesus is being tested about divorce, which in that world left women and children with almost nothing. Just after it, a wealthy man walks up with everything the culture said mattered and cannot let go of it, and Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The children sit right between those two. What is Mark showing us by putting them there, and what does the word hinder mean in a chapter that is otherwise about who gets left out?

One detail worth having. The Greek word behind do not hinder them shows up again in Acts 8:36, when the Ethiopian official asks what is to prevent him from being baptized. It is the language of access, of whether somebody gets to come in, which is exactly what the disciples were deciding for those kids without realizing it.

GD2

2 TIMOTHY 1:5 · MARK 10:16

Paul traces Timothy's faith back through his mother and his grandmother, naming both of them, which means somebody was building into him long before anybody knew who he would become. Jesus does something similar in Mark, taking the children in His arms and blessing them physically and publicly. Say a name out loud, one kid or teenager you are going to bless this week, and tell the group what your version of laying hands on them actually looks like.

Write these names down. This is the list your group carries into the fall, and if you are wearing the wristbands, it is who you are praying for every day this week.

CLOSE YOUR GROUP IN PRAYER

Every campus declared this together on the weekend: *"I declare, with God's help and the power of the Holy Spirit, I will bless, encourage, and build into the next generation."*

One of the students closed her message by having everyone hold their hands out, put their worries in them, pray for a few seconds, then squeeze and open their hands to let it go to God. Do that with your group. Then pray by name over the kids and teenagers you just named, and pray for the four students who taught the church this weekend, that what they carried down the mountain from camp holds all the way through the school year.