

Survivor

Youth Retreat
Middletown UMC
Summer 2008

Small Group Leader Information Sheets

Small Group #1

Saturday Afternoon ~ Surviving the Crowd

Introductions & Prayer

- **Say:** We will go around the circle and simply say your name, grade and favorite Disney character.
- **Pray:** You (or the adult leader) can open with short prayer.

Diving In:

- **Ask:** Do you find it embarrassing to make different decisions than your friends?
- **Say:** I want you to think for a moment about a time when you had to make a different choice than your friends or peers.
- **Ask:** Does anyone want to share a time when they had to make a difficult choice?
- **Ask:** What does that feel like?
- **Say:** In the beginning of the book of Daniel, we find that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had a difficult decision to make. Would they follow the crowd, drinking their wine, eating their food, worshiping their king, or would they choose to live differently. In the end, Daniel convinced the guard to let them eat nothing but vegetables and drink nothing but water. And when they did, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel ended up being stronger than the other men.
- **Discuss:** What was the story about? What does this story mean for our lives?

Closing

- **Read:** Daniel 1:15-17
- **Say:** This weekend, we are reminded that we are called to live differently because we believe in Jesus. As we follow God's plan for our lives, we made different and sometimes difficult choices to worship only God.

Prayer

Feel free to do any kind of prayer: group prayer, individual prayer, led by leader or other youth, etc.

Small Group Session #2

Saturday Evening ~ Surviving Stress

Opening & Prayer

- **Invite** someone to open the group with prayer.
- **Say:** Today, Chris talked about stress in our lives. In the next few minutes, we are going to think about the stress in our lives and seek God's guidance.

Activity on "Surviving Stress"

- **Pass Out:** Hand each person a piece of rope.
- **Say:** Using the rope I handed you, make knots, just as Chris did in his message. As you do, think of the things in your life that can cause stress. What stresses you out?
- **Be Prepared** ~ Be prepared to further explain the activity or give an example of the stress in your life.

Reflection

- **Say:** Look at all of those knots.
- **Ask:** Does anyone want to share what the knots in their rope represent?
- **Say:** We do have so much stress in our lives. From trying to get good grades to already thinking about college to dealing with our parents, stress happens. But certainly we have never faced anything like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. As Chris shared in his message, King Nebuchadnezzar wanted everyone to worship the golden idol that he had made. Whoever refused would be burned alive. Talk about stress! But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not worship the idol. So they were thrown in the fiery furnace. The King even made the furnace hotter than ever, because he was so mad. But when the King looked in, not only did he see that the three men were alive, but there was another man with them – a "heavenly being." In the midst of your stress, God is there. God will always save you, if you let him, from your stress.
- **Say:** So, to remember that God will always save us from our stress, why don't you hand me your knotted rope and I will give you a new piece of rope. May it remind you that God is always with you.

Closing

Read Daniel 3:16-18

Prayer

Close in prayer. Give thanks that God has made each one of us unique. Give thanks that God looks at the heart and not at the things of this world!

For this lesson, you will need: Bibles, 2 strings per person.

Small Group Session #3

Sunday Morning ~ Surviving the Battle

Opening & Prayer

- **Invite** someone to open the group with prayer.
- **Ask:** Have you ever had to do something that seemed impossible? (Let youth share and respond.)

Scripture Reading:

- **Say:** We have talked about surviving the crowd, surviving stress and now we are going to talk about surviving the battle. I am sure that many of you have heard of the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. Daniel had become one of the king's servants, serving as a leader over the people. Several of the other leaders became jealous of David. So, they suggested that King Darius make a new law. This new law said that for 30 days, all of the people under King Darius' rule could worship only him. Daniel was not willing to worship the King and not God, so he began praying to God for guidance. The men who were jealous saw him and reported him to the king. The King had tried to save Daniel, but found no way around the law. So Daniel was thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "Daniel, by your God rescue you." They closed the door on the den of lions. Early the next morning, the king rushed to the lion's den, opened the door, and began crying out, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God able to rescue you?"
- **Read** – Daniel 6:21-22

Diving In:

- **Say:** Sometimes it is hard to trust that God will provide for us.
- **Ask:** How has it been hard for you to live out your faith?
- **Ask:** How do others know that you love God?

Closing

- **Say:** To end our small group time today, we are each going to take some time alone with God. Each of you needs to find a quiet place where you can concentrate. I am going to pass out a card with each of this weekend's key scriptures. Read them over and think about what they mean. Pray. When you hear the music begin, return again to the gathering area.