



# SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

## I Have Questions / What do we do about anxiety?

### LEADER PREP

#### BOTTOM LINE

There are tools to take on anxiety.

#### SCRIPTURE

*Be merciful to me, my God, for my enemies are in hot pursuit; all day long they press their attack. My adversaries pursue me all day long (Psalm 56:1-2a NIV).*

*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4 NIV).*

#### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students realize that they aren't alone or helpless, no matter what they're feeling when it comes to anxiety and stress.

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

Leaders—remember that students have a short-term perspective in this stage of development. Your life experience can often make the problems students are facing seem small to you. When talking about the stress and anxiety your students are facing, be careful not to undermine what feels big and impossible to them. It matters to them. Listen to each one of their concerns with the same level of engagement.

### CONVERSATION GUIDE

Create meaningful conversation. Adjust the questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the most stressful area of your life right now? (*family, school, friendships, dating, etc.*)
2. What is the difference between **stress** and **anxiety**?
3. What do you typically do when you feel stressed or anxious?
4. How have you seen anxiety turn into something that hurts you or someone you know?
5. How can knowing that you aren't alone in your particular struggle help you deal with it?
6. Read Psalm 56:3-4. What are the things that feel true in a stressful or anxious time that aren't? What are the things that are true about God no matter what we are experiencing inside or outside?
7. Read Philippians 4:6-7. Paul challenges us to pray and be thankful when we feel anxious. How can these two things help?
8. What's one thing you can start doing next time you feel anxious or stressed to help you cope with it better?

#### TRY THIS

Leaders—pass out one "Things That Stress Me Out" handout and one pen to each student. Give your students a couple of minutes to fill out the top half of the handout (the things that stress them out and the things that calm them down). Once everyone's done, ask your students to share some of the things they wrote down in each column.

Then, before you wrap up group, ask your students to complete the bottom half of the handout, identifying one thing stressing them out that they can't control, one thing stressing them out that they can control, and what they can do to ease stress in those areas this week.

**LEADER NOTE:** As we talk about anxiety, there's a chance a student may bring up one of the 3 hurts: (1) A student is hurting themselves, (2) A student is being hurt by someone else or, (3) A student is thinking about hurting someone else. If one of these "hurts" comes up, please reach out to a staff member after small group so they can take appropriate safety steps if necessary.