



Represent
Wk 3/4: Be Affirming
January 23 & 24, 2021

LEADER PREP

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

- (1) For students to realize that how they treat their friends matters
- (2) For students to grow in how well they represent Jesus to others

SCRIPTURE

Acts 9:20-31

THINK ABOUT THIS

Middle and high school students give a great amount of power and weight to their friends. **That means your students hold a great amount of power and influence in their friends' lives.** How well are your students representing Jesus to their friends? You may have students all over the board on that and they may have never thought about that before. Preaching isn't the only way to share the Gospel; how your students treat their friends will most likely leave a bigger impact than the words they say. **The main goal for this series is for you to engage your students in conversations that help them reflect and grow in how they are treating their friends and representing Jesus through their character.**

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.



CONVERSATION GUIDE

MAIN POINT

Let's represent Jesus well by seeing good in others.

GET THEM TALKING

- (1) What is a talent, skill, or personality trait you have that someone has complimented you on?
- (2) How do those encouragements make us feel? Why?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

READ ACTS 9:20-31 and answer the following questions:

1. In your own words, what was Saul's reputation? Why were the believers in Jerusalem afraid of him?
2. Imagine you were a Christian in those days and Saul came to your door, what would you do?
3. Why is it easier to sometimes judge someone based on their reputation or what you hear others say about them?
4. What did Barnabas do and what difference did that make?
5. What's the difference between viewing someone by their reputation or viewing them based on what you've seen of them?
6. Can you share about a positive change in your life, or someone you know, after following Jesus?
7. How can we support friends who are trying to make positive changes in their lives?
8. Let's go around the circle and everyone affirm, that is say something positive, about the person on your right. (Even if you don't know them very well, pick something you see you like, such as "I like your smile" or something you've seen them do in small group like "I like the way you shared earlier")

NEXT STEP

Pick a friend, or even someone you don't know super well but who could use some encouragement (aka anyone), think of something positive you've noticed about them – and go tell them this week! Super next step challenge: pick a different person and affirm them every day this week!

PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests and close your time together in prayer.

SCRIPTURE

MS students are concrete thinkers, so opening your Bible to read the Scripture with them is a preferred visual cue.

ACTS 9:20-31 (NLT)

²⁰ And immediately he [Saul] began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!" ²¹ All who heard him were amazed. "Isn't this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem?" they asked. "And didn't he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?"

²² Saul's preaching became more and more powerful, and the Jews in Damascus couldn't refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. ²³ After a while some of the Jews plotted together to kill him. ²⁴ They were watching for him day and night at the city gate so they could murder him, but Saul was told about their plot. ²⁵ So during the night, some of the other believers^[a] lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the city wall.

²⁶ When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe he had truly become a believer! ²⁷ Then Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them how Saul had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. He also told them that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus. ²⁸ So Saul stayed with the apostles and went all around Jerusalem with them, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ He debated with some Greek-speaking Jews, but they tried to murder him. ³⁰ When the believers^[b] heard about this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus, his hometown.

³¹ The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers."