

Stan  
Wk 3/3: Fasting  
February 28, 2021

## LEADER PREP

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

For students to gain a foundational understanding of fasting and how to take a first step.

### SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:16-18

### THINK ABOUT THIS

Just like God doesn't always answer our prayers the way we expect, God may not answer our fasts the way we expect either. Prayer and fasting isn't like a vending machine where we put something in and get to select what we get back. Prayer and fasting is a conversation with God, where we ask God for things and He answers in the way He sees best. **Follow up with your students to see how their fasting is going.** Let them know you are available to talk to them through anything, even tough things that may come up as they fast.

Be a great cheerleader for your students and celebrate any and every step they are taking to grow closer to Jesus. Students may not always hit the goals they share in small group, but every step they take is a step in the right direction. And when we mess up, remind them there is GRACE!

*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

**Sometimes saying no is the best yes.**

### GET THEM TALKING

What are some things you've wanted so much that you made sacrifices or gave up other things to get it? (Ever saved up for anything big or done extra chores to earn something?)

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, what is the difference between doing something to earn God's approval or love and doing something out of your love for God?
2. Have you ever heard about fasting before? What have you heard about it?
3. The definition of fasting is abstaining from something that sustains us, like food, for spiritual purposes. How would you share the meaning of fasting in your own words if a friend asked what it meant?

#### **READ MATTHEW 6:16-18 and discuss:**

4. In your own words, what is Jesus saying?
5. One purpose of fasting is to remind us of our dependence on God. Why doesn't it seem like we are dependent on God sometimes?
6. Do you think we are always dependent on God? Why or why not?
7. One purpose of fasting is asking God to move in powerful ways in the world around us. What are different ways we could ask God to move in our world?
8. Brainstorm together: When doing a fast, what are things you can do to redirect your thoughts when cravings come up?

### NEXT STEP

Pass out the next step fasting cards and read them together. Encourage your students to take it home and talk more with their parents about it.

### 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.

### MATTHEW 6:16-18 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup>“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.