



LEADER PREP

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students realize that their friends determine the direction of their life and that God wants us to choose our friends wisely.

MAIN POINT

Your friends can make or break you.

MAIN SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 12:3-11 + 16 NLT

THINK ABOUT THIS

Friendships most likely feel like the center of most of your students' worlds right now, so it can be a scary thing to really look at their friendships honestly – especially if your students feel like they may be led to make some changes on which friendships are the most important in their lives. **The need for acceptance can drive all us, teenagers and adults, to make bad decisions. Remind your students of God's acceptance of them,** their identity in Him, and your acceptance of them – no matter what. This may help them take a more real and honest look at their friendships.

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.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

GET THEM TALKING

- What are some traits that you look for when choosing a friend?
- Someone recap the main point of the message in your own words.
- Who is one of your closest friends? Are they a positive or negative influence? Why?

INTO THE WORD

READ 1 Kings 12:3-11 + 16 and answer the following questions:

- Why do you think King Rehoboam listen to his friends and not his father's advisors?
- How did that work out for the king?
- If you were in his shoes, who would you have listened to, and why?
- Have you ever gotten conflicting advice from people: maybe one set of advice from your parents and one from friends? How did you decide whose advice to listen too?
- Why do you think our friends have so much influence in our lives?
- Who of your friends influence you into a deeper relationship with God?
- How can we grow our friendships with others who encourage us in our faith?
- What should we do if we notice our friends are negatively influencing us?

NEXT STEP

- Who are the people in your life whom it is wise to say "no" to and to say "yes" to?

Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal that to you. Talk to a friend or mentor if you have questions about how to do that.

PRAYER GUIDE

We are going to close in prayer. Prayer requests?

MAIN SCRIPTURE

Scripture is provided for convenience, but we prefer you and your students open your Bibles to read the Scripture. This helps your students learn how to find Scripture in their Bibles and where these verses are in the larger context of God's Word.

1 Kings 12:3-11 + 16 NLT

³The leaders of Israel summoned him, and Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel went to speak with Rehoboam. ⁴"Your father was a hard master," they said. "Lighten the harsh labor demands and heavy taxes that your father imposed on us. Then we will be your loyal subjects."

⁵Rehoboam replied, "Give me three days to think this over. Then come back for my answer." So the people went away.

⁶Then King Rehoboam discussed the matter with the older men who had counseled his father, Solomon. "What is your advice?" he asked. "How should I answer these people?"

⁷The older counselors replied, "If you are willing to be a servant to these people today and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your loyal subjects."

⁸But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and instead asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him and were now his advisers. ⁹"What is your advice?" he asked them. "How should I answer these people who want me to lighten the burdens imposed by my father?"

¹⁰The young men replied, "This is what you should tell those complainers who want a lighter burden: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist! ¹¹Yes, my father laid heavy burdens on you, but I'm going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!'".....

¹⁶When all Israel realized that the king had refused to listen to them, they responded,

"Down with the dynasty of David!

We have no interest in the son of Jesse.

Back to your homes, O Israel!

Look out for your own house, O David!"

So the people of Israel returned home.