

Thank you for previewing this youthministry360 Small Group Leader's Guide for *NOW*.

We're pumped you're considering utilizing this lesson plan with your *NOW* student journals.

We designed this 4 session small group Leader's Guide to help give you a more relational framework to help your students work through *NOW*. To help you evaluate this sample, below you'll find an overview of the structure of the lesson plan.

Function

These Leader's Guides should be used the week following the corresponding week in *NOW*.

- For example, the Leader's Guide for Week 1 should be used to facilitate a small group gathering after students have completed the first week of *NOW*.
- The Leader's Guide for Week 2 should be used to facilitate a meeting after Week 2, and so on.

Structure

The *NOW* Leader's Guides are designed to provide you with at least half an hour of meeting time content. Most groups will find that there is enough content (with the addition of student input and interaction) to go well beyond a 30-minute time slot.

- The first component of each *NOW* Leader's Guide is a time for students to share what they've learned that week in their personal study of *NOW*.
- The second component of each *NOW* Leader's Guide is a Bible study activity that takes one aspect of the previous week's content and goes more in depth in a fast-paced discussion.
- The final component of your *NOW* Leader's Guide is a section that previews the week to come.

If you have any questions about your Leader Guide preview PDF, please do not hesitate to email (customercare@youthministry360.com) or call us (888.96.ym360).

NOW: Impacting Your World For Christ (Right Now!)

4-Session Small Group Leader Guide

Purpose:

- The purpose of these small group leader's guides is to provide you with a framework with which to lead students in knowing and applying the truths in *NOW*.

Function:

- These Leader Guides should be used *the week following* the corresponding week in *NOW*.
 - For example, the Leader Guide for Week 1 should be used to facilitate a small group gathering after students have completed the first week of *NOW*.
 - The Leader's Guide for Week 2 should be used to facilitate a meeting *after students have read Week 2*, and so on.

Structure:

- The *NOW* Leader Guides are designed to provide you with at least half an hour of meeting time content. Most groups will find that there is enough content (with the addition of student input and interaction) to go well beyond a 30-minute time slot.
- The first component of each *NOW* Leader Guide is a time for students to share what they've learned in their personal study of *NOW* during the previous week.
 - We've provided some general questions to help prompt discussion, but we've chosen not to articulate a detailed activity. We want students to have the freedom to talk about what they are encountering.
 - Do your part to make sure you have an environment that is safe for sharing thoughts and opinions. Encourage students to open up about what they're learning.
- The second component of each *NOW* Leader Guide is a Bible study activity that treats one aspect of the previous week's content in a more in-depth discussion.
- The final component of your *NOW* Leader Guide is a section that previews the week to come.

A Few Thoughts For Small Group Leaders:

- Your students will need their *NOW* books and their Bibles for your small group time.
- As we mentioned earlier, each small group lesson will feature an "unstructured" time of review. This brings to light two important considerations:
 - You'll want to inform students that they should come to small group prepared to talk about specific things they found interesting, challenging, confusing, and so on.
 - As much as possible, you should consider reading through *NOW* along with your students. You don't have to, but if you do you'll find that you are in a much better position to answer their questions, or relate to what has been challenging to them.

NOW: Impacting Your World For Christ (Right Now!)

Week 1 Lesson Plan

Getting Started (5-10 minutes)

FIRST, begin this first small group session by discussing with students the idea behind NOW and their commitment to read the book. Say something like:

- **This book can be a big step in your life. It can help you begin to truly see your life as a powerful resource for God to use to impact the world. This is going to be a really fun next few weeks. We're going to journey through this content together. And my hope is that you will be challenged to embrace the challenge to make a difference in your world for the sake of Christ.**

THEN, remind students of how this group will function over the next few weeks. Explain that every student will be expected and encouraged to spend time each day working through *NOW*. Each week's meeting will cover the material from the most recent week they've completed.

Challenge students to invest themselves in this group as much as possible, helping them understand that the overall experience will be stronger the more they engage with the material. Remind them that it's OK to miss a day or two (it happens!), but that the important thing is to commit as much as possible to sticking with it over the next four weeks. Ask if anyone has any questions.

FINALLY, transition into an opening prayer time. Seek to make this prayer related to this specific spiritual journey your students are on. As much as possible, encourage students to share personal prayer requests with the group. Maybe not this first session, but over the next three sessions, give students the chance to pray for one another. After your prayer time, spend some time looking back over the first week of *NOW*.

Looking Back (5-10 minutes)

FIRST, explain to students that you'll start each meeting with a time of reviewing what they've learned in the previous week. As a reminder, this is an unstructured time of review. In other words, there's no specific day you'll be asking students to look back at. There's no prescribed activity. This time of review flows purely from each individual's interaction with the content in *NOW*. Your goal for this time is to have students share their reflections and engage in a dialogue around any questions or thoughts that may arise.

Having said this, we've provided you with a set of questions to help prompt students to think about the past week, and to help encourage them to participate. Consider asking questions similar to the following to help students open up about what they're learning in *NOW*:

- **Was there a specific day that seemed to make more of an impact on you than the other days? Why? What was it about that day that jumped out at you?**
 - If possible, lead students to go deeper in fleshing out their answer to this question. Help them grasp how their answer practically applies to their daily lives.
- **Overall, was your response positive or negative to Week 1? If positive, why? What did you like about it? If negative, what rubbed you the wrong way?**
- **What feelings did you feel as you worked through these activities?**
- **What questions do you have? Was there anything you didn't understand?**
- **What did you encounter that was completely new to you? Were there concepts that you hadn't run-in to before? How did it make you feel? What thoughts did it cause you to consider?**

FINALLY, transition into your time of Bible study using the “Going Deeper” activity.

Going Deeper (10-15 minutes)

FIRST, remind students that Week 1 was a look at the concept of purpose and how God wants to use them to impact the world. Explain that this “Going Deeper” will take more of an in-depth view of what it means to see their lives as a resource to be used by God.

THEN, have a student turn to Week 1, Day 5. Remind them that this day is a look at exactly how we can know what God’s plan is for our lives. Explain to students that the day lists two ways we can go about determining this. You’re going to take a more in-depth look at Romans 12:1-2 and see what this passage tells you about living our lives on mission for God.

Have students turn to Romans 12. Remind students that Romans is Paul’s letter to Christ-followers living throughout Rome. Read or have a student read Romans 12:1-2. Explain to students that verse 1 uses the image of the Old Testament system of offering sacrifices as a way of pleasing and worshipping God. Then say:

- **Anyone who comes to faith in Christ is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Part of living as a new creation is understanding that our lives are God’s to use as He sees fit. Paul equates our new lives as holy offerings to God. Our lives are something we give to God as holy and set apart for His purposes. Paul goes a step further in verse 2.**

THEN, ask:

- **Paul is giving us a command here in the first part of verse 2. What does he say we should be careful not to do?**
 - *Answer:* Paul says not to conform to “the pattern of this world.”
- **Let’s make sure we’re on the same page. What does it mean to conform to something?**
 - *Answer:* To conform means to “be similar in shape or make-up” with something, or to “act in accordance with” something.
- **So, what does it mean when Paul says not to conform to the world?**
 - *Answer:* We’re not supposed to look or act like the world.

Explain that after telling us what not to do, Paul then turns around and tells us something that we should do. Have students look back at the second part of verse 2. Ask something like the following:

- **What are we supposed to do instead of conforming to the world’s ways?**
 - *Answer:* to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.
- **OK, so, this language can be tricky. But what is Paul talking about here? How do we transform our minds?**
 - *Answers will vary.* Allow students to consider what this might mean. Explain that only God can truly transform our minds. And so Paul is encouraging us, essentially, to turn from the ways of the world and embrace the new life God offers us through faith in Christ. When we come to faith in Christ, every aspect of us, including how we think, is made new.
- **OK, so, what does Paul say is the point of all of this? Why should we not conform to the world? Why should we embrace the transformation that Christ brings?**
 - *Answer:* So that we can “test” and see what God’s will is for our lives.

- **Ah! So now we have it. Paul says that by being renewed in Christ, we can test and know what God’s will for our life is. Who can make sense of this? Who wants to take a guess at what Paul is getting at here? What does it mean to “test” in order to find out God’s plan?**
 - Answer: The Greek word *dokimazō* essentially means to find out how much something is worth by putting it to use. The idea here is that in order to know God’s will for our lives, we would simply live our lives, faithfully and obediently, and that God will lead us to a path that is in line with His plan for us. Boom! That’s a pretty simple way of finding out God’s plan for us.

Finally, explain that this journey might look different for each of us. Sometimes God allows some of us to test more options than other people. Some of us might have a longer journey of discovering what God wants us to be doing. But for everyone, God wants to make clear His will for our lives. And by obediently following Him, we can discover the path He wants us to take.

Looking Ahead (5 minutes)

FIRST, ask students to turn to page 23. Explain to students that Week 2 is all about defining their vision for how they are going to make a difference for Christ in their worlds. Then draw students’ attention to page 24. Explain that this will give them an idea of what’s coming in Week 2. Make sure you make the following point:

- Week 2, Day 3 is an important day. It’s the day where they will finally attempt to articulate in writing the vision God is giving them. Encourage them to really make some time for this day, as it may require some extra reflection and prayer.

FINALLY, encourage students to look for activities in the upcoming week that are especially meaningful, or that cause them to ask questions. Remind them that they’ll be asked to share these types of reflections at your next meeting. Encourage them to take notes or to circle or underline specific passages or activities so they can remember to talk about them.

Don’t miss out on the opportunity to touch base with your students this upcoming week through texts, Instagram DM’s, or even a phone call. By doing so, you will exponentially increase the likelihood that they stay with their commitment to study *NOW*.