

# RENEW

SMALL GROUP LEADER



## 01. HEART

### HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE:

**GOAL:** The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *This small group lesson is designed to help you and your students go deeper into what it means to have a renewed heart and how to keep our hearts connected to God. It's easy to get lost in the checklist of saying and doing the right things, but not having our hearts in it. This lesson is designed to help students see the value that God places on what's inside (our hearts) not what's outside (how we appear to others).*
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students about renewing their hearts and authentically worshipping God. That is why the Small Group Leader's Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.*

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A copy of the Facilitator's Guide for you and any other facilitators.
- A copy of the Student Book for each participant.
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare: Anything that could work as a fake microphone. 10 to 20 popular (and appropriate) songs from various genres, queued up on an iPod or iPhone. Printouts of the lyrics. A way to play the music so everyone can hear it.

### TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Don't forget to take a minute and watch the teacher prep video found in your Dnow Studies account. It's a short video that will take you through some of the need-to-knows before you dive into this lesson with students.

**The Small Group Leader Guide** This table outlines the parts of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe that you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

<b><i>Lesson Outline</i></b>	<b><i>Included in Facilitator's Guide</i></b>	<b><i>Included in Student Book</i></b>	<b><i>Approximate Timeframe</i></b>
<b>Large Talk Review with Opening Questions</b>		Yes	3-5 minutes
<b>A Second Look</b> A look at renewing your heart in current, everyday life—followed by discussion questions.	Yes	Yes	10-15 minutes
<b>A Little Deeper</b> Dig into Bible passages that were not in the Large Group Talk. See what else Scripture says about this topic.	Yes	Yes + discussion questions	15-20 minutes
<b>Live it out</b> An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson.	Yes		10-15 minutes
<b>Apply it</b> A practical application for students to do this week.	Yes	Yes	2-3 minutes
<b>Student Devotional</b> A short devotional for students to do on their own		Yes	

**The First Meeting:** *Since this is the first meeting together for this event, take the time to lay the foundations for the whole event.*

- *If your students don't know each other, cover introductions and consider an icebreaker (see [leadertreks.com/freebies](http://leadertreks.com/freebies) for several icebreaker and team building activities).*
- *Be sure to cover the schedule and ground rules for the event, especially if you are staying at a host home.*



- *Tell students why you are here. You are probably sacrificing some time and comfort to be a small group teacher and, chances are, it's worth it! Let students know why you care so much about them and why you want to invest in them to help them grow. Tell students that you think they're great and why it's worth it for you to be small group leader this weekend!*

## Large Talk Review

*Take a minute to review what students just learned in the Large Group talk. Have them pull out their notes, and ask them to share what their answers were for the two questions found on **page 4** of the Student Book. Consider having students share their answers with a partner, and then ask for two or three volunteers who might want to share with the whole group.*

## A Second Look

*Read this story together as a group and answer the following questions, found on **page 5** of the Student Book.*

Have you ever gone to your favorite restaurant hungry for one thing, but you changed your mind as soon as you saw a mouthwatering picture of something else in the menu? Maybe it was the vibrant colors in a salad or the steam rising from a burger, but you can already taste the food before you've even ordered it.

Behind every amazing food photo is a ton of hard work. To make the food in the picture as appetizing as possible, a food stylist arranges each item with care. Individual sesame seeds are placed using tweezers. Salads are built up on mounds of potatoes so they look fuller and are easier to rearrange. Food dyes are injected into meat so burgers are the perfect color. A special concoction of oils, or even WD-40, is sprayed onto fruit so it looks shiny and fresh. Then a food photographer comes in to adjust the lighting, choose the best angle, and take the perfect picture.

But while the end result looks delicious, at best it tastes exactly the same as the food you actually eat, and at worst it's inedible. That's right—so it won't melt under the hot lights of a photo shoot, ice cream is replaced with a gross substance you'd never want to eat. Instead of ice cubes, plastic replicas float in drinks. And the milk in the bowl on the front of your favorite box of cereal? It's probably a heavy cream or even a mixture of glue. I'll take the less beautiful real food, thank you!

## Discuss:

- Think through the last 10 decisions you made (to buy something, to wear something, to go somewhere, to hangout with someone). How important was appearance in your decision making process? Why?
- With the food from these menu pictures in mind, why do you think God cares more about our hearts than how we look on the outside?
- Why do you think some people spend so much time worried about how they come across to the world, instead of focusing on their hearts?

**Leader's Note:** Be sure to say a positive or encouraging comment after students share, for example, "Thanks for saying that," "Good insight," "I think we've all felt that way," or "I've never thought of it like that." If you let silence take over after a student shares, it can change the tempo of the discussion and prevent students from sharing any more. Stay upbeat, nod at them, and smile. It can change the whole atmosphere of each small group time.

## A Little Deeper

*In this section, you'll take a look at several Bible passages and students will answer questions. The Background Notes below will give you a little more insight into the confusing parts of these passages. As students share, remember to listen deeply. Don't be afraid to ask second-level questions.*

**Read each Bible passage and answer the questions found in the Student Book on pages 7 and 8:**

Matthew 13:15: *This people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.*

**Background Note:** Jesus had many confrontations with the Pharisees. They were religious leaders, trained in the law. They knew what was written in the Old Testament better than almost anyone else. Of all people, they should have known what God wanted and how to worship God. But they lost their heart connection to God in the minutia of trying to do the right things for the wrong reasons. They kept laws in order to bolster their image, becoming prideful and arrogant in their religious performance. While their hearts may have started in the right place they were far from God by the time Jesus encountered them.

Discussion questions found on **page 7** of the Student Book

Matthew 15:18: *But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.*

**Background Note:** We wash our hands before we eat so we won't get sick, but people in Jesus' time washed because they thought eating with unwashed hands made them unholy. Jesus is making a point here: that unholiness comes from the inside, not the outside.

Discussion questions found on **page 7** of the Student Book



**Philippians 4:6–7:** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Discussion questions found on **page 8** of the Student Book

## Live It Out

### Lip Sync Contest

*What You'll Need:* It works really well to give one or two students the task of gathering these things a day or two before the event.

- Anything that could work as a fake microphone
- 10 to 20 popular (and appropriate) songs from various genres, queued up on an iPod or iPhone. Printouts of the lyrics. A way to play the music so everyone can hear it.

Have students who want to participate take turns choosing songs to lip sync to from the list you put together. Let them know that this will be a competition for the most believable performance. Encourage them to perform in groups, maybe using back up singers. And if time is an issue, limit each performance to just one minute. After everyone has performed, the group will vote on who gave the most believable performance.

### Debrief:

- If you had a chance to lip sync, how difficult was it to make it look like you were actually singing the song? What did you do to look more convincing?
- Why did you vote on the winner that you did? What made their performance the most believable?
- Have you ever felt like you were just going through the motions (or lip syncing) in your walk with Jesus? Do you think other people could tell? Do you think God cared?
- When you feel that way, how can you turn the corner from empty actions and start following Jesus with your heart first?

## Apply It

Write down one way you are going to apply what you now know about renewing your heart. Think about what you can do today or this week to grow in this area.

*Be specific:*

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

**Leader's Note:** *Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." Challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.*

## What's Next?

**Schedule:** Make sure you let students know what's happening next in the schedule and what they need to do or bring with them.

**Student Devotional:** *The Student Book contains a short devotional for students to do on their own. Make sure to point this out to students and let them know if and when this fits into the schedule of the weekend. The devotional that corresponds with this lesson is found on **page 35**.*