

RENEW

SMALL GROUP LEADER



02. MIND

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 knowing the mind of Christ and what it means to think like him.* This is no easy task, since we are conditioned to think the way our world and our culture think. Marketing and media are designed to make us think a certain way, but Christ renews our minds, and when we embrace that, we can turn the tide of our thinking. In him we can find real wisdom that outweighs the “knowledge” of the world.
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students about renewing their minds and valuing wisdom, not just intellect.* 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: *blindfolds, a dark location, a designated course.*

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.

<i>Lesson Outline</i>	<i>Included in Facilitator's Guide</i>	<i>Included in Student Book</i>	<i>Approximate Timeframe</i>
Large Talk Review with Opening Questions		Yes	3-5 minutes
A Second Look A look at renewing your mind in current, everyday life—followed by discussion questions.	Yes	Yes	10-15 minutes
A Little Deeper 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
Live it out An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson.	Yes		10-15 minutes
Apply it A practical application for students to do this week.	Yes	Yes	2-3 minutes
Student Devotional A short devotional for students to do on their own		Yes	

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 12** 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 13** of the Student Book.*

You are the captain of the varsity basketball team, and part of your responsibility is to help the coaches during tryouts for the freshman team. You and your co-captain give input and help run the drills and scrimmages that will determine who makes the cut. Unfortunately, turnout is slim. The coaches are looking for 12 freshman players, and only 14 have come to try out. As the drills begin, it doesn't take more than a few minutes to realize who the first cut should be. It looks like one guy has never even held a basketball, let alone played the game. You've seen him before in the lunchroom eating by himself, but you don't know his name. As you check the roster and find that his name is David, you also see him miss his 5th layup in a row. It only gets worse during the scrimmage—you're pretty sure David doesn't know the rules of basketball either. You cringe as you watch him travel with the ball. Your coach leans over, shaking his head, and says, "He's no good at basketball, but I have to give him credit for trying. No one else is hustling like him."

Unfortunately, you also have to make a second cut to get the team down from 14 to 12 players. Above David there are three guys at about the same ability level, and normally the coaches would just expand the team by one to keep all three. It wouldn't be fair to cut one of them when the other two are at the exact same level. But if they expand the team to 13, that means David would be the only cut. It would be difficult to explain to David why you were willing to expand the team for another player, but not for him. The coach doesn't really have time to work one-on-one with David to get him to the level he would need to be to play, so if he made the team he would never make it off the bench during an actual game.

The coaches are looking for your input on the decision. Discuss the following questions with your group.

Discuss:

- What would you tell the coaches to do? Why?
- What will that decision mean for the team? For the season? For the coaches? For David?
- Now imagine that you put on the new mindset of Jesus, and made the decision based on his value system. Would you make any changes or additions to your decision?

A Little Deeper

As followers of Jesus, we must love God and others with our whole beings, including our minds. Using our intellect, imagination, and wisdom to love others requires God transforming our minds to be more like Christ's. When we just use our own wisdom or rely on the wisdom of our culture, we may end up wandering away from the desires of Jesus and begin to act foolishly. We need Jesus to make us new in the attitude of our minds, putting on our new selves and living accordingly.

We are going to look at some key passages of Scripture about the wisdom that comes from God. The Bible should be our main source of wisdom, and we should allow the words of God to shape our minds and actions.

Read each Bible passage and answer the questions found in the Student Book on pages 15 and 16:

Romans 12:1-2: *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.*

*Discussion questions found on **page 15** of the Student Book*

Philippians 4:8: *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

*Discussion questions found on **page 15** of the Student Book*

Proverbs 3:5-6: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

*Discussion questions found on **page 16** of the Student Book*

Live It Out

Walking in the Dark

What You'll Need: Blindfolds, a dark location, a designated course.

This activity works best in a darkened home or building.

1. Split students into groups of three and line them up next to each other in a straight line, holding hands (this can also be done with partners). The person in the middle of each group is then blindfolded.
2. The blindfolded person is led by their two partners through the house or building on a designated course (e.g., around chairs, through various rooms, up stairs); partners are allowed to talk and share about incoming obstacles or steps the blind person must take. (Have one of the partners keep track of how long it takes to go through the course.)
3. Once the course is completed, the same blindfolded person must navigate the same course on their own, without holding the hands of their partners. This should be done in the dark and the same partner should time it.
4. Finally, after each blindfolded person has finished, ask them to go through the course one more time without a blindfold and with the lights on. This final run should be the fastest and easiest of all. Have the same partner keep track of time.

Leader's Note: Depending on time and group size, the group leader could have time trials between two teams, or have multiple groups attempt to navigate the course at once.

Debrief:

- Blindfolded people, how did it feel to navigate the course with people, then alone? Which was the easiest—blindfolded with guides, blindfolded and alone, or with the lights on and no blindfold?
- Guides, how did it feel to lead the blind? How did it feel to watch helplessly as they navigated the dark alone?
- What are some of the connections you can see between this activity and following Jesus with a renewed mind?
- Have you ever had to make a difficult choice in life and felt like you were alone, wandering in the dark? Share about that experience.

Say Something Like: Remember from the Large Group Talk what Paul wrote to the Ephesians? We are not to live like the Gentiles who “are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God.” Without transformed and renewed minds, it’s like we are wandering through life alone, wearing a blindfold in the dark. With the light of Christ to guide our way, navigating the difficult paths becomes much less frightening and discouraging. Plus, when we do this both in the light and in community with other people, it becomes remarkably less difficult. This doesn’t mean there won’t be obstacles in our path or difficulties to overcome; it simply means that we’ll be able to handle those things without the fear, anxiety, or uncertainty we would have without Christ and community.

Apply It

Write down one way you are going to apply what you now know about renewing your mind. 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 37**.*