

Training Small Group Leaders

What do small groups do?

The *Step 4* small-group section of each session is designed to help the children discuss the theme and verse, personalize the message, interact with a small group of peers, and participate in activities that will keep God's answers in their hearts.

During *Talk & Pray*, the small group leader may be asked to share a story of his own that illustrates the theme. The discussion that follows helps kids talk about what they have seen or heard or experienced. A review of the BibleToons Scripture is included to remind kids that God's Word can help them decide what God wants. Creative prayer suggestions encourage small groups to talk to God.

The *Activity Choices* (craft, game, or snack) offer ways to help kids personalize the truth and think about living it out in the coming week.

How should we organize our small groups?

In order to make the most of the small-group time, create groups of no more than 8-10 children (fewer is better but not always possible). Try to keep the same children together for the entire six weeks. Grouping children by grade level will encourage discussion among peers.

Recruit small-group leaders who love elementary children and who are friendly, caring, and relational people. Ask each leader to commit to staying with the same group of children for the six weeks of this curriculum (and longer if you plan to use more BibleToons curriculum or other curriculum designed with a small-groups component).

What will small-group leaders be doing?

Leading a small group will come more naturally for the adult who easily relates to people and who is genuinely interested in kids and their needs. Here are a few tips to keep small-group leaders focused on their role:

- The small-group time is not a time to pour in more information, but a time to help kids think about what they've already heard and seen, reflect on it, apply it, talk about it together, and pray about it.
- Use the small-group time to connect with your kids—what they like, what they fear, what their families are like, what they hope for, what they're doing in the coming week.
- Be willing to lead the small group more by listening, guiding, and asking questions rather than by telling, instructing, and giving answers.
- Always take time to pray with your small group. As you build relationships with the kids in your group, the attitudes and actions that you model will become more important to them. Each week, model for them the importance of communicating with God.
- Follow up on the kids in your small group. Send e-mails. Make phone calls. Notice absences. Kids this age are looking for adults they can trust. You may be the only person they feel they can share with openly.