Leading with Heart: A Teen Small Group Leader's Guide



Discover how to lead teen small groups with truth, relevance, and compassion through biblical principles of leadership.





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Introduction

Welcome to this 7-day journey on leadership tailored specifically for those shepherding teen small groups. Leading young hearts requires more than just knowledge—it calls for *relevance* in today's world, heartfelt *compassion*, and a foundation grounded in **God's truth**. As you engage with these studies, you'll be equipped to influence the next generation with wisdom and grace.

Teenagers live in a fast-paced culture filled with distractions, questions, and challenges. Your role as a leader is not merely to teach but to guide them into a vibrant relationship with Christ, helping them navigate life's complexities through the lens of Scripture. This study plan draws from biblical examples of strong, purposeful leadership and offers practical insight for creating a nurturing environment where teens feel valued and spiritually fueled.

Whether you're new to leading or seeking fresh inspiration, this study encourages you to lean on God's strength, embrace humility, and foster authentic connections. Together, we will explore how to communicate truth in ways teens can relate to, encourage open dialogue, and model Jesus' servant-hearted leadership. Prepare to grow, both personally and in your ministry impact—your leadership matters deeply.









Day 1: V Lead with Integrity









Day 1: **(**) Lead with Integrity

Your Verse

Proverbs 11:3 – The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

Supporting Scriptures

- Psalm 25:21 May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you.
- Titus 2:7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity...







Day 1: **(**) Lead with Integrity

Devotional: The Power of Integrity in Leadership

Leadership rooted in integrity is foundational. Teens look up to leaders who are authentic and trustworthy. Proverbs 11:3 reminds us that a leader's integrity acts as a guide, not only for themselves but for those they lead. Especially in teen small groups, where questions abound and honesty is key, integrity builds a safe atmosphere where faith can flourish.

As a small group leader, ask yourself: Are you consistent in your words and actions? Do you admit mistakes and seek forgiveness when needed? These moments teach teens that true leadership includes humility and moral courage. Remember Paul's advice in Titus 2:7 to exemplify goodness in every way – your life is a live curriculum.

Integrity creates trust, and trust opens doors for deeper conversations about God's truth. Young people need leaders who don't just preach values but embody them daily.







Day 1: ① Lead with Integrity

Reflect and Apply

1.	How do my actions align with the values I teach to teens?
2.	In what ways can I demonstrate humility when I make mistakes?
3.	How does integrity influence the trust and openness of my group?







Day 1: ① Lead with Integrity

Journaling Prompts

1.	Identify a situation where you acted with integrity during leadership.
2.	Write about a challenge you face in staying consistent with your words and actions.
3.	List qualities of integrity you want to model for your small group.







Day 1: ① Lead with Integrity

Prayer for Today

Lord, grant me the strength to lead with unwavering integrity. Help me live authentically and to be a trustworthy example for the teens in my care. May my words and actions reflect Your truth and inspire a spirit of honesty and humility. Teach me to admit my faults and seek Your guidance when I falter, that I might lead with a pure heart and steady hands. *Amen.* \bigwedge









Day 2: Cultivate Relevance









Day 2: 7 Cultivate Relevance

Your Verse

1 Corinthians 9:22 - I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

Supporting Scriptures

- Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.
- Colossians 4:5–6 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.







Day 2: 7 Cultivate Relevance

Devotional: Meeting Teens Where They Are Spiritually

Teens live in a world vastly different from past generations. To reach their hearts, a leader must be relevant – meeting them where they are culturally and spiritually. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:22 reveal his strategy of adaptability without compromise. He entered different cultures to share the gospel effectively.

In small groups, relevance means knowing the challenges teens face daily—their hopes, fears, and language—and weaving biblical truths into those realities. Jesus modeled this perfectly by engaging honestly with diverse crowds (Luke 19:10). Practical wisdom in Colossians reminds us to be intentional with our actions and words around others.

Balancing faithfulness to Scripture with cultural sensitivity is key. Embrace creativity in teaching and listen deeply. When teens see you care about their world, they'll be open to God's timeless truth.







Day 2: 🍞 Cultivate Relevance

Reflect and Apply

How can I adapt my communication style to connect deeply with teens' experiences?
What cultural challenges face the teens in my group, and how can I address them biblically?
Am I open to learning from teens' perspectives while upholding Scripture?







Day 2: 🍞 Cultivate Relevance

Journaling Prompts

	Describe a recent moment when you connected a Bible truth to a teen's life issue.
2.	Write about a cultural barrier you want to understand better.
3.	List creative ways to make lessons relevant for your small group.







Day 2: 7 Cultivate Relevance

Prayer for Today

Jesus, help me follow Your example of relevance and connection. Teach me to understand and empathize with the teens I lead. Guide me to share Your truth in a way that resonates in their world, opening hearts to Your love and wisdom. May I blend cultural awareness with biblical faithfulness, always honoring You. *Amen.*









Day 3: C Lead with Compassion









Day 3: 🎔 Lead with Compassion

Your Verse

Ephesians 4:32 - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Supporting Scriptures

- Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility.
- Matthew 9:36 When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless.







Day 3: 💛 Lead with Compassion

Devotional: Walking the Path of Compassionate Leadership

Effective leadership requires a compassionate heart. Teens, navigating complex emotions and challenges, thrive when they feel truly understood and accepted. Ephesians 4:32 calls us to kindness and forgiveness, reflecting the mercy God extends to us. Compassion isn't weakness; it's strength that creates safe spaces for authenticity.

Paul encourages us to clothe ourselves with compassion (Colossians 3:12), which means choosing empathy daily. Jesus saw the crowds and felt deep compassion (Matthew 9:36). This example reminds leaders to look beyond surface behavior and see the soul's needs.

Compassion also equips you to listen well and respond with patience, fostering trust within your group. As you lead, guard your heart from impatience and judgment, embracing God's love poured out through you.







Day 3: 💝 Lead with Compassion

Reflect and Apply

1.	How do I currently show compassion to the teens in my group?
2.	Are there areas where I struggle to be patient or forgiving?
3.	How does adopting a compassionate attitude impact group dynamics?







Day 3: 💙 Lead with Compassion

Journaling Prompts

1.	Recall a recent interaction where you showed kindness or forgiveness to a group member.
2.	Journal about a time you felt compassion from someone—how did it affect you?
3.	Write down ways you can nurture greater empathy in your leadership.







Day 3: 💛 Lead with Compassion

Prayer for Today

















Day 4: See Communicate with Clarity

Your Verse

Ephesians 4:15 - Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Supporting Scriptures

- Proverbs 15:23 A person finds joy in giving an apt reply— and how good is a timely word!
- James 1:19 Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.







Day 4: 🙅 Communicate with Clarity

Devotional: Balancing Truth and Love in Leadership

Clear communication is vital for teen small group leaders. Speaking truth with love creates an environment where teens feel heard and challenged without fear. Paul's counsel in Ephesians 4:15 highlights maturity gained through loving, honest dialogue.

Proverbs reminds us of the power of a timely, thoughtful word to encourage and instruct. Listening well, as James advises, is equally important—true communication is not just about speaking but also about understanding others deeply.

When leading teens, clarity helps avoid confusion, and love prevents harshness. Practice patience, tailor your explanations carefully, and invite questions freely. This approach fosters growth and mutual respect.







Day 4: 🙅 Communicate with Clarity

Reflect and Apply

1.	How effectively do I listen before responding in group discussions?
2.	Do I balance truth with kindness in my communication?
3.	What adjustments can I make to improve clarity when teaching?







Day 4: 🙅 Communicate with Clarity

Journaling Prompts

	Write about a time when clear communication positively impacted your group.
2.	Identify a communication habit you want to develop or change.
	Describe how you encourage openness and questions in your small group.







Day 4: See Communicate with Clarity

Prayer for Today

God, grant me the wisdom to communicate with clarity and love. Help me to listen attentively, speak truthfully, and foster an environment where teens feel safe to share and grow. May my words build up and bring others closer to You. *Amen.*

















Your Verse

Mark 10:44–45 – and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.

Supporting Scriptures

- John 13:14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.
- Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition but in humility consider others better than yourselves.







Devotional: Leading by Serving Others Humbly

True leadership models Jesus' example of service. Mark 10:44–45 breaks worldly leadership norms by showing that greatness lies in humble service to others. For teen small group leaders, this means putting the needs of your group before your own comfort or recognition.

Jesus' foot washing in John 13 illustrates servant leadership tangibly—leaders must be willing to do humble tasks and show love through action. Paul encourages humility and thinking of others first (Philippians 2:3–4), which builds unity and respect.

By serving your teens, you foster a community that reflects Christ's heart. This posture opens doors for meaningful relationships and lasting impact.







Reflect and Apply

1.	How do I demonstrate servant leadership in my small group?
2.	Are there ways I can serve my group more effectively?
3.	How does humility shape the atmosphere in my leadership?







Journaling Prompts

	List recent actions where you served your small group without expecting recognition.
2.	Write about the challenges and rewards of putting others first.
3.	Identify practical steps to increase your servant-leadership posture.







Prayer for Today

Lord Jesus, teach me to lead by serving. Help me embrace humility and prioritize the needs of the teens I guide. May I reflect Your servant heart, washing feet and loving without condition. Use me to build a community rooted in selfless love. *Amen.*

















Your Verse

2 Corinthians 12:9 – My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Supporting Scriptures

- Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
- Isaiah 40:31 Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.







Devotional: Strengthened by Grace in Leadership Weakness

Leadership can be challenging and at times overwhelming. Recognizing our weaknesses allows God's strength to shine through. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:9 remind us that God's power is perfected in our weakness. Leaders must rely on God daily, especially when facing tough situations.

Psalms assures that God is a strong refuge, always ready to help, and Isaiah promises renewal for those who trust Him. Leaning on God frees leaders from self-reliance and fuels endurance needed to guide teens effectively.

Dependence on God invites His wisdom and peace into your leadership journey. It reminds you that you're never alone, and His grace equips you fully for this vital role.







Reflect and Apply

1.	Where do I feel weak or inadequate in leading my group?
2.	How can I intentionally depend more on God's strength daily?
3.	What lessons have I learned through challenges in leadership?







Journaling Prompts

	Describe a moment when God's strength helped you overcome a leadership challenge.
2.	Write about your personal areas of weakness and surrender them to God.
3.	List scriptures that encourage you to rely on God's power.







Prayer for Today

Heavenly Father, remind me daily that Your grace is enough. In my weaknesses and struggles as a leader, may Your strength sustain me. Teach me to lean on You fully and to trust Your power to equip and guide me. Let Your peace guard my heart amid any challenge. *Amen.* \$\mathcal{L} \forall \for















Your Verse

2 Timothy 2:2 - And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Supporting Scriptures

- Exodus 18:21 But select capable men from all the people... to be leaders over them.
- Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.







Devotional: Multiplying Leadership for Lasting Impact

Leadership extends beyond today—it's about multiplying faith through others. Paul's charge to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2) challenges leaders to invest in others who will continue the work. As a teen small group leader, you have the unique opportunity to inspire and empower future leaders among the youth.

Moses' advice in Exodus 18 shows the wisdom of delegating leadership to capable individuals, sharing responsibility wisely. Hebrews encourages mutual encouragement, fostering a community that grows together in faith and action.

Empowering others reflects trust and confidence, creating a lasting legacy. Encourage teens to lead, teach, and serve, helping the next generation carry forward God's mission.







Reflect and Apply

1.	Who am I currently investing in to grow as leaders?
2.	How can I encourage teens to take leadership roles within the group?
3.	What legacy do I want to leave through my leadership?







Journaling Prompts

	Write about a leader who influenced you and what you learned from them.
2.	List ways you can identify and mentor emerging teen leaders.
3.	Reflect on your vision for the future of your small group leadership.







Prayer for Today

Lord, help me to inspire and empower others. Show me who to invest in and give me wisdom to nurture their gifts. May I lead with a vision that lasts beyond my time, encouraging teens to grow as faithful servants and leaders for Your Kingdom. Use me as a catalyst for multiplying Your work. Amen. 💸













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