



MIDDLE SCHOOL CRISIS CONVERSATION GUIDE **FOR SGLs**

AS A SMALL GROUP LEADER FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS, you know that there's a lot of change going on. Their rapidly changing bodies and brains make everything extra interesting, and sometimes extra challenging. When you add to that a cultural or relational crisis, this time in their life can be very difficult. During this time, your goal is to consistently affirm the middle schoolers you influence.

AFFIRM THEIR ABILITY TO THRIVE

Even though their journey through adolescence can be a crisis all by itself, it doesn't mean you can't support and affirm their ability to thrive through the difficult things they might experience. We want to help you by giving you some words to say and not to say.

WHAT TO SAY

- "I hear you. Keep talking."
 - "When you're ready to talk, I'm here."
 - "I'm trying to understand." Or, "Help me understand."
 - "What do you wish I knew about all of this?"
 - "This really stinks. It's bad. I'm sorry."
 - "I'm not trying to fix it. I just want to be here for you."
 - "This is hard for me. I imagine it must be hard for you, but in a different way. Want to tell me about it?"
 - "I don't think I have an answer, but I can sit here with you."
 - "I believe you have what it takes to get through this, and I'll help you."
-

WHAT NOT TO SAY

- "Let me fix it."
 - "There's a reason for everything."
 - "Here's why this happened . . ."
 - "It's not as bad as you think it is."
 - "Let's get to the bottom of it now."
-

Make sure to involve professional counselors, as needed, as well as your ministry leader.
