Small Group Guide

“Something to Sing About” — Mark 14:26–42

Middle & High School Sunday School | 30–35 Minutes

INTRODUCTION FOR GROUP LEADERS

Being a teenager can mean dealing with pressure from school, friendships, family, social media, and uncertainty about the future. Students may feel expected to act like everything is fine even when they are struggling.

In this passage, Jesus sings with His disciples before facing betrayal, suffering, and the cross. Later, He openly expresses His sorrow and prays to His Father. His example shows students that trusting God does not require hiding their emotions.

This lesson explores five reasons believers can have joy and hope during difficult times. Encourage participation without requiring students to share personal struggles. Students may pass on any question.

Suggested Schedule:

- Opening question — 3 minutes
- Scripture reading and key takeaways — 7 minutes
- Discussion — 15 minutes
- Reflection — 4 minutes
- Application and closing prayer — 4 minutes

Total: 33 minutes

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. You can have joy even when life is hard.
Jesus sang with His disciples even though He knew suffering was coming. Christian joy does not mean always feeling happy. It means having a reason to hope because God is with you.

2. Difficult seasons do not mean God has abandoned you.
Jesus knew His disciples would struggle and scatter. Problems at school, tension at home, or disappointment do not mean God has stopped caring. We may not know when circumstances will change, but we can trust His faithfulness.

3. Your hope rests in Jesus.
Before His death, Jesus promised that He would rise again and meet His disciples in Galilee. His resurrection gives us hope that reaches beyond our current circumstances—even when a problem does not resolve the way we want.

4. Failure does not put you beyond God's grace.
Peter was certain he would never deny Jesus, but he did. Later, Jesus restored him. When we fail, we can turn to Jesus, confess our sin, and receive His forgiveness.

5. Real strength includes surrender.
Jesus honestly told His Father what He was feeling and submitted to His will. We can bring God our fears and desires while choosing to trust and obey Him.

OPENING QUESTION

Allow about three minutes.

What song do you listen to when you need encouragement, motivation, or a reminder that you are not alone? What makes that song meaningful to you?

Transition: Music can help us express what we feel. Today's passage begins with Jesus and His disciples singing—even though a very difficult night is ahead.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Mark 14:26–42 together before beginning. Divide the reading among three volunteers: verses 26–31, 32–36, and 37–42.

Allow about 15 minutes for discussion. Use the main questions first and the follow-ups as time allows.

On Joy in the Journey

1. Read Mark 14:26 and 33–34. Jesus sang with His disciples, but He also expressed deep sorrow. What does that show us about having faith when we feel sad or overwhelmed?

- Why might someone your age feel pressure to pretend everything is okay?
- How could you be honest about your feelings while still trusting God?

Leader Emphasis: Joy and sadness can exist together. Tears are not evidence of weak faith.

On Seasons of Difficulty

2. Jesus knew His disciples would scatter, and He still promised to meet them after His resurrection. How might knowing that Jesus sees what is ahead help you face something uncertain?

- What kinds of situations make students worry about the future?
- Who is a trusted person you could talk to when life feels overwhelming?

Leader Emphasis: Following Jesus does not prevent every difficulty. God often provides support through trusted adults and other believers.

On Hope in Christ

3. Read Mark 14:28. How is hope in Jesus different from hoping you make the team, get a good grade, or receive someone's approval?

- Those things can matter, but what happens when they become the foundation of our confidence?
- What does Jesus' resurrection tell us about His power and His promises?

Leader Emphasis: Our circumstances change. The risen Jesus remains faithful.

On Grace and Shortcomings

4. Read Mark 14:29–31. Peter thought he would never let Jesus down. Why is it easy to overestimate how strong we will be when pressure comes?

- What might pressure to hide your faith look like at school, with friends, or online?
- When you fail, what is the difference between making excuses and returning to Jesus?

Leader Emphasis: Grace invites us to confess and change. Peter's later restoration in John 21 reminds us that failure does not have to be the end of our story.

On Surrender as Strength

5. Read Mark 14:35–36. Jesus honestly asked His Father to take away the suffering ahead, yet He submitted to His Father's will. What could an honest prayer of surrender sound like for someone your age?

- How could you trust God with a friendship, a family problem, or a decision about your future?
- What is one obedient step you could take even while you still feel afraid?

Leader Emphasis: Surrender means trusting God with the outcome while taking the next faithful step.

6. Read Mark 14:37–38. Jesus told His disciples to watch and pray. What distracts us from prayer or makes us spiritually unprepared?

- When are you most likely to make a choice you later regret?
- What practical habit could help you pause, pray, and choose wisely?

Leader Emphasis: Good intentions need to be supported by prayer, wise choices, and dependence on God.

REFLECTION EXERCISE

Allow about four minutes. Give students paper and a pen, or invite them to reflect silently.

Write a short answer to each question:

- **What makes you sing?** Something you are thankful for or that gives you joy.
- **What makes you cry?** Something painful, disappointing, or worrying.
- **What do you dream about?** Something you hope for in the future.

Look at your answers. Which one is hardest to trust God with right now?

Finish this prayer:

"Father, You know that I feel _____ about _____. Please help me trust You and take this next step: _____."

Invite volunteers to share one insight. Students may keep their answers private.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This Week, Choose One:

- **Pray honestly.** Spend two minutes each day telling God what you are actually feeling. Ask for help trusting Him with one specific concern.
- **Find your song.** Choose a Christian song or hymn that reminds you of God's faithfulness. Listen to it this week and identify one truth that connects with today's passage.
- **Encourage someone.** Sit with someone who is alone, check on a friend, or send an encouraging message. Listen without feeling you must fix everything.
- **Take a step back toward Jesus.** Confess a wrong choice to God. If you have hurt someone, take an appropriate step to apologize and make things right.

- **Watch and pray.** Identify one situation where you regularly face temptation. Plan a response before it happens, and ask God for strength to follow through.
- **Remember a verse.** Read Mark 14:38 or John 16:33 each day. Write down how it can guide you when pressure comes.

Before closing, let each student silently choose one action. Invite a few volunteers to name theirs.

CLOSING PRAYER GUIDE

Allow about two minutes. Students may pray aloud or silently.

1. **Gratitude** — Thank God for something that gives you a reason to sing.
2. **Honesty** — Tell Him about something that hurts or causes worry.
3. **Surrender** — Ask Him to help you trust His will and take the next obedient step.
4. **Hope** — Thank Jesus that He is risen and that you can depend on His promises.

Suggested Closing Prayer:

"Father, thank You that we can come to You with both our joy and our sadness. You know the pressures we face and the things we do not know how to handle. Forgive us when we depend only on ourselves. Help us watch, pray, and trust You. Thank You for the hope we have because Jesus is alive. Give us courage to obey You and care for one another this week. In Jesus' name, amen."

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Optional passages for students to explore after class:

- **Mark 14:26–42** — Jesus sings, warns His disciples, and prays in the garden.
- **John 16:33** — Jesus offers peace amid trouble.
- **Hebrews 12:1–2** — Keep looking to Jesus as you persevere.
- **Hebrews 13:5–6** — God promises His presence.
- **John 21:15–19** — Jesus restores Peter after his failure.
- **1 Corinthians 10:12–13** — Take temptation seriously and depend on God's faithfulness.