

# RISE

## MIDDLE SCHOOL SMALL GROUP GUIDE

### Session 10

#### The Invitation

##### Part 2

- This is the second week of our series called "The Invitation," and we will continue talking about what it looks like to follow Jesus. In this first video segment, we will get to know more about the presenter, Nick Redd. He will talk to some random people on the street about the Gospel and share his own story of realizing that Jesus is real.

#### **Play Video Segment #1: Nick's Story**

Discuss:

1. At the end of the video, Nick asks the question: "Who is Jesus to you?" How would you respond to his question?
2. What is one thing that stood out to you in Nick's story?
3. Was there anything in particular that you felt you could relate to?
4. Nick describes a moment at Mass when he realized that the Eucharist was really Jesus and that Jesus was a real person. Do you find it easy or difficult to think of Jesus as a real person doing regular things like eating breakfast with his family, learning how to read and write, and getting tired at the end of a long day?

#### **Play Video Segment #2: The Kerygma, Part 1**

Discuss:

1. What is one thing that stood out to you?

2. How would you define love? What does that look like in your life? (St. Thomas Aquinas defines love in this way: "To love is to will the good of another.")
3. What is your reaction when you hear the words, "God loves you"?
4. Nick shared this quote from Pope Benedict: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction." Have you had an experience or encounter like that with Jesus yet?
5. What does it mean when he quoted the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, describing God as good, but not safe? How does that make you feel?

### **Play Video Segment #3: The Kerygma, Part 2**

Discuss:

1. What is one thing that stood out to you?
2. Nick talked about brokenness in the world. What are some examples of brokenness you see around you?
3. What does it mean when we say we are broken? Can you name a way in which you might sometimes hurt others or how others can hurt you?
4. Nick talks about how Jesus said to people, "Your sins are forgiven." How can we experience the forgiveness of Jesus today?
  - We can ask God for forgiveness in prayer or by going to Confession. Going to confession can be difficult and may cost us a great deal of effort at first. But it is one of the greatest graces that we can receive again and again in our life - it truly renews the soul and completely unburdens it. We leave confession with new

strength. God is merciful, and he wants us to receive His mercy. When you go to confession, you turn a clean, new page in the book of life.

Discuss:

1. Nick described Jesus as the bridge. What is the purpose of bridges in the world generally? How is Jesus a bridge between God's love and us?
2. Take a moment and think about your answer. On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with your current relationship with God? (1 being not satisfied, 10 being perfectly satisfied)
  - Pope Francis said, "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since 'no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord.'"

### Session Challenges

- Our verse of the week is 1 John 4:10 - "This is love: not that we loved God, but that **he loved us and sent his Son** as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

Discuss: What does this verse mean and why is it important for us?

- Your challenge this week is to continue working on completing the Lent Challenges.
- Our closing prayer is an opportunity to make a personal commitment to Jesus. You may be inviting Jesus into your heart for the first time, or you may be inviting him into your life in a

deeper way. Read the prayer below if you are ready and willing or say your own prayer.

Pray:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, [pause]

I thank you for the love you have for me, [pause]

and for dying for me on the Cross. [pause]

I'm sorry for my sins, [pause]

and any choice I've made that has separated me from you. [pause]

I invite you into my heart and in my life [pause]

and I choose you to be Lord of my life. [pause]

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- You can pray this prayer whenever you'd like to invite Jesus into your heart more deeply.