

"Value"

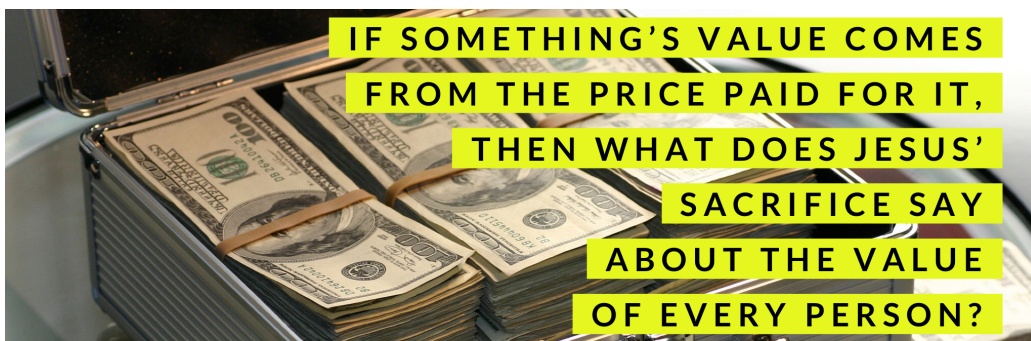
A NOTE TO LEADERS

As you're leading your students through a discussion about value and respect, keep in mind that it's easy for middle schoolers to get wrapped up in what everyone else is doing. They can be easily influenced by their peers to act and think in certain ways. So if students' friends or family don't value themselves or other people, they might think it's normal and do the same. Remember that middle schoolers are keen observers, they notice and remember what you say and do. So try to model the type of behavior that Jesus demonstrated by treating yourself and others with respect and honor.

The main goals of small group today are to **help students recognize the value in both themselves and others** and to encourage them to **treat everyone** (including themselves) **with the value and respect they deserve**.

There can often be a disconnect in what we know we should value and how we act. Probably the majority of students know they should value others, but do their actions show that? On certain questions, really take time to push students to think of what actions they can take to value others. Encourage students to even ask for forgiveness where they may have devalued others.

Last but not least, because middle school is an age where we place an extremely high value on what others think, **some students may not know what to do if someone asks them to do something that would make them feel less valued.** They may feel like they HAVE to do it if they want any friends or to have any value. That is simply NOT true. Encourage your students that they have intrinsic value that God, the Creator of the Universe Himself, has given them and they don't have to do anything to earn or keep that value. It's perfectly fine for them to tell someone, "No I won't do that." If they need support in saying no to others, encourage them to reach out to a parent or yourself.



MAIN POINT: Value what God values.

OPENER:

Pick one or two of the questions below and have each of your students give an answer to get them all talking:

- 1.** If people value and respect others, how do they treat them?
- 2.** If people don't value and respect others, how do they treat them?
- 3.** Do you think you should treat others, ALL others, will value and respect? Why or why not?

READ:

Luke 19:1-10 NLT

"Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. ² There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. ³ He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. ⁵ When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today." ⁶ Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. ⁷ But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled. ⁸ Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" ⁹ Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

ASK:

- 1.** How did other people treat Zacchaeus?
- 2.** How did Jesus treat Zacchaeus?
- 3.** Think to yourself, does the way you treat others look more like the people in this story or Jesus?
- 4.** What are things we can do to treat others more like Jesus?
- 5.** How can people use social media to devalue each other? How can social media be used to treat others more like Jesus treats us?

READ:

Mark 12:31 NLT

"The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

ASK:

- 1.** What does it mean to value yourself?
- 2.** What do you think about this statement from the video: "When we devalue ourselves it's often because we are looking for love or attention, which isn't wrong. But the route you take to get there is not healthy."
- 3.** What are things people do to show they don't value themselves?
- 4.** What are ways we can encourage other people and ourselves of knowing our value?
- 5.** How can we respond to other people when they ask us to do something that devalues us?

UNPACK:

Some of us may struggle more with valuing ourselves - we want love and attention and so we do things that aren't healthy to get them because we don't fully believe in our intrinsic value. Some of us may struggle more with valuing others - we feel like we can pick and choose who we value. **But God has hand-created each and every single one of us and everyone has intrinsic value.** That means that neither we nor others have to do anything to earn value.

NEXT STEP: Take a moment to think to yourself: Do you have a harder time valuing yourself or valuing other people? Whichever one is harder for you, think of one thing you can do this week to encourage yourself or others of your/their value. ***Close your time together in prayer.***