

## Defining The Win

It's important for a clear "win" to be determined for each element in your student ministry program. Reggie Joiner talks about clear wins in *The Orange Leaders Handbook* by asking the following questions: What is the goal? How do you know when you've reached success? How does the win move people relationally and spiritually to the end in mind?

### Defining the win For Small Group Leaders

In a small group ministry, a small group leader will have students with different life experiences, different life circumstances, different family situations, and different spiritual backgrounds. When a small group leader impacts the life of a student, it's an impact that usually takes place over the course of years, not days or months. Obviously, the greatest victory is when a student comes to know Christ as their Savior. But, it's equally important to recognize that there are plenty of other wins to be had along the way, both large and small. Big wins are easy to see, but sometimes a win can be so small, and so subtle, that it passes without notice.

A small group leader knows a clear win means leading young people to a place where they trust the wonder and discovery and passion of God. The dad who does the youth group BBQ knows the win is not a perfectly cooked hot dog but a place where teenagers can hang out, be comfortable and figure out what it means to be in relationship with God and others. <sup>1</sup>

Defining the win for the small group leader allows them to see and take hold of small victories while they're waiting to lean in during those pivotal moments. Put simply, one of the greatest challenges a small group leader might face is wondering whether they're making a difference in the lives of students. Weeks, months, maybe even years can pass by without evidence of significant spiritual growth. But when a leader recognizes a win, even the smallest, they are able to see a student taking a step in the direction of Christ. It's encouraging. It's motivating. It's fuel.

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<sup>1</sup> Defining clear wins is addressed in the Orange Leader Handbook on page 47. This section was directly taken from the Orange Leader Handbook. Also in the book *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry*, the authors devoted an entire chapter to what it means to clarify the win. You can buy both books here:

<https://secure.rethinkgroup.org/store/product.php?productid=71> and <https://secure.rethinkgroup.org/store/product.php?productid=740>

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### Possible Wins?

If you're a student pastor, defining the win is one of the most important things you can do to equip a small group leader. There are two great questions Reggie encourages every leader to ask when attempting to define the win:

1. Do your staff (paid or volunteer) and key leaders understand the clear win every time they show up to serve?
2. Do you keep everyone connected with goals and celebrating wins? How?

Like any great journey toward an ultimate goal, the journey of a student toward Christ is marked by wins. Wins are limitless, they can be anything really, but the following are some wins that may be achieved in the context of a relationship between a student and a small group leader:

- Returning a text/phone call
- Regularly attending small group
- Adding to discussion in small group
- Initiating conversation/ being a leader amongst peers
- Prioritizing the influence of friends within small group over other, non-Christian voices of influence.
- Showing influence by bringing friends
- Praying out loud
- Showing vulnerability
- Public profession of faith
- Baptism
- Service to the church or community
- Participating in a mission trip

Wins are more than a way to access the growth and success of our student ministry—wins, even the small ones, allow us to see and celebrate the steps our students take in their walk with Christ.