

I WONDER

1. Which of the following do you have doubts about?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The existence of God | <input type="checkbox"/> The value of prayer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The resurrection of Jesus Christ | <input type="checkbox"/> The virgin birth of Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The story of Jonah and the whale | <input type="checkbox"/> The possibility of miracles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The existence of heaven | <input type="checkbox"/> The Genesis account of creation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The truth of the Bible | <input type="checkbox"/> The reality of hell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The love of God | <input type="checkbox"/> The idea that Jesus was and is God |

2. When you have doubts about your faith, which **three** of the following reactions is typical for you? Circle them.

Feel guilty

Share my doubts with another Christian

Blame my doubts on the devil

Ignore them

Share them with a non-Christian friend

Get others to doubt the same things

Assume I'm too ignorant to understand everything

Talk to God about my doubts

Ask honest and sincere questions, searching for answers

Talk to my pastor

Other—

3. What do you think? Put an **arrow** by the one you think is most true.

- Doubts about God are normal.
- When I doubt God, he loves me less.
- My pastor never has any doubts about God.
- God understands and accepts my doubts.
- Doubting means a person is losing faith.
- If you have no doubts, then you have no faith.
- If left alone and unrecognized, doubt will become disbelief.

4. Turn to **Psalm 73** in your Bible, and summarize it in your own words.



I WONDER [d o u b t]

THIS WEEK

It is normal and healthy for teenagers to doubt and question what they believe. Most of them are searching to find who they are and what they believe. They're looking for answers and deal with tough questions. It's important for them to be able to discuss these doubts and questions with an adult like yourself. This session isn't able to answer all their questions and doubts, but will help them understand that having doubts is normal, even among adults.

OPEN

Make them wonder! Make a list of the top 10 biggest mysteries or doubts that your kids have—things that your group wonders about. Discuss possible solutions or answers for each one. How will they find the answers, if they can? What baffles them so about these mysteries or doubts? Some of these may include questions about how God made the world from nothing, how Jesus was God and man, if they'll ever travel to Mars, things like that. You never know what doubts or mysteries your kids will have!

Ask your group to role-play situations in which they must defend their beliefs. Split them up into groups and have one group play the devils advocate. One group must defend their side and their beliefs—not only their faith in God, but other issues, like how God created the earth or why there is a heaven and hell. Challenge them to use their Bibles to defend what they are saying. This can be an incredible way to get your kids thinking (depending on your group, of course!)

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Ask you group to share what they have doubts about. What statement created the most doubt? What do your kids want to know more about? Be careful not to eliminate their doubts with quick spiritual come-backs. Give them room to discuss these with each other.
2. How do your group members handle doubt? What is the most common answer? Some may not want to share—that's okay. Ask them what the most common reaction of teenagers is.
3. Doubt is almost a prerequisite for developing a strong faith—no faith is required if you are absolutely sure about something. What were their answers? Take some time to talk about concerns that they may have about dealing with doubts.
4. This Psalm deals with doubt. How did your kids summarize it?

THE CLOSE

Tell the story of John the Baptist and how he confidently announced the coming of Christ, then—when he was thrown into prison—began to have doubts about whether Jesus actually was the Son of God (Luke 7:18-19). Doubt is normal—having doubt doesn't mean the loss of faith or that the doubter has sinned.

The Christian writer Frederick Buechner said, "Doubt is the ants in the pants of faith; it keeps it alive and moving." Doubt stimulates closer growth toward God. Challenge them to search for a deeper, more meaningful faith and encourage them to talk to people who trust and care about them. Talking with parents or other responsible, respected adults can strengthen and deepen their faith in Jesus Christ.

Finally, suggest they save their big doubts for God himself, because they may never be answered in this life. We may not have all the answers, but God does. As 1 Corinthians 13:12 says, "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face." God will reveal all truth to us one day in heaven.

MORE

- Several Biblical characters had serious doubts about what God was doing. A few of them were Moses, Abraham, Peter, and Thomas. Ask your group to find examples of doubting characters in the Bible and let them share their findings. Who had doubts? What were the doubts? Are these still concerns that they have today? How did God address the situation? What happened after they understood?
- Challenge your kids to think about trust in light of doubting. What is trust? How does trusting compare to having faith? Do your kids trust only those things that they see? For example, how easy is it to trust God? Would they trust God more if they could see or touch him? How can your kids strengthen their faith in God? How does trusting others affect trust in God? Is it easier to trust people or God?