

NUKE 'EM



1. What do you think is the likelihood that nuclear weapons will be used in your lifetime?
 - It will probably happen
 - It's somewhat likely
 - It probably won't happen
 - Nope, not going to happen

2. What do you think might happen if nuclear weapons are used in the future?

3. Pretend for a moment that you are the newly elected president of a certain country. As president, you have a difficult decision to make. Your country is at war with another nation. Should you—
 - Use nuclear weapons to end the war sooner and save the lives of your people? or
 - Continue to use conventional weapons, even though you know more of your people will have to die?

4. Do you **A** (agree) or **D** (disagree) with the statements below?
 - ___ The world powers need more nuclear weapons to maintain world peace.
 - ___ Nuclear weapons could be used on a limited scale without getting out of hand.
 - ___ Only the military has to worry about nuclear weapons and warfare.
 - ___ The average person doesn't know enough about the threat of nuclear war.
 - ___ Countries need nuclear weapons for their self-defense.
 - ___ The threat of nuclear war is one of the biggest problems faced by today's world.
 - ___ The Bible has nothing to say about nuclear war.
 - ___ The next global war will include the use of nuclear weapons.
 - ___ Nuclear war can be prevented.
 - ___ The church should speak out against the threat of nuclear war.
 - ___ Nuclear war really isn't that big of a deal.
 - ___ The world is a safer place to live because of nuclear weapons.

5. Which of these true for you (if any)? Have you ever—
 - worried about a nuclear war happening in your lifetime?
 - thought about what it would be like if you survived a nuclear war?
 - considered how nuclear weapons could affect your children?
 - wondered what God thinks about nuclear weapons?

6. How do each of these verses apply to nuclear war?
Romans 12:17-21 1 Peter 3:8-12 James 4:1, 2

THIS WEEK

As long as nuclear weapons exist, their use is a possibility. Anytime there is a world crisis, the threat is there. Study after study has examined the fear, uncertainty, and anxiety that are suppressed in many young people about this issue. This TalkSheet provides a forum for positive discussion on nuclear war and the role of Christians as peacemakers.

OPENER

To start this discussion, break the group into four smaller groups placed strategically around the room. Give each group its own table and tell them each table represents a country. Place a larger table in the middle of the room to represent the United Nations.

Any country can send a representative to any other country by going to another's table. Give each group an envelope that contains information about its country. Keep the information brief, but mention the number of nuclear weapons it has, the wealth it possesses, and the level of democracy that exists. Be sure to designate one country as a primarily Christian nation. Tape a list of each country's information on the United Nations table for all the countries to see. Give each country one minute to talk briefly about its information and to select a president, an ambassador to each other country, and a United Nations representative.

Announce that one of the countries has been attacked by another with nuclear weapons. Tape a damage list with the name of the attacking country to the attacked country's table. Then let the game begin by allowing the attacked country as well as the other countries to decide what they will do about the situation.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. This generation of young people tends to be pessimistic about the future. Depending on the most current world crisis, young people will usually predict the use of at least one nuclear weapon during their lifetime. What do your students think?
2. Young people can come up with any number of possibilities. Ask them if any of their potential scenarios are positive ones. How many of them involve massive destruction? Are any of them inevitable? Are there ways that we as Christians can work to avert them?
3. Examine the issue of when (if ever) it would be morally right to use nuclear weapons. U.S. President Harry Truman was the first human being to have the power and the weight of this decision on his shoulders.

4. What do your kids think? Do they disagree on any of these statements? Why or why not?

5. Let volunteers share their answers and give reasons for their responses. Then talk about the many ways young people cope with the threat of nuclear war. For example, hedonism (an attitude of living for today); trust (a feeling that those in control will use good judgment); denial (a refusal to think about it much); indestructibility (a feeling that it could never happen); and postmodern progress (a belief that we have learned from the past and won't use nuclear weapons). Discuss with the group how Christ offers hope in the midst of despair.

6. You may want to divide the group into three smaller ones and assign each a different passage of the Bible. Each group should discuss a passage and report its conclusions.

THE CLOSE

Fears and concerns about the growth in nuclear weapons and the threat of war are normal. But God is in control of nations. If you survey the Old Testament, you'll clearly see that God was in control of history—even though it didn't always appear that way to his people. Encourage your kids to pray for the powerful countries of the world and for wisdom of world leaders. You may want to close by reading the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12), emphasizing verse nine. Contrast Christ's teachings of peacemaking with the way nuclear-capable countries run their foreign policies.

MORE

- You may want to ask your kids to make a list of all the movies they've seen in which nuclear war was a threat. Does your group think that these movies accurately describe the threat of war? Why or why not? What influence do they think media has on how people think of war and nuclear weapons?
- Check out some online information about nuclear war and weapons. There are several Web pages with simulation maps and more. Challenge your kids to find some new information about nuclear war by doing a keyword search of nuclear war or check out <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/>.