

THIEF IN THE NIGHT [Christ's return]

THIS WEEK

Many high schoolers are fascinated with the book of Revelation and the end of the world. They want to know about the future and what it holds for them. So many people believed that the year 2000 would be the time of Christ's return—now they've been left disappointed and wondering. What do your kids think about Christ's return? This TalkSheet will let you openly talk about the return of Christ with your group.

OPENER

You may want to start by splitting your group up into smaller groups and giving each group a different set of Bible verses to read (you can combine these if you don't have enough groups for all the verses)—

- Luke 12:40, Luke 17:23-24
- Matthew 24:40-50
- Revelation 6:12-17
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3
- Isaiah 13:6-12
- Zephaniah 1:14-18
- Matthew 25:1-13
- Matthew 25:14-30
- Matthew 25:31-46
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-57
- 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18
- Revelation 21:1-8
- Revelation 20:11-15
- Isaiah 34:4, Joel 3:15-16, Zechariah 14:4

All these verses describe the second coming of Christ—some are parables, so you might have to help your kids out. After each group has read their verse, gather as a group and have each group summarize each set of verses. You may want to have some groups read their verses aloud. Make a master list of what the second coming will be like. How do these verses make your kids feel? What do these verses say about the power and authority of Christ? What assurance can Christians have about his return?

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. You may receive a lot of different answers. Some may foresee technological advances, the future decline of morality, the environment, and other social problems. Make a list of these predictions.
2. Examine the various responses of your kids, asking why they feel the way they do. Why would a non-Christian not want Christ to come back? What about a Christian?
3. Each of these statements has the potential for further discussion and you may want to probe

some issues further. Remember that even theologians and Bible teachers can't agree on the specifics of Christ's return. But what do your kids think?

4. Postulate what it might be like if Christ returned today. What regrets might people today have? Why or why not? What would your kids do differently and why?
5. Have the students share their views. Ask if Christ's return really matters to them in terms of the way they plan to live their lives.

THE CLOSE

You may have had a lot of questions and discussion items during this TalkSheet. Summarize the different points made during the discussion. What did your kids learn about the return of Christ? How have their feelings or views of Christ changed? Why or why not? Explain that the return of Christ is uncertain, and may be frightening to some. Those who love Jesus don't have anything to worry about—but they've got to be ready for him to come anytime. Finally, close with this challenge for your group-- Jesus told us in his own words that no one will know when he will return (Matthew 24:36), but he will return. Are they ready?

MORE

- You may want to invite the pastor of your church to answer the group's questions regarding Christ's return. Here are some questions to get the discussion going—
 - ⇒ Why is the return of Christ so important?
 - ⇒ What will happen when Christ does return?
 - ⇒ When do you think Christ will return?
 - ⇒ Why didn't Jesus tell us when he was coming back?
 - ⇒ How has the doctrine of the second coming of Christ affected your life?
- If you want to talk more about the second coming of Christ, consider taking this TalkSheet further. Spend some time reading some passages from Revelation and talking about them with your group. This is sometimes a hard chapter to grasp the meaning of—if you choose to do this, make sure that your group is interested in learning more. Check out the *Teen Devotional Bible* (Zondervan) for editor's notes and further explanations. Or use a Bible reference guide, or other Bible reference handbook, to help your kids understand the passages.