

THE BLURRING OF MORALITY

1. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being "breaking every one" and 10 being "keeping every one"), how well do you think our society follows the Ten Commandments?

How about the world at large?

2. When do you have the **hardest time** telling right from wrong?

Why are some times harder than others?

3. What do you think—do you **A** (agree) or **D** (disagree)?

- A decline in moral values is the number one problem facing the country.
- Girls have better morals than guys.
- There's a difference between what teens think of morality and what they're supposed to think.
- People are more concerned about not getting caught than doing the right thing.
- People have to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong.
- Most teenagers understand the difference between right and wrong.



4. If you had to talk to a fifth-grade class about morality, what would you say?

How would you explain the difference between **right** and **wrong** (or black and white)?

5. Read each of the passages and complete the sentences.

Ecclesiastes 7:20—No one can do right all the time because—

Mark 10:31—Christ turns the world's values around by—

Ephesians 2:1-5—Being dead in our sins means we should now—

1 John 2:15-17—Christians need to reject the world's values because—

THIS WEEK

What's right and what's wrong has been distorted by society today. Teenagers have been left with varied and blurred concepts of morality. For this reason, parents and churches must be more intentional in teaching values and moral standards. This TalkSheet offers you that opportunity.

OPENER

How well do your kids know the Ten Commandments? For this intro you'll need a large poster board or whiteboard. Ask your group to think of as many of the Ten Commandments as they can. See if they can remember the order of the Ten Commandments, too. Then take turns reading each command from Exodus 20 with your group. After each one is read, ask your group to put the command in their own words—what does the command mean to them today? Make a master list of all the commandments, written in their own words. Then ask them how and why these commands still apply to people today? Are some more important than others? Why or why not? Which one is the most important and why? How can your kids follow these commands in their own lives? Ask your group to give examples of how society breaks these commandments. Why are some broken more than others?

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. How did your kids rate society? The world? Take a poll and come to a group consensus on this question. Are the commandments supposed to make people miserable? Why do more and more people live contrary to God's way and discuss the present and future consequences of doing so?
2. You may want to take the time to talk about peer pressure and its influence on individual morality. When do your kids struggle with morality? Why is it hard to decide what's right and wrong?
3. Do your kids agree or disagree? Poll the students on each of the statements and see if they conflict as a group. Take some time to talk about those that they do.
4. What would your high schoolers say to sixth graders? What warnings would they have for them?
5. Each of these passages address Christian morality. Ask several volunteers to complete the sentences, then discuss what they had to say about Christian morality.

THE CLOSE

There's no doubt that the decisions your kids face will get more difficult and uncertain as they grow older. They'll need a moral foundation to base their decision on. People in today's society set their own standards and values—morality is no longer just black or white. Standards that were once clear are now blurred—they've become gray.

Point out that it's hard to stick to a set of values, especially in a society that questions them. Remind them that God has given us a set of morals in the Bible—he's laid out clear boundaries. You may want to read these Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) with your group again, or look back at the set you wrote in the intro. Even though they were written thousands of years ago, how do they still apply today? What other rules does God give in the Bible? What other commands did Jesus give in the New Testament? What benefits come from following God's rules and living for him?

Close by reminding your kids that God forgives and forgets. No one will ever be able to follow God's laws perfectly—that's part of being human. But if someone loves God, they'll follow what he says is best for them. Close with a time of prayer and encourage your kids to start following God's boundaries and asking God for wisdom and guidance in their decisions.

MORE

- You may want to ask your kids to keep track of how many of the Ten Commandments are broken in the next TV show or movie that they watch. Have them note what the movie was rated and what it was about. Follow up with your kids to talk about morals in the media. How common is it for your kids to see murder, adultery, or swearing in what they see? What impact does this have on how people live and treat each other? What can your kids do to set boundaries around themselves?
- Encourage your kids to think of one command that they don't follow very well. What specific area of sin are your kids struggling in? Are they caught up in stealing? Not respecting their parents? Struggle with a low self-esteem (love your neighbor as yourself!). Challenge them to get right with God and to spend some time with him in prayer—he gives strength and wisdom to those who come to him! Encourage them to set goals and see how God works in their lives.