

# THINK IT THROUGH



1. What are two problems that all teenagers have to face?
2. What do you think? Are these statements **R** (really true), **S** (sort of true), or **N** (not really true)?
  - When Christians have problems in their lives, they should let God decide what to do.
  - Your Christian beliefs don't make much difference when looking for solutions to everyday problems.
  - Christians shouldn't think much about problems they face, since it's God's job to tell them what to do.
  - A Christian should work with God to solve life's problems.
  - When a tough situation is encountered, young people should figure out what it means on their own.
  - God wants to work with us on every problem we face.
  - When Christians are upset, they should ask God to take the anxious feelings away.
  - When faced with a problem, you're better off going with the feelings you have and not trying to lean on God.
  - God can help a Christian figure out solutions to life's problems.
  - God will somehow work out Christians' problems for them.
  - Rather than tell God our problems, we should take action to work them out.
  - We can work hard to solve life's problems, because we know God is working with us.
  - Christians should trust the Lord to give them the answers to their problems.
3. Put an arrow by the statement that best describes how you handle your problems.
  - God solves all my problems
  - I let everyone else (parents, teachers, friends) deal with my problems.
  - I deal with problems alone—I don't even tell God my problems.
  - I ignore my problems.
4. The following are three examples of how biblical believers looked at problems. Pick one to read and then write down what the verses say in your own words.
  - Exodus 4:10-12
  - Nehemiah 2:2-5
  - 2 Corinthians 1:8-11



## THIS WEEK

This TalkSheet lets you and your high schoolers examine how they approach their problems—both big and small. Do they solve them themselves, expect God to solve all of them, or cooperate with God in working out their problems?

Be aware that some kids in your group may be dealing with some massive problems in their lives, including alcoholism, premarital sex, depression, physical or sexual abuse, divorce at home, pornography, and more. Pay close attention to the dynamics of your group throughout this discussion.

### OPENER

Before you start, write some problem scenarios on pieces of paper. Feel free to expand on this list, leave any out, or add any that you think of—these are to help you get started.

- You're not doing well in classes and your parents are angry. But you're trying your hardest.
- Your friend started dating a guy (or girl) two months ago and now he (or she) wants to have sex. Your friend isn't sure if she should.
- You found out that your closest friend has started using drugs.
- A teammate has been coming to school with bruises on her face, arms, and legs. She says she fell during track practice, but you and your teammates know her dad has a hot temper.
- Your friend's mom was diagnosed with cancer. She may live only a few months.
- You've been cut from the basketball team and now your so-called friends on the team have ditched you.
- You just aren't fitting in at school—you've tried to dress cool, be nice, and all that. But it hasn't worked.
- You've come home on Friday to find your parents screaming at each other. They've been fighting a lot—and you heard your dad threaten to leave.

Split your kids into groups and give each group a problem. Then ask them to read the problem and think about how they would handle the situation—realistically. What would the implications be if they made different decisions? How often have your kids heard of situations like these?

### THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Write down all the suggestions. What are the most common problems of teenagers? Which one does your group think is the most common?
2. How do your kids respond to these statements? Take some time to talk about the validity of each of these. What do they say about Christians and problems? What have your kids been brought up to believe about God and dealing with their problems?

3. As a follow-up to question 2, how do your kids handle their problems? In general, who do they turn to the most—theirself, others, or God? What do they find the most comfort in? Why or why not?
4. Let different individuals share their reflections from each of the three situations. You may want to conclude by reflecting on Romans 8:28.

### THE CLOSE

Remind your group that God is a partner in problem solving. Most Christians would probably agree that God and his people work together—he guides and enables them to solve problems. Emphasize to your kids that God is able to help solve problems. But they need to be willing to come to him with their problems and concerns and trust that he is able to handle them!

Encourage your kids to find a trusted adult to talk with—including you, if they feel comfortable. Stress that it is vital for them to get help in dealing with these problems. If you sense it's appropriate, you may want close in prayer with your group.

For more information and links to specific Web sites and resources, check out lessons [www.X-rated.sin](http://www.X-rated.sin) (page 87), Hooked on Drugs (page 61), and Your Last Breath (page 101).

### MORE

- You may want to continue this discussion with a Q&A with your group. Ask your kids to write down problems they are struggling with. (Be sure to keep it anonymous.) Then collect the problems and read them individually to the group. Be sure to screen them for appropriateness before you read them out loud. Then have your group to brainstorm solutions to the problems. What advice do they have for each other? How can God help in the situations? What are some tangible solutions for finding answers?
- What are some ways that that TV and movie characters deal with problems? You may want to show a clip of a TV show or movie and then talk with the group about how the character(s) handled a problem. What was effective and not effective? Why or why not? What does advice does society have for dealing with problems? Are these healthy solutions or not? Point out to your group that many people deal with their problems in unhealthy ways—turning to drugs, alcohol, or physical abuse, to deal with their problems.