

WALKING WITH GOD

1. How often do you think about each of the following? **A (all the time)**, **S (sometimes)**, or **N (never)**?

- Wanting a closer relationship with God
- Wishing you could actually see God
- Wondering if and when God is listening to your prayers
- Feeling that something is missing in your relationship with God
- Considering questions about God and Christianity that don't seem to have any real answers
- Wondering if all this Christian stuff is a waste of time
- Wishing you could understand God

2. What do you think—**Y (yes)** or **N (no)**?

- If you know about God, you know God.
- You should feel closest to God at church.
- Getting to know God is quite difficult.
- Pastors (or those in ministry) feel closer to God than others.
- There's no one right way to grow in a relationship with God.
- If Christ had not become a human being, we could not have a personal relationship with God.



3. Suppose you were one of Jesus' 12 disciples.

Do you think that as one of the disciples, you could have known God more personally than you do now? Why or why not?

4. Think about your relationship with God and answer these questions—

How is your relationship with God like a friendship?

How is your relationship with God unlike a friendship?

5. What does each of these verses say about personally relating with God?

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| Psalm 84:2 | Colossians 1:21-23 |
| Psalm 89:46 | Hebrews 2:14 |
| Isaiah 6:3-7 | Hebrews 4:14-16 |
| John 1:18 | |

THIS WEEK

Young people want to know God—not know *about* God, but *know* God. They want a personal relationship with him. They want to see him, talk with him, and walk with him. Take this opportunity to discuss personal, intimate relationships with God.

OPENER

What makes things grow? What does a person have to do to get things growing? What about a baby? A child? A plant? An animal? Other things in the world? Why do some take more effort to grow than others? Why is it harder to grow certain kinds of plants than others? Why do some kids grow faster than other kids? Brainstorm about these questions with your group.

Now compare this to a person's spiritual growth. What do people have to do to grow spiritually? Do your kids think it takes work or not? What happens if they don't get "fed"? Point out that not everyone grows at the same rate or in the same way. How do some Christians grow in Christ differently than others? Why are some people deeper spiritually than others?

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Let volunteers share their doubts or interests in a relationship with God. Point out that the psalmist felt the same way (Psalm 42).
2. Let your kids talk about and debate each of these statements. Point out to the group that knowing God isn't as easy or as hard as they make it out to be. God is as close to them as their next prayer.
3. What may have been different about this time in history? What would it have been like being close friends with Christ? Is this different from your relationship with him today? You may want to illustrate this by reading Matthew 28:17.
4. You won't find the phrase "personal relationship with Jesus Christ" in the Bible. But God does tell us in other ways that he wants to be close to Christians. What insight do your kids have about how a relationship with God is like and unlike a friendship?
5. What did your kids learn from these passages? You may want to create a master list to record the insights of the group.

THE CLOSE

Point out to the group that the metaphor of walking with God is a useful way to look at how we relate to him. There are different ways we walk with people. For example, if you go to the mall with your parents, you might walk away from them—you don't want your friends to see you so close to them. When walking with a boyfriend or a girlfriend, you might hold hands or walk arm in arm. If you have the unfortunate experience of walking with a police officer who has taken you into custody—you might walk with your head lowered! On the other hand, you might walk casually and coolly with your friends. Ask the kids to describe how they are walking with God. Does their walk change from day to day? Why or why not?

There's a bumper sticker that reads "If you don't feel close to God, guess who moved." Point out to you kids that God never moves from them—they move away from God. Encourage your kids to get closer with God by drawing near to him. James 4:8 says "Come near to God and he will come near to you." Read this verse and spend some time in prayer, giving your kids time to think about God and draw near to him.

MORE

- Encourage those in your group who are interested to keep spiritual journals of their walk with God for one week. Mention that journaling is useful to write thoughts, prayer requests, and ideas of God down on paper. Suggest time to journal—while reading the Bible, listening to music, during prayer, or while thinking about your day. You may want to talk about their experiences—what did they learn by journaling? Did it help their walk with God or not? If so, how?
- What gets in the way of your kids' relationship with God? Do they not have enough time? Are they too tired at night to talk with God? Challenge your kids to set aside a few minutes a day to spend with God. It doesn't even have to be very long—just a goal to make time for God. After all, friends should spend time together, right?