

WHO'S NUMBER ONE?

1. When it comes to church or church-related activities, how often do you like to go?

- As much as I can
- More than once a week
- Once a week
- A couple of times a month
- A couple of times a year
- Not at all

2. After each of the following statements, write in your response—Y (yes) or N (no).

- ___ I'm a Christian, but there are a number of more important things in my life.
- ___ I want to share my Christianity with others.
- ___ I work hard at living a Christian life.
- ___ There are times when I need to hide my Christianity from my friends and acquaintances.
- ___ My Christian beliefs aren't much help in making everyday decisions.
- ___ The way I look at everyday life is based on my Christianity.



3. Label each statement with M (for that's me) or N (for no, that's not me).

- ___ I usually choose church activities over other activities when I'm busy.
- ___ I sometimes hide my Christianity from others so I won't be embarrassed.
- ___ I use my Christian beliefs when I make everyday decisions.
- ___ I have many friends who are also Christians.
- ___ I have a lot more to learn about how to apply my Christianity to my life.
- ___ I like talking with others about my Christian faith.
- ___ I am happy about being a Christian.

3. How would you finish these two statements?

The things getting in the way of my Christianity right now are—

What I'm willing to change to get closer to Christ is—

4. All of the following passages are teachings of Jesus. Paraphrase two of these passages in your own words.

Matthew 7:13, 14

Matthew 8:18-22

Luke 14:25-33

Matthew 7:24-27

Matthew 11:28-30

THIS WEEK

Christian teenagers, if they haven't already done so, are about to come to a fork in the spiritual road. When they were younger they attended church, prayed, and memorized Bible verses because that was what they were supposed to do. But now they have a choice. What importance will Christianity take during their adolescence? Use this TalkSheet as an opportunity to talk about the role of Christianity in the lives of your young people.

OPENER

On a white board or poster board, make a list of what your kids think are important. What would an average person consider to be important? Ideas may include food, family, money, health, and friends. Write all these suggestions down. Where does Christ fit into this list? How long did it take your kids before they mentioned Jesus or God? Now ask the group what a non-Christian would consider to be the most important? A celebrity? A government leader? How about a Christian? Point out that people have different priorities and things that are most important to them, based on their beliefs. Where do your kids' beliefs stand? Is Christ first on their list?

Now have them rate these on a scale. What are the most important things in life? Why do some people think some are more important than others? How will your kids' priorities of importance change as they grow up? Go to college? Get married? Raise a family? Point out that through all this, God never changes. He always stays the same—and is always there, ready for an important place in their lives.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Is church involvement an indicator of how important someone's Christianity is to them? How important is church activity to your group? Why or why not? What does church involvement strengthen one's faith?
2. How did your kids answer this? What answers indicate a higher or lower commitment to Christ? Why or why not?
3. How do your kids handle their faith? Are they surrounded by others who are Christians? How did your kids answer these statements? Take some time to talk about these with your group.
4. No Christian is perfect—all have obstacles standing in the way of a close relationships with Christ. What's in the way of your kids' relationships with him? You may want to ask those who are willing to publicly make a commitment, but don't pressure any of your young people to share.

5. It will be helpful to break the kids into groups to do this activity. Then have the groups come back together and have each group share what they learned.

THE CLOSE

You may want to use the following questions to wrap up the session—How committed do you want to be to your Christian faith? What kind of relationship do you want to have with Jesus Christ? How many things are more important than God?

When God gave the Ten Commandments, he knew that there would be many things that would compete for our attention. This probably explains why the first commandment was first (Exodus 20:3)! Ask your kids this question—what crowds out God in your life? Whatever it is, it is their god. They are committed to something! Ask the students how much of their commitment is directed toward their Christian faith. How can they get closer to God?

You may want to close with time for prayer, giving your group time with God in silent prayer.

MORE

- How important are their Christian beliefs to your group members? Would they like to set goals for themselves—to get closer to God? To put him first? To spend more time with him and less time in front of the TV? It's important for everyone to have spiritual goals. Encourage each group member to write a letter to themselves—stating their spiritual goals and how they want to grow as closer to God. Give them envelopes, which they will address to themselves and seal. Mail the letters to them anywhere from six months to a year.
- Challenge your group to investigate five Bible characters to see how important their faith in God was to them. They will find that, for the most part, the Bible is a book of failures, not successes. This can be a source of encouragement for your young people, since there isn't much difference in people today than in biblical times. You may want to talk about this as a group and point out that God never changes, no matter how badly one messes up. He's always there with open arms.