

Short Sheet # 16

Conversations Along the Trail

(Third of five follow-up Bible Studies for after camp)

To the Leader: The following discussion is designed to introduce kids to the concept of communicating with God daily through prayer and Bible study.

Kids will be encouraged to listen to God and to speak with Him as well. Please note: There are probably more questions than you can possibly cover in one discussion. It depends on the group. In any case, the goal is *not* to try to cover every question. The goal is to stimulate good discussion that makes kids aware of their new ability to communicate with God through listening and speaking.

Ice Breaker (Choose one or more.)

- With whom do you enjoy talking and why? Have you always enjoyed talking with this person? If not, what steps did you have to take to get to where you are today?
- If you need some good advice, to whom do you go and why?
- If you could ask God any question and be guaranteed an audible answer, what would you ask?
- Play a listening game. (Don't let the kids know you are playing a listening game. Following are the guidelines.)
 - If you have a group larger than seven, divide the group into small groups of four kids each. If you have a group of seven or less, remain in one group.
 - Have each student share three things about themselves. For example: their birth date; any facts they know about their birth; their best birthday celebration or gift.
 - After everyone in the group has shared, bring the group back together and offer a \$1 bill to anyone who can repeat all of the information given by the other members of the group.
 - Ask the question, "Why is it easier to talk about ourselves than to listen to other people?"
 - Have the students list on a big piece of paper or a wipe-dry board the characteristics of a good listener.

Bridge Statement

- God wants you to really enjoy talking with Him. But just as it takes time and effort to build good communication with people, it takes time and effort to become comfortable talking with God. Let's get started now.
- There is great news for us as we undertake our journey of faith with Jesus. He is available at any moment to give us advice or answer our questions, even though you probably won't hear Him audibly. Let's talk about how you do hear and speak with God.
- Good communication is the key to a good relationship. And listening is probably more important than speaking in learning to communicate effectively. Let's talk about learning to communicate with God. We'll start by finding out what it means to listen to Him.

Examination of Scripture

There will be a variety of Scripture used in this discussion. It is best to look up the verses one at a time and as needed (John 16:12-14; John 14:25, 26, 23; 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 58:6-8).

- John 16:12-14. The point: God has a lot to say to us and speaks through the Spirit within us. We listen with our hearts and minds.

- Jesus is talking with His disciples before He is about to be put to death. What problem does Jesus point out in verse 12? What does He offer as the solution to the problem in verse 13?
 - In verses 13 and 14, Jesus makes five "He will" statements about the Spirit of Truth. What are those statements? (Note: You may wish to write these on large pieces of paper or on a wipe-dry board as the kids call them out to you.) The Spirit speaks what the Father tells Him. He shows you the right way to go in life. One test you can use to decide if it is the Spirit directing you is this: when you do what the Spirit says to do, it will make Jesus look good.
 - We don't hear God with our ears (usually!) but with our hearts and our minds. Our heart is our "will" at the centre of our being. God's Spirit "nudges" our will one direction or another. In other words, he encourages us to say, "Yes, I will do that" or "No, I will not do that." Can you think of any time since you've been home from camp when God convinced you to say, "Yes, I will..." or "No, I will not..."? Explain the circumstances and what you decided to do.
 - God speaks to us in our thoughts as well. He gives us new thoughts and a new perspective on life. Can you think of anything you've thought about differently since you've met Christ? Family members? Old friends? Old habits? The world around you? Explain the difference if you can.
 - When have you heard God speak to you from within the most clearly? What do you think helped you to hear Him at that time? What can you do today to become a good listener to God?
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- John 14:25, 26, 23. The point: The Spirit teaches us and reminds us of Jesus' words.
 - According to these verses, what two things will the Spirit do for us? Jesus words are recorded for us in the Bible. If we will read those words, the Holy Spirit will bring them to mind just when we need them. (Leader: share a personal example.)
 - Has God been teaching you anything since you got home from camp? Would you mind sharing it with the rest of us? Have you had an experience where God reminded you of something you had learned earlier? What was the situation and how did it help you to be reminded?
 - According to verse 23, what should be our response to Jesus' teaching?
 - 1 Peter 5:7. The point: Not only does God have a lot to say to us, but He wants us to tell Him everything as well.
 - What are we supposed to do with our cares or concerns?
 - What are the concerns of the kids at your high school today? What do they spend their time thinking about? What do they worry about? Are there any items on this list that we can't talk with God about? If so, which ones and why do you think so?
 - God wants you to tell Him everything. He already knows what is on your mind. You might as well talk with Him about it.
 - Psalm 58:6-8. The point: We can tell God anything, even our gripes and complaints.
 - The book of Psalms is kind of like a journal of prayers to God. It is believed that a man named David wrote most of these "letters" to God. In Psalm 58:6-8, David is complaining about his enemies. What five pictures of destruction does David give God for dealing with his enemies?

- Do you think David was out of line, talking with God this way? Why or why not?
- Is there anything that you are afraid to talk with God about? (optional question).
- God called David a man after his own heart. Apparently God wasn't offended by David's honest prayers. We can't offend God either. Four guidelines in speaking with God are: 1) Speak honestly; 2) Tell Him everything; 3) Listen carefully for God's guidance and teaching; 4) Do what God says.

A Verse to Meditate on and Memorise (Choose one).

- 1 Peter 5:7, "Cast all your cares upon him, because he cares for you."
- John 14:26, "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

Application (already interwoven.)

Action Step (Choose one.)

- Say the magic words! *Everything honestly. Listen and act.* These are the magic words for the week. When you talk to friends from the group this week, make them say the magic words before you will grant their requests. For example, if you're with a friend and he or she says, "Put in a different CD," you say, "What are the magic words?" Feel free to torture one another mercilessly with these words. They are the key to communicating effectively with God.
- Write a letter to God this week. Be honest and talk with Him about everything that concerns you. *Then*, write a letter from God to you in return. Be willing to listen carefully and act accordingly. Report to the group next week about your experience.
- Read Psalm 86. Get a piece of paper and make two columns on it with the following headings: "What David Said About Himself," and, "What David Said About God." Ask God to teach you to pray like David - honestly from the heart and with an attitude that says "Teach me your way, O Lord." Bring your piece of paper next week.