

# EVEN MY ENEMY? [loving your enemies—Proverbs 25]

## THIS WEEK

Through movies, TV shows, and violence in society, teenagers have learned to deal with enemies in a manner far different than that required by Jesus. Most students will struggle with the plan God lays out for dealing with enemies—they can't imagine how it would help them. This TalkSheet session provides a great opportunity to challenge students to see if they really trust God enough to follow his commands, even when they seem bizarre.

## OPENER

What is the most common way that enemies relate to each other? How does the media glorify enemies—and how to deal with them? You may want to ask your kids to list examples of how people in society deal with their enemies (from the least to most extreme), including enemies of state (world leaders versus world leaders or country versus country) to personal enemies (friends, relatives, and so on). What is the general message that society gives to those who hate an enemy? If you feel it's appropriate, you may want to share a few different examples of how someone dealt with an enemy. Possibly show a movie or TV show clip or read an article from a magazine or from the Internet. Ask for your kids' reactions to these situations. Were they surprised or shocked? Why or why not? What are the consequences to the actions taken against the enemy? How will these affect others?

## THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. What makes a person become an enemy? With a show of hands, how many of your group members have people in their lives who they would consider to be a real enemy?
2. Talk about the way people treat those who they think of as enemies. You may want to ask which of the ways seem crazy and why. How does society in general treat their enemies?
3. How would your students describe the treatment the Bible says people must give to their enemies? Discuss how this conflicts with the way people usually treat those they dislike.
4. Have a few willing students share their answers. Some might say that their enemy think they were weird or strange. Then ask them this—how would you react if your enemy treated you as Christ commanded?
5. Why is loving our enemies a hard order for most people? Where are your students in their ability to practice what the Bible teaches on this subject?

## THE CLOSE

Explain to your group that it's difficult—but not impossible—to care for those who hate people. Let them know that this process is done one step at a time, starting with something simple such as refusing to say bad things about the person. Once they've succeeded at little things, they can go on to other gestures of peacemaking. Encourage them to ask God for help in dealing with their enemies and to ask him for the strength to love the enemy back. Challenge them to pray for one enemy during the week and to see what happens—does the relationship improve? Why or why not? What is God teaching them about love, patience, and perseverance?

## MORE

- Ask your students to rewrite Matthew 5:43-48 by substituting the name of a person who they would consider their enemy for the word enemy. What does this verse say to them? Is this verse an encouragement to them or not? How do these verses relate with being a Christian?
- How did some biblical characters handle their enemies? You may want to take a look at some of these stories and examples. Check out the relationship between Jesus and Satan (Matthew 4:1-10), Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27:41), Esther and Mordecai (Esther 9), David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1-54), or Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37). How did God work in these relationships and what happened? Note how God used the bad for the good—the same thing he can do with enemies today.