

# FEAR NOT! [ f e a r — P s a l m 1 1 2 ]

## THIS WEEK

Trusting in God helps teenagers free themselves from the things that cause them anxiety—the fears of embarrassment, of being unpopular, not being attractive, bad grades, and a myriad of other things. This TalkSheet allows your class members to discuss their fears without fear and shows them how trust in God can cancel worry.

## OPENER

What scares your teenagers today? What would they be most hesitant to talk about with you, their peers, or their parents? What subjects would make them the most nervous and scared? Or are your kids just so bold that they're not scared of anything (not likely!)? Start off with a simple question to trigger their thoughts. What in the media or society makes them afraid or scared? Why are they fearful of these things? Are some fears more prevalent or important than others? What fears to their parents or siblings have? Are these fears different than their own? You may get a variety of reactions. Pay attention to your group's answers and allow everyone to express an opinion. You may want to make a list of their suggestions and then pick the three most common fears among themselves or their peers. Then launch into this discussion on fear.

## THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. You may want to have your kids check out the answers to these in a dictionary. To be worried speaks of negative emotions such as anxiety and fretfulness. To be concerned can also mean that, but it has a more positive meaning—to be responsible for or interested in something.
2. How much control do your kids have over these situations? Are they being realistic about their control—or lack of—a situation? You may want to ask for individual responses to these issues. Which ones do they have more control over? Why or why not? Remind them the problems are inevitable, but worrying about them is a choice.
3. Would your kids still worry about these situations? Why or why not? Would they worry if they knew that God has complete control over all problem? And while your kids may question why things happen in their lives, God has his reasons, some of which are beyond them knowing.
4. What does this verse say to your kids? What does a godly person have? How does this affect their beliefs or how they handle situations in their lives?
5. The truths in these verses are powerful—they

give anyone the power to overcome worry. Read each passage over with your group and paraphrase them. How do your kids feel after reading these verses? How will these verses help them in the future? You may want to have them write down these verses on a 3x5 card for reference when they're feeling the itch to worry.

## THE CLOSE

God wants to drive fear from the lives of your kids. Challenge them to be people who trust in God and obey his commands. Encourage your kids to bring their stresses, doubt, and worries to God. He's there with open ears 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And they can be guaranteed that he's listening. Spend some time in prayer with your kids.

Finally, encourage them to seek out a trusted adult to talk with about issues that are really affecting them. Situations of abuse, sexual assault, depression, and family problems may need professional help. For more information, visit the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network ([www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)) the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (<http://ncadd.org>), Suicide Voices Awareness of Education ([www.save.org](http://www.save.org)), the National Foundation For Depressive Illness, Inc. ([www.depression.org](http://www.depression.org)), or the Youth Specialties Web page ([www.YouthSpecialties.com](http://www.YouthSpecialties.com)).

## MORE

- Worry is a heavy burden. It zaps energy and robs a person of spiritual closeness with God. You may want to read Matthew 11:30, which says "for my yolk is easy, and my burden is light." To illustrate this, gather some large stones or a few other heavy items. Label each of these items with a sin or worry, such as cheating, not getting along with parents, or problems with friends. Then ask for a volunteer to come up and help out. Put all these stones (or other items) into a backpack on the volunteer's back. Point out that sin and worry is like the backpack—and unnecessary burden that they don't have to carry. What removes this burden? Prayer. Point out that praying to God and giving him their worries, doubts, troubles, and sins will remove the burden. Then remove the backpack. God doesn't want Christians do carry around extra weight—he says he'll do it for them. For a more full explanation of this illustration, see Coming Clean on page 105.
- Encourage your kids to support and encourage each other. You may want to create a weekly prayer list for your group, or set up an e-mail list for them to share their prayer requests, worries, and thoughts with each other.