

GOT FAITH? [faith]

THIS WEEK

Even if they aren't aware of it, everyone has faith. Some have faith in themselves, some in science, and some in money. Others put their faith in cults or false religions. Take time to talk about what kind of faith your students have through a TalkSheet discussion.

OPENER

What is the importance of faith? What does faith mean to your kids? Start out by asking your kids a few questions to get them rolling. Why do people—both non-Christians and Christians—have faith in something? What purpose or direction does faith give people? Point out to your kids that people find hope in what they have faith in. For some people, faith is empty and numb. It doesn't mean anything to them. What faiths have your kids noticed in others at school? In their families? On the job? What do people today put their faith in and why? You may want to make a master list of these suggestions. What does it mean to have faith in a person? How does this relate to having faith in God?

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Did the grades they chose reflect how seriously they live out their faith? Why or why not? You may want to ask a few of them to share their grades and why they gave themselves that grade.
2. Have students compare the grades they gave themselves with the grades they feel their friends might give them. Is there a difference between the two grades? Why or why not?
3. What do your kids think about this statement? What are your students putting their faith into—the church, a set of beliefs found in a book, a quest for the meaning of life, or a historical Jesus who is who he says he is?
4. Examine the reasons your kids believe some young people don't take their faith seriously. What distracts teenagers from their faith? Also examine why some young people do take their faith seriously. Is it easier for young people to live with or without faith in Christ? Is the Christian life worth it?
5. Explore how someone's faith may change throughout life, especially during the next stage of life—the college-career years. Talk about whether or not the students' faith will be strengthened or weakened by questioning their beliefs and faith. Will it become more or less important?
6. Create a master list of everyone's responses. Take one or two of the Bible characters mentioned in Hebrews 11 and review their relationships to faith.

THE CLOSE

Explain that many people talk about faith in terms of belief. They believe that there is a God or they believe that you should go to church. But is simple believing that faith the kind of faith God wants? There isn't anything wrong with a belief that focuses on information. The Bible says that even the demons believe (James 2:19). But there is another kind of faith—a faith that believes in something. It is based on facts, but runs deeper than mere knowledge. It focuses on a relationship with God. Your kids should understand that God didn't expect them to walk around lost and in the dark—the Bible provides them with the facts for their faith. But they still must believe in those facts to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

MORE

- Hold a faith Q&A time with your group. Have the group write down any questions they have about the Christian faith on 3x5 cards (anonymously). Then collect the cards and have your kids take turns picking out questions. If they feel comfortable, have them try to answer it or pass it on. Discuss the questions as a group and encourage them to use the Bible for back up to their questions and answers. To liven things up, invite your senior pastor to a meeting and put him in the hot seat for a question-and-answer session!
- Challenge your kids to e-mail or talk with one adult this week about their belief in God, life after death, the Bible, miracles, prayer, and so on. Or, challenge them to go into an on-line chat room to get some responses on these questions. This is a great way to challenge others to think about and defend their beliefs. Especially if they enter chat-rooms under non-Christian Web pages! Later have them share their experiences, what was discussed and what the kids learned from doing this.