

JUST TRUST ME [t r u s t]

THIS WEEK

Trust is a big issue in the lives of kids today. Some don't trust their parents. Some have been hurt and abused. Others don't have many friends and don't trust other people with their feelings and emotions. It's important to teach them what trust is and what it means for Christians. This TalkSheet will direct your discussion on believing in others and how God fits into this picture.

OPEN

Start by holding an envelope in your hand—with a small prize—either a dollar bill (or more), a gift certificate, or a coupon for a free dessert. Ask your group who would like an envelope. Remind them that they don't know what's in the envelope and that there's a consequence with taking the envelope without knowing what's in it? What makes them trust you or not trust you? Are they going to take the envelope without knowing what the consequences are?

Finally, if someone does take the envelope, ask them in front of the others why they want the envelope and why they trust you. Then hand over the envelope and let them open it. Of course, they won't have to do anything but take the prize!

If no one dares take the envelope, challenge them once more. Then, open the envelope and show them what was inside—a prize. They wouldn't have had to do anything but accept the prize!

This illustrates how trust works. Some people either trust too easily or not enough. Either one of your kids trusted without knowing the risks, or no one trusted at all. Remind them that when they trust a person or something, there are risks involved and consequences that await. Being a Christian involves a risk, too—it means giving your heart and life to God. What are the consequences? Having others look down at you? But what's the prize? They don't have to earn anything. They only have to accept the gift of God's love and eternal life with him in heaven. Not too bad of a free reward, huh?

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Let the group share their responses. Some will be humorous and some more serious. You may want to make a list of their responses.
2. Who did your kids chose as trustworthy and not? Why or why not?
3. Most of the kids will have a friend who has betrayed a confidence in some way. Let them share their experiences as long as they don't use names. What have they learned from the experience?

4. This brings the trust issue closer to home. Some kids won't want to reveal their answers, so don't force them. Instead, ask them to think about why others may or may not trust them. What do they need to work on to be trustworthy? Point out that trust is important for all good, healthy relationships.

5. Ask for a show of hands indicating their opinions on these questions. Ask some to share any strong feelings they might have. Discuss how a person can earn trust and how much trust you should extend to a person you don't know very well.

6. Relate these verses to trusting in relationships today. Focus particularly on the fact that we can trust God all them time—he never changes and never will.

THE CLOSE

Communicate that some people simply can't be trusted. Other people seem like they can be trusted, when really they can't. Trust takes time and patience. No one deserves to be instantly trusted. If someone breaks trust, it can take a long time—sometimes years—to be rebuilt.

It's not easy to trust others and for others to trust us—they need to guard our hearts.

They can ask God to heal us when we've been hurt. God forgives us even if people don't. He knows our hearts and can help us become more trustworthy people.

MORE

- On a whiteboard or poster board, write the word TRUST vertically. Split your group up into five smaller groups and give each group one letter of the word trust. Have each group list at least two words or phrases that describe trust and that start with the letter that they've been given. For example, if a group had T, they could list "telling the truth" or "trying to rely on another person". Encourage them to help each other think of descriptions. Then, go over these with the group and discuss what the different phrases or words mean.
- You may want to take some time and talk about what breaks trust. If you sense that some of your kids are struggling with trusting others, they may be dealing with some larger issues, such as sexual abuse, problems at home, or having a hard time at school. Make note of what you see. You may want to have a one-on-one later on with that person. And if you sense an abusive situation, encourage the person to find help—and report it to the authorities in your area.