

# SERVING THE SLUMS [helping others — Psalm 82]

## THIS WEEK

The down and out include the hungry, the homeless, the lonely, the misfits—anyone who doesn't fit in with the crowd. They can be found in cities, suburbs, and (yes!) even high schools. This TalkSheet will guide your students toward their obligation to help in some way those who the world would rather ignore.

## OPENER

Start off by lining five or six volunteers against one wall. All they have to do is move to the other side of the room together—except one of the volunteers can't use any body part except one arm! No walking, no crawling—but this person is welcome to drag himself by the arm! Give no other rules or details. Give a go signal and watch what happens. (Call time in 30 seconds or so.)

Most likely everyone made it across but the person with only one good arm. Point out that the best solution would have been for the other people to carry that person to the other side of the room! Did the group think of that? Or were they thinking only of themselves? Introduce the session by explaining that the discussion centers on people in need and ways your students can help them.

## THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Discuss the words, pointing out that these are the things Christians are called to do. To defend means to protect, guard, and prevent injury or destruction. To maintain means to keep, hold, support, and preserve. To rescue is to free, save, liberate, and deliver. To deliver means the same as rescue and also has the idea of transport, as in taking a weak person away from a bad situation.
2. Which reactions are usual for teenagers? Why are these the common reactions? Are these the same ways that adults would respond? And how about Jesus—how would he respond to these situations?
3. You can have small groups work on one or two situations each. Allow time for each to reach a consensus about what should be done. If a group thinks the drunken man shouldn't be helped with money that he is likely to misuse, encourage your students to think more creatively. How can they offer him food, shelter, or clothing without giving cash?
4. This one may cause some heated debate. Your kids may be interested to know that the Bible says people who refuse to work shouldn't be fed (2 Thessalonians 3:10). What are some ways that your students could help the young man change

his attitude? What other alternative solutions would they have for this situation?

## THE CLOSE

Encourage your students to take seriously God's call to help those who are in need. Skid Row isn't the only place where there are needy people—there're people in need everywhere. Challenge your group to not just feel bad for someone who is hurting, but to have the courage to get involved in practical applications of God's love.

## MORE

- Put your kids on the other side! You may want to find a safe vacant lot somewhere and provide cardboard, scrap lumber, and plastic tarps out of which your students can make shelters to spend the night in. Allow no food and provide no assistance (but of course make sure they're safe). Afterward debrief with your students about their night of homelessness. Did it change the way they think about the needy? How? What does it make them thankful for?
- You may want to brainstorm a practical way to share God's love with those in need in your community. With your group, come up with a unique service venture—something that your group can do to show God's love to others. Maybe collect and hand out used Bibles, serve free hot chocolate on a cold night, or some other way of reaching out. Your group might find that the most simple ways of serving can impact someone in a big way.