

# TALK IT THROUGH [family communication]

## THIS WEEK

Communication between parents and teenagers is important, but it often doesn't happen enough. Parents (or guardians) fear they can't talk with their kids like they used to. Kids wonder why their parents need to talk so much. Parents feel like they're running out of time to tell their kids all they will need to know—kids think they know it all. Use this TalkSheet time to examine the vital issue of communication and encourage more parent-teen dialogue.

## OPENER

Note: The term parent here and in the following items refers to all kinds of parenting adults—birth, step, foster, or guardian.

For this activity, write some of the following questions (and whatever other ones you want to add) on pieces of paper. Put these slips of paper into a question box for your kids to pull questions from.

- What would you say to your parents to get out of being grounded?
- What would you do if one of your parents wants to talk with you about sex?
- Describe the silliest talk you have ever had with a parent.
- How do you get your parents to let you use the car?
- If you could ask your parents any question and they would tell the truth, what question would you ask?
- How do you get money out of your parents when you need it.
- What do you do if your mom or dad asks you about your date last night?
- If you could talk with your parents about anything, and later they'd forget what was said—what would you talk or ask about?

Have your kids take turns drawing the questions and answering them.

## THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. On a poster board or a whiteboard, write down which issues your kids talk with their parents about most often. Do the same for those issues that are rarely or never discussed. Ask the group members to summarize what this says about their overall communication with their parents.
2. Talk about who has the responsibility for communication. Do young people have to wait for their parents? What if their parents don't want to talk or aren't very good at communicating?
3. Are there any issues that your kids should be talking over with their parents but aren't? Summarize the group's sharing of personal views into a statement or two.

4. Is there a common theme among your group's responses? Ask the students how they can bring about change by changing their own behaviors.
5. Discuss the verses and summarize on a whiteboard or overhead what they have to say about family communication.

## THE CLOSE

You may have gotten a variety of responses from this discussion—some kids get along well with parents but others can't stand them. Point out that communication with parents is important, and your kids can learn a thing or two. Encourage them to trust their parents—and give their parents a fair chance to communicate with them. After all, communication goes two ways (that's why it's called dialog!). What separates them? Why do some kids have better relationships with their parents than others? What can your kids do to hold up their end of the relationship? And point out that the Big Daddy upstairs is listening to them all the time—he's waiting for them to talk with him, too! Close with a time of prayer for your kids and their parents.

## MORE

- Hold a talk show with your kids and some of their parents! Your group members will be the audience, and will ask questions or write down their questions in advance. Have the host introduce the guests and the topic of the show. Provide the host with two to three sample questions to start off the show. Here's a few suggestions—what would you like to see teenagers talk with their parents about? How often should parents and their kids sit down and talk? Why aren't parents more understanding of their kids when they talk with them? If you could tell young people only one thing about parents, what would it be?
- Some of your group members might not have good relationships with their parents, or they may know of other kids who don't. Unfortunately, physical and sexual abuse happens within church families too. Encourage your kids to talk with a trusted adult—including you, if they want. For more information on dealing with abuse, check out the National Exchange Club Foundation ([www.preventchildabuse.com](http://www.preventchildabuse.com)) or the American Humane Association ([www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org)), Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network ([www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)), The Family Violence Prevention Fund ([www.fvvpf.org](http://www.fvvpf.org)), or Christians In Recovery ([www.christians-in-recovery.com](http://www.christians-in-recovery.com)).