

THE SUNDAY SITUATION [c h u r c h]

THIS WEEK

What is the importance of going to church? Do you feel that some of your kids go just because their parents make them? This TalkSheet is designed to create discussion about the church and will encourage your high schoolers to get involved in it.

OPEN

You may want to start by asking the group to list all the churches that they know of or have been to. This can include different denominations, religions, and styles of worship. There are hundreds of different branches of churches—both Protestant and Catholic. Make a list of these suggestions and ask the group what makes a church. Is it a building? Is church a group of people? Can church be meeting with some friends together on a Sunday night?

Then ask your group what makes a church? Is it worship alone? What does going to church mean to them? Encourage them to be honest with their answers—some kids may not like church much. You may be surprised at the variety of answers.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. How did the group answer this question? Talk about the importance or unimportance of each activity in relationship to church attendance.
2. Ask the kids to list all the things they like about the church, keeping track of them on the white-board or poster board. Ask if there is anything they don't like and list them as well, but be careful this doesn't turn into a gripe session.
3. Put them in charge for once! What if they were on the church board to determine priorities for the church. What ministries they would discontinue, which they would keep, and which they would emphasize more?

You might want to try this hypothetical situation—a rich widow dies and leaves \$3 million to the church; how would your mock church board use the money?

4. Have a vote on each of the statements, according to their answers. If everyone agreed on a particular one, go on to the next. If there is a wide difference of opinion, discuss the pros and cons.
5. Read each passage and allow them to share their completed sentences with the group.

THE CLOSE

The following are some suggestions to emphasize as you close—

- The church is the body of Christ and everyone is a part of it. Christ is no longer physically present in the world, but his body, the church, is. When you become a Christian, you become part of that body. There is no such thing as a solitary Christian. Christians grow in community with each other.
- The purpose of church isn't entertainment. In a worship service, people aren't the audience—God is. Christians come to worship him and to grow closer to him. That requires expending some effort on their part.
- Young people aren't the church of tomorrow—they are the church of today! Your kids know that they are a vitally important part of the church. Encourage them to get involved.

MORE

- Want to see how much your kids know about their church? Make up a short quiz with questions about the church such as—
 - ⇒ Name a missionary our church sponsors and the country where he or she serves.
 - ⇒ What is our pastor's middle name?
 - ⇒ What is the name of the church's newsletter?
 - ⇒ Summarize last Sunday's (or this morning's) sermon in 25 words or less.
 - ⇒ What year was our church founded?
 - ⇒ Which family in our church has been a member the longest?
- Some of your kids may never have been to a church of a different denomination or religion. If you feel it's appropriate, attend a different worship service with some of your kids. Check out a non-denominational church or a Catholic mass. How do these church services differ from yours? Is it good or bad? What did the group like or not like? What did this experience teach them about the church and how God would view different denominations and styles of worship?