

Date Used: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

## **REPORT CARD FOR MY SCHOOL**

### **Topic: School Life**

#### **Purpose of this Session:**

Kids are required by law to attend school. Adults and kids will tell you that schooling is important. Yet for many kids, the joy and excitement they felt when they began school in kindergarten diminishes each year they attend. By the upper elementary school years, students not only lose interest in their course work, they also perceive their teachers as being less caring than in earlier grades. Much of the concern and disinterest kids express about school is due to their inability to change their circumstances. They feel powerless to control a large chunk of their day. Give your students the opportunity to talk with each other and with adults about their school experiences. Use this TalkSheet as an opportunity to listen and to create an environment where your kids can feel God's grace extended to their school life.

#### **To Introduce the Topic:**

Ask four volunteer young people who represent two different schools to come to the front of the group. Seat each of them in a chair with the students from opposing schools facing each other. Tell them they are going to participate in a school competition. They each have 30 seconds to say as many positive things about their schools as they can. The group can vote on which school received the most compliments. The school with the highest number of positive statements wins.

#### **The Discussion:**

**Item #1:** List each of the suggested changes on a chalkboard or on newsprint. Ask the group why these changes are necessary.

**Item #2:** The same school might get an A+ and an F from different students, depending upon their experiences. Let the group members share their grades and their reasoning.

**Item #3:** Create a master list of the concerns checked by the students. Narrow these down to the five biggest concerns.

**Item #4:** Ask the students what it means to be a Christian at their schools and how Christ could make a difference there. You will find that many students have never thought about this issue before.

**Item #5:** All students need someone to talk with about their school frustrations. Assure kids that they can talk with you. Point out that keeping problems to themselves is not a solution to their problems. Even if a talk can't solve their problems, they will feel better knowing that someone else knows, cares, and appreciates what they are feeling.

**Item #6:** This passage encourages us to commit the school day and every day to God. Just as adults worry about their daily tasks at work, young people worry about their school day. Will I do this worksheet correctly? I need to look at my spelling list before the test! Why won't Brad play with me? Explore with the kids how they can trust and acknowledge God during their school day.

#### **To Close the Session:**

Close the session by asking the kids to identify the different parts of school. They might mention athletics, social activities, schoolwork, and homework. Place the headings they give you on a chalkboard or on newsprint. Under each heading have the young people identify a series of problems that kids face in that aspect of school. Then engage the group in a problem-solving session around these identified issues. Challenge the group members to see themselves as a Christian community that is solving these problems together.