

Date Used: _____

Group: _____

FAMILY FRICTION

Topic: Getting Along With Parents

Purpose of this Session:

As kids get older, getting along gets tougher. You used to hear the complaint from young people in high school and junior high, "My folks don't understand." Now this is heard from kids in the upper elementary grades. Use this TalkSheet to discuss how young people can better get along with their parents, stepparents, or adult guardians.

To Introduce the Topic:

Ask your group members to place their two hands together, palms flat. Have them slowly move their hands up and down. As they are doing this, explain that one hand represents their parents and the other themselves. When they were younger, there wasn't much friction between them. But as they have grown up, they want to move one way and their parents want them to move another. Ask them now to speed up the movement of their hands.

Explain that there will be times when this friction in their families will heat up, just as they can feel the heat caused by the friction of their hand motions. But this heat does not have to get red hot. There are things kids (and parents, too!) can do to keep things cool.

The Discussion:

Item #1: Ask what the ideal together time would be if kids had their choice. During this discussion you will want to listen to the young people while at the same time support the role parents play and the difficulties parents face in raising children.

Item #2: Explore with the kids the role they play in getting along with their parents. Tell the group that families are different. Some do better at different things. Some are strained by a parental job loss, a divorce, or child abuse. Brainstorm with the group how kids who lack a supportive home can find needed support in constructive ways (as opposed to destructive ways, such as acting out in school, smoking, or gang involvement).

Item #3: Address each of these issues with sensitivity. Have volunteers role-play how they can better get along. You can set up situations from stories the kids provide from their top-five lists.

Create a group list to see what the kids chose as the top five. Point out how family friction is part of growing up and that they do have some control in minimizing it. Be careful not to blame either parents or kids for the family friction. Your goal is to empower the kids to positively change their family relationships with the help of the Spirit of God working in their lives.

Item #4: Create a large list of statements from the ideas provided by the group. Ask the students to identify those at the top of the list. Then have the kids describe how they could put these into practice in their home lives.

Item #5: Ask how practical each of these biblical principles is in terms of family life.

To Close the Session:

Close by creating a list with the group of all the practical and positive benefits that kids get out of working on their relationships with their parents. The group can also brainstorm and plan an event with parents that would help the parents and kids better understand and communicate with each other.