

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

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

# **REJECT!**

## **Topic: Rejection**

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

We all know kids can be cruel to each other, especially to their peers who stand out as different. Ridicule is heaped on the poor kid wearing the wrong clothes; on the odd-looking kid with the big nose, the chicken lips, or the wing ears; and on the kid who stutters or walks with a limp. This TalkSheet gets kids talking about rejection—a feeling they have all experienced to some degree.

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

Ask the kids to tell a group story about school rejection. Begin the story by saying, "The first week of school started off . . ." then have different kids provide a sentence, continuing the story from student to student. You may have to step in periodically to get the story back on track. You only need to keep the story going long enough to get a picture of how your group relates to rejection.

### **The Discussion:**

**Item #1:** Ask the group to describe the types of people who are rejected. They will describe anyone who, in their perception, is different. Talk about why some kids are treated unfairly. Do they deserve this unfair treatment? Discuss a particularly tough situation—the kid who has moved.

**Item #2:** This question establishes that most, if not all, of your group has experienced rejection. Focus here on how your group members felt about their own rejections. You may want to role-play some of these situations to help kids take different perspectives. If young people see situations from other viewpoints, they understand their rejection experiences better and are less likely to reject others.

**Item #3:** Talk with the kids about how they can respond if they are rejected in these ways. Discuss how they can respond if their peers reject others in these ways.

**Item #4:** Use this Zinger to discuss how kids can work against rejection and still keep their friends. Ask the kids if this is a realistic situation. How often do these kinds of things happen? Then look at their response options. If this happened to your kids, they could (a) ignore it, (b) make fun of Henry, (c) decide they don't want to be a part of the team, (d) talk with Henry later, (e) talk with the team later about accepting Henry, (f) storm off angry and quit the team, or (g) pressure the kid who said "Hey Fatso" to take it back. Brainstorm with the kids ways they can befriend and help those rejected by the group without losing their own friends.

**Item #5:** Point out that God is not in the rejection business. Explore the following questions with your group: What is the Christian's role in preventing rejection? How can Christians face rejection? How can the group support those who feel its hurt? How can the group support those who are trying to prevent rejection from happening to others?

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

Research indicates that kids are cruel and demeaning to others in order to build themselves up. Cliques of young people find acceptance in each other through rejecting outsiders who are different. For example, the player who made the joke about Henry in Item #4 did it to cover up his or her own inadequacies.

Explain to the kids that when we reject others, we are really saying that we can't handle our own faults, character defects, and sin. If we can find others who appear different than us and ridicule them, then we must be okay. But this is not true. All of us need the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Instead of rejecting others, we need to look at our own lives in relationship to Jesus Christ.