

Following Jesus in Real Life Situations

by Carol Duerksen

MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- Paper and pens
- WWJD bracelets—purchase these prior to the session for students

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS:

Play the human knot game. You will need at least 3 people. Get in a group and form a tight circle (shoulder-to-shoulder). Have each person reach into the center of the circle and grab a hand of a person standing across the circle—each person must hold hands with two different people. Try to untangle so everyone in the group is holding hands normally in a circle. You cannot let go of one another's hands. When the circle is formed, some people can be facing out and some in.

After the game, say: If you think that knowing how to follow Jesus is pretty clear and straightforward, go to the right side of the room. If you think it's kinda confusing and tangled up, like this game, go to the left side of the room.

When students have divided themselves, sit down and talk about why they answered like they did. Suggest that perhaps both answers are right. Jesus seems to be clear about what he says in the Bible, but how we interpret it and what we do about it seems to get tangled up.

EXPLORE OUR LIVES AND THE BIBLE:

Hand out paper and pens. Ask students, either individually or in small groups, to write down situations that they or their friends encounter in life that call for choices, and those choices are connected with what they perceive to be right or wrong. Here is a list of options—you may offer some of them as examples, and/or add them to the examples from students. It's best to include examples from your students because these are their real life challenges.

- 1 My best friend, who is also the star hockey player, expects me to help him pass tests. We have a system figured out and yes, it could be called cheating.
- 2 I know that a good friend of mine is having sex with her boyfriend.
- 3 I spent my school lunch money on something I really wanted that my parents won't buy for me.
- 4 I told my parents I was with my friend at her house but we were really with some other kids at a party and yes, we were drinking.

- 5 My parents won't let me play violent video games at home, but I sure do enjoy them at my friend's house.
- 6 There's this hot guy at school—me and all my friends are dying to date him. Yesterday he asked me out. Well, he asked me to meet him in the park after school and said he'd bring something we can enjoy together. I think he's going to bring some pot. I won't smoke it, but maybe I can get him to come to youth group and church with me.
- 7 I was on the internet last week and I somehow got on a porn site. Now I've been going there every day. Come on, it's natural for a teenage guy to do this.
- 8 There's this girl at school that everybody is mean to. I don't want to be too friendly because I don't want kids to think I'm her friend, but I feel bad about how she's being treated.
- 9 My friends and I were in a store the other day and one of them dared all of us to lift a pair of earrings. It was stupid but we all did it, and I've gotta admit, it was a thrill to pull it off.
- 10 Sometimes I lie. My parents wouldn't always want to know the truth anyway.

Place all of the papers in a basket and draw them out, one at a time. Read and discuss.

- Is there a clear right/wrong answer here?
- What would Jesus do?
- What support do you find in the Bible for your answer?
- What makes it difficult to do the right thing?

APPLY / RESPOND:

Invite students to write down a time in their life when they made a choice they knew was right and good and that showed they were following Jesus—a choice that was hard to make but that they made nevertheless. On the back side, ask them to write down a specific choice or situation that they are facing now in which it is either hard to know what Jesus would do, or they know what Jesus would do but it is hard to follow. Assure them that no one else will see these papers.

When students are done, ask students to the papers in their shoes. Say: *Jesus does want you to follow him in real life, every day situations, and he promises to walk with you and be with you in those situations. The paper in your shoe is a reminder of that.*

Hand out the WWJD bracelets and say: *Here is a more permanent reminder of Jesus' presence with you, reminding you to think "What Would Jesus Do?" in every moment of your life.*