

THIS MEANS WAR! [w a r]

THIS WEEK

Teenagers live in a world full of war and the news of these wars are brought into their homes via television, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. The threat of nuclear or biological war is a real, persistent threat. This TalkSheet allows you to discuss the subject openly and offers the opportunity to find out how the kids feel about it.

If you or your church takes a strong position on either side of the war and peace issue, you may use this discussion as a way to help your kids understand your view as well as to form one of their own.

OPEN

You may want to start this discussion with a role-play scenario—

Find a political story dealing with war. You can find these on the Internet at any news or history Web pages such as www.cnn.com or www.cfsc.dnd.ca. Or enter the keywords war or current events in any search engine to find plenty of resources and links.

Read parts of the story to your group to role play the situation. You may want to split the group up into smaller groups for discussion. How will they, as political leaders, decide to act? How will their action affect the world and national relationship? What are the probable consequences?

Based on their beliefs and who is being attacked, each group has five minutes to decide whether or not to take action against this powerful country to stop the violence—knowing that any action will likely start another world war. Discuss their decisions and inform them the focus of the evening will be war.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. What do your kids think war is? What are their interpretations of war? What image of war has the media imprinted on them?
2. Does your group think there is peace in the world? Why or why not? What current events are going on that make them question this peace? Take some time to talk about this and how they feel about the current world situation.
3. Ask the group to share their reasons for having war. Do any of these justify war? Why or why not? Decide which reasons are most justifiable.
4. Ask for the reasons for their choices. You may want to have the opposing sides debate their answers. How can they, as individuals, make a difference?

5. Discuss these verses with the group. What do they say about war? How does God view war?

THE CLOSE

Communicate to your youth that war is brutal—it shouldn't be taken lightly. Although war is terrible, it is sometimes inevitable to keep world peace and protect our country. War is the price people pay for freedom and justice. As Christians we should support our country, but strive to be peacemakers. We should fight for and promote peace, acceptance, and love.

Don't leave this discussion in a negative light. Communicate that God is still in control of the world—he knows every person in every corner of the world. They don't have to be afraid.

MORE

- Show a clip of a movie that portrays war. There are quite a few of these—but be sure to preview the clips before you show them. Suggestions include "Saving Private Ryan," "The Hunt for Red October," "Crimson Tide," "In Love and War," "The Thin Red Line," or "Courage Under Fire." Each of these portray war situations that were before your kids' time! But they still show examples of the pain and human loss involved. Without making this session a history class, quickly debrief on some recent wars and why wars are fought. Why do they have troops in Somalia and in Iraq? Why does our government spend millions of dollars each year to prepare troops for war? How does that make your group feel? What scares them about war situations?
- Have your kids look in the Bible to find passages or stories of war. Share these findings with the group and discuss God's view of war. Emphasize the fact that God allowed the Israelites to fight wars, but at the same time commands us to love everyone. How do they as Christians account for these differences? What does your church say about war and peace?