

WISE UP

1. Who is the wisest person you know?
2. What is the best advice anyone ever gave you?
3. How would you complete this statement?
I would be much wiser if I—
4. Check **three** areas below where you could use more wisdom.
 - Staying out of trouble
 - School work and studying
 - Family life
 - Handling my emotions
 - Relationships and sex
 - Understanding the Bible
 - Choosing friends
 - Spending money
 - Listening to advice
 - Deciding about my future
 - Relating to God
 - Other—



5. What advice would you give to the parent who wrote this e-mail?

I have three children—two teenage daughters and one teenage son. My problem is that none of them will listen to my advice. They think they know it all and that I know nothing—especially my son, the oldest. I'm concerned for their futures and want to share some of my hard-earned wisdom. I don't want them to make the same mistakes I made or those I have seen others make. What can I do?
6. Pick a chapter in the book of **Proverbs** to read and write **five pieces** of advice given in the chapter.

WISE UP [w i s d o m]

THIS WEEK

Youth hear advice from friends, teachers, parents, and the media—just to name a few sources. Who do they listen to? What will they believe? How are they able to sort out all these ideas and information? This TalkSheet is created to discuss the need for guidance and ends with a discussion on God's Word as the ultimate source of wisdom.

OPEN

Before this activity, you'll need something to write on (a newsprint, poster board, or whiteboard), something to write with, and a few other items—horoscopes, some large dice, a deck of cards, a Magic 8-ball, "cootie catcher" (ask a junior high girl), advice-column clip (check a newspaper or teen magazine), a Bible and so on. Start by asking your kids to name the problems they face daily and list them on the whiteboard or poster board. (For example, what to eat for breakfast, what to wear, who to eat lunch with, or how to study for a test). Then split your group into smaller groups and give each a few of the problems listed. Their mission is to solve or answer these problems by using a "tool of wisdom"—on of the "other items" you brought with you—as their only way to make a decision or figure out their dilemmas. Then debrief the group on these sources of wisdom and how helpful (or unhelpful) they were.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Who do your kids consider to be wise? Why? What characteristics of this person makes them wise?
2. Ask for volunteers to share their bits of good advice. Who did they hear them from? How has it helped them?
3. Let some of the kids read their completed sentences and state their reasons. Close by making the point that everyone should seek more wisdom each day.
4. After listening to their answers, point out that being wise doesn't necessarily mean being smart. Learning is one thing, but it's what you do with your learning that leads to wisdom. How can your kids gain wisdom in these areas?
5. This e-mail deals with a problem common to parents of teenagers—the know-it-all son or daughter. As the kids share their advice, try to help them see the parent's point of view, rather than just their own.

6. This exercise is appropriate for several small groups. Make sure that each takes a different chapter. Allow sufficient time for them to think of five statements of wise advice. The purpose is learning to use the Bible as a source of wisdom for daily living. Encourage them to look at God's Word for help in practical ways.

THE CLOSE

Discuss with your kids how to seek God's wisdom through prayer, Bible study, and the advice from other Christians. Warn the group to be aware of the advice that they get from their friends, the media, and other outside sources—it's easy to hear the wrong message and make the wrong choices. God has given them the ability to discern and evaluate what is going on. And, remind them that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7)—true wisdom comes from God. The more they love God and keep his commandments, the more wisdom they'll receive.

MORE

- With the group, write down five issues that young people want advice on—choosing friends, dating, dealing with anger, doing drugs, and so on. You may want to have them look for Bible verses that deal with these issues. It may be helpful to use a topical Bible or search an on-line Bible for passages. Have them look through Proverbs as well—Solomon was a smart guy. Then discuss these verses and how they apply. What does God have to say about this?
- Q & A time—you may want to use a panel of adult parents or a combination of adults and kids. Have your kids write questions that they want advice on (make sure these aren't signed). Put these in a box and read them one at a time. Then, have the adults give their advice or opinion on the situation. This is a great way for kids to interact with adults and hear perspectives from other people, not just you or their peers.
- Where do people look for advice in today's society? A few examples include advice columns in newspapers and magazines (such as "Dear Abby"), question and answer columns in teen magazines (such as *Teen* or *Seventeen*), radio or TV shows such as Dr. Laura or Oprah, and self-help books. Which of these have your kids gone to for advice? Which sources are most reliable or give the most honest advice? Why or why not? Take some time to talk about these trends in a society that is seeking wisdom.