

LIVIN' IT UP

1. How would you answer this? In my opinion, fun is—

2. How about this? I could have more fun if I changed places with—

3. What do you think—A (agree) or D (disagree)?

- It's fun being a Christian.
- My life is boring.
- Christians have a different kind of fun than non-Christians.
- I need more excitement in my life because I'm a Christian.
- When I'm having fun, I sometimes don't care what might happen to me.
- Christ had fun while he was on earth, so I can too.
- Non-Christian kids don't really have fun—they just think they do.
- Most fun things are either sinful or unhealthy.

4. Rank the activities below from the **most fun (1)** to the **least fun (14)**.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching television |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partying | <input type="checkbox"/> Going to school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trying a new hobby | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing video games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Going on a vacation | <input type="checkbox"/> Working |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dating | <input type="checkbox"/> Being with friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surfing the Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> Being at youth group |

5. Check out the following Bible verses—what you think each has to say about having fun?

Deuteronomy 12:7

John 10:10

Ephesians 5:15-16

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

Mark 8:36



LIVIN' IT UP [h a v i n g f u n]

THIS WEEK

Many young people don't know how to have fun. They're facing so many adult pressures and issues that many youth forget how to play. Others play too much and too hard. Youth have mistaken fun with substance abuse and other unhealthy activities. If someone acts crazy or spontaneous in a healthy way, they think he or she is high or drunk. They need to learn how to have fun creatively and safely. This TalkSheet will help you talk about having fun.

OPEN

This is your chance to make this discussion fun! Choose a few fun games and let the group play them. There are several store bought games like Outburst or Scategories that are great for large groups. You could also check out the Ideas Library books (Youth Specialties)—there are several books of games and crowd-breakers. Or have your kids bring in their favorite music or video (but be sure you screen what is shown or played!). You may also want to have your kids or parents bring in a variety of fun food—pizza, soda, chips, cookies, or ice cream sundaes.

Or you may want to plan a random fun event, such as a scavenger hunt or another activity that you normally wouldn't do at a typical meeting.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. Make a master list of all their definitions of fun—both positive and negative answers. Why did they choose these answers? Keep the list in view in case you want to refer to it.
2. Ask the kids to explain why they chose the person they named. Don't ask for specific names, but ask them why they want to be that person? What does he or she have that they don't have?
3. Read the statements aloud and ask for volunteers to express their opinion. Ask that they explain their answers. For example, some might disagree to the statement it is fun being a Christian.
Some of the statements explore the need for constant excitement. Young people who are always living on the edge are headed for trouble.
Partying has become a major sport. Fun is healthy and good, but destructive fun can be potentially dangerous.
Ask the members of your group why they think so many young people choose to have fun in harmful ways, such as substance abuse.
4. Ask them to share their choices for most fun and least fun. What are healthy ways of having fun? Why

do some teens equate fun with recklessness? Discuss some of these issues with your group.

5. Read the Bible verses outloud and ask the group what the verses say about having fun. Try dividing the kids into smaller groups for this part of the discussion.

THE CLOSE

God does want us to have fun! He isn't a cosmic killjoy—or a corrective parent—sitting up in heaven with a frown on his face. He wants us to enjoy life at its fullest—that's why he created all the things they enjoy. He's the creator of life, he knows what's best for us, and how we can get the most out of life. Read Philippians 4:4 where Paul encourages us to rejoice.

It is possible to have fun without getting into trouble. Your kids will probably encounter many situations as they grow older when they'll face decisions about drugs and alcohol. Emphasize that having fun is not synonymous with getting wasted. Losing control, getting sick, and risking irreversible brain damage is not fun. Encourage your kids to pursue activities without doing anything they'll regret later.

MORE

- Plan a big fun event with your kids during a weekend or school break. This could include a special event, a trip to an amusement park, or an overnight camping trip. Let your budget and your creativity guide you. You may want to have a special fundraiser with your group to raise money for this. Then go and have a rockin' time with your kids!
- Have your kids do some research on fun things to do in the area. This is more difficult if you live in a small town! Have them check out the Internet for information on events or things going on in your area. Or on a whiteboard or poster board, brainstorm together fun activities that they could do. Challenge them to think creatively (not just renting movies), but to think of ways that they can spice up their fun times, even if it is low key.