

EXPLORING THE CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE

by Peggy Frey

PURPOSE

To show there are many alternate lifestyles from which to choose; to show the difference between worldly lifestyles and true discipleship.

PREPARATION

Gather chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and felt-tip markers, paper, pencils and Bibles.

On small pieces of paper, list the following scripture verses: Matthew 16:24-25; 23:13-14; 23:25-28; Mark 7:6-9; Acts 8:3; 10:42-43; 2 Corinthians 13:5-6; Galatians 5:15; Ephesians 6:18-19; James 3:17; 1 Peter 3:3-4.

On 3 x 5 cards, write the tasks and alternate decisions. Gather the materials needed to do each task. Examples of cards are:

Task—Inflate a balloon and sit on it until it breaks.

Alternative—Stand up, turn in a circle and sit down five times.

Task—Get a small object (such as a fork, spoon or piece of chalk) and tie it around your neck for the rest of the meeting.

Alternative—Sit on the floor in the center of the meeting room for the remainder of the meeting.

Task—Get someone in the group to give you any amount of money.

Alternative—You give someone else some money and if you do not have any money with you,

you must borrow some from someone else, promising to repay it.

Task—Borrow a pencil from someone and write one sentence describing your youth leader. Read the sentence to the group and return the pencil.

Alternative—Give the group your full name, address, telephone number, birth date, favorite color and television program.

Task—Get four other people in the group to do 10 jumping jacks.

Alternative—Tell the group three things about yourself, two of which are true and one that is a lie. Have them guess which one is the lie.

Task—Lead the group in a song of your choice.

Alternative—Stand in front of the group and recite your favorite nursery rhyme.

OPENING

Point out that throughout life there are many choices that will determine the kind of lifestyle to be lived. Explain you are going to play Alternate Choices, a game that involves making decisions.

Ask for as many volunteers as you have prepared task cards.

Give each participant one of the cards and explain they have a choice, they can either do what is on the card or they can trade it for an alternative card. If they trade their card, they must do the task

on the alternate card.

Proceed with the game until each participant has had a chance to perform the task. Ask what was difficult about the game. What makes some decisions difficult? Once a decision is made, is it difficult to follow through with the appropriate actions?

THE "MEAT" OF THE MEETING

Distribute papers and pencils and ask each individual to list some things that might turn people off to Christianity or prove to be hypocritical. Give the youth three to five minutes, then ask individuals to share with the group one thing from their list. Write the items on the chalkboard or newsprint under headings such as "Phony Christianity" or "Stumbling Blocks."

Then have the youth list on their individual papers some qualities or characteristics of a Christian or true disciple. Ask individuals to share one of these qualities with the rest of the group. List them on the chalkboard or newsprint under headings such as "True Discipleship" or "Real Christianity."

After you have completed the two lists and gone over them with the group, distribute the Bibles and the slips of paper with the scripture verses and explain you'll be studying about faith. Ask whether the scriptures depict qualities of a phony or true disciple. Which qualities should we display in our lifestyles? Which should we try to avoid?

RESPONSE (OR CLOSING)

Explain the first steps to becoming a true disciple of Jesus are to believe in him and to trust him.

Ask a youth to read John 3:16. Discuss the meaning of this verse. Explain: We can try to be "real Christians" and try to avoid "phoniness," but we are human and we can fail. Don't be discouraged by failures to be a true disciple. The main point to remember is God loves us and sent his son to die for us. All we have to do is believe. The rest falls in place according to his grace.

Close with a group prayer thanking God for giving us guidelines to live by and for his forgiveness when we fail.