

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

by Tammy Spigelmire

PURPOSE

To discuss the feeling of belonging and how this relates to Christ's church.

PREPARATION

Gather several songs of praise (either classical or contemporary), a Bible, 3 x 5 cards and pencils. Study and make copies of the Groupie Guide in the "Meat" of the Meeting section.

OPENING

Open with prayer, then sing several songs of praise.

Explain that this study will delve into the feeling of belonging.

Define the term clique. Are there cliques at school? Are there cliques at church? Do Christian youth mix in well with the "popular" youth at school? Why or why not?

Divide the group in half and label one half the "in-the-clique" group and the other the "out-of-the-clique" group.

Have the youth answer and discuss the appropriate questions for the "out" and "in" groups.

Combine the groups and discuss the answers. As a Christian, do you more often feel "in" than "out"? Are there specific settings where you definitely feel "out" as a professed Christian? If you are a Christian and your friends are not, is there pressure on you not to

Questions for the "Out" Group

1. How do you feel when you are left out? Insecure?
2. Do you find it difficult to share your faith in this situation?
3. How can you let others know you would like to belong?

Questions for the "In" Group

1. How do you feel when you are included in a group? Secure?
2. Do you find it difficult to share your faith under these circumstances?
3. How can you let others know you really care and allow them into the group?

share your faith? Why or why not?

Read Psalm 95. What is the message? Then discuss the lyrics of the praise song from the Opening. Are we to "make a joyful noise" to God all the time or part of the time? How should we feel being a Christian?

THE "MEAT" OF THE MEETING

Give copies of the following questions to each young person.

BELONGING

Groupie Guide

Read Psalm 100 and answer the following questions:

1. What group are you in at school?
 - A. The "in" group.
 - B. The "out" group.
 - C. Don't care.
 - D. Other.
2. How can you be sure?
 - A. My friends tell me.
 - B. People tease me.
 - C. I'm not sure.
 - D. Other.
3. Do you want to change this

situation?

- A. No, I'm happy (explain).
 - B. Yes, I'm unhappy (explain).
4. I feel the "in" group should be ...
 - A. My church friends.
 - B. My school friends.
 - C. There shouldn't be an "in" group.
 - D. Other.
 5. What is the message of Psalm 100?
 6. How does Psalm 100 relate to your life?

Gather in a circle and discuss the Groupie Guide. Ask if Jesus belonged to any earthly groups. Did the disciples have a strong feeling of belonging? Did they ever have doubts and feel "out"? Is anyone denied an "in" with God?

RESPONSE (OR CLOSING)

Hand out 3 x 5 cards and pencils to the participants. Encourage them to write a goal for the upcoming week by completing this sentence: I will make a joyful noise to the Lord by _____.

Examples could include: being more accepting to all people at school, having a more positive outlook about each day, or bringing a friend to the next youth group meeting.

Refer to Psalm 100 and explain this can be used as a guide for group involvement. Have half of the young people read verse one, the other half read verse two, and so on.

Close in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.