

# SO, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

1. How would you complete this? Circle one.  
For me, living as a Christian is—

easy

hard

impossible

2. Is this statement true or false?  
If you don't act like a Christian, then you aren't a Christian.

3. Check which actions below you think a Christian would do—

- Wear the latest style of clothes
- Copy whatever your friends do
- Stand up and defend your beliefs
- Listen to the advice of your parents
- Go to church
- Witness to others by your actions and words
- Care only about people who will care about you
- Get good grades
- Watch whatever is popular on TV
- Say things you think others want to hear
- Listen to God's word by reading the Bible
- Make fun of the weird kids at school

4. Ramiro goes to church every Sunday and is a leader in his youth group. All the adults at church are proud of Ramiro because he's "such a fine Christian young man." When Ramiro goes away to school, however, none of his friends even know he's a Christian, because he acts just like everyone else.

What is your opinion of Ramiro?

5. Which of the following verses warn against hypocrisy?

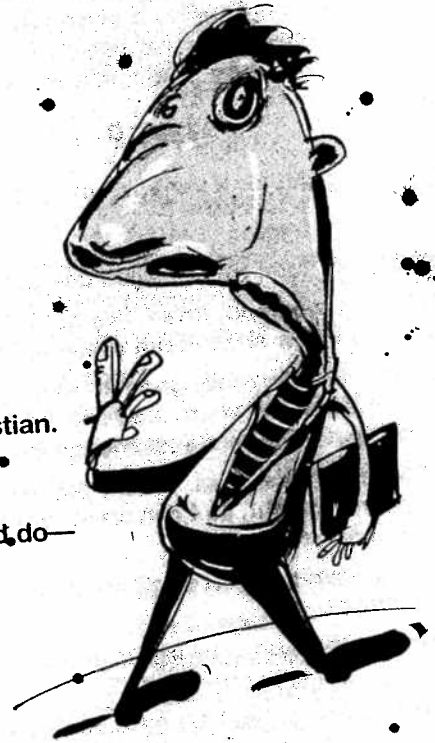
Matthew 6:1

Matthew 7:15

Matthew 11:28

Matthew 23:1-4

Matthew 25:40



# SO, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? [ h y p o c r i s y ]

## THIS WEEK

As kids get older they start to think more reflectively. They begin to observe and analyze how they and others live their lives. Adolescence is an important time for teenagers to develop their own ideals and set of morals. This TalkSheet gives you several options for discussing how your kids form and live out their Christian beliefs and values.

## OPENER

The following skit (or a variation of it) may work as an intro—

**BRIAN:** Hi, Tom! How are you doing?

**TOM:** Not too good, Brian. I've got a big test in math tomorrow and I'm not ready for it.

**BRIAN:** Hey, I'm really good in math. I'll help you study anytime you want. Just say the word, and I'll be there. What are best friends for anyway?

**TOM:** Hey, that's great. I really appreciate that! How about tonight, so I can cram for the test. Say around seven?

**BRIAN:** Ummm, sorry. Can't make it. I'm busy tonight.

**TOM:** Oh. Well, uh, how about tomorrow morning—early, before school?

**BRIAN:** No way, man! My eyes don't focus until after lunch!

**TOM:** Oh. Well, thanks anyway, I guess. See you later.

**BRIAN:** You bet! And good luck on the test.

After the skit, ask your kids what they thought of Brian. Would they like to have Brian as a friend? Why or why not? They'll probably point out that Brian said one thing and did another. This is a good lead-in for a discussion on hypocrisy.

## THE DISCUSSION, BY THE NUMBERS

1. Have the kids share their completed sentences with each other. Discuss the fact that the Christian life isn't easy to live and it never will be. It can real hard sometimes—it's not surprising that Christians blow it most of the time. But that doesn't mean we should stop trying to do live according to our beliefs as Christians.
2. You may want to raise this major theological issue—does salvation come by faith or by good works? Ask for your kids' opinions, but don't let the discussion go too far. Point out that God

loves us for who we are—no one is the perfect Christian. Our goal is to live each day like Christ wants us to, even if we do mess up.

3. Talk about each statement and ask why the kids checked the ones they did. This is a good time to discuss Christian conduct.
4. Ask the kids to share their opinion of Ramiro. Why do they think Ramiro lives two different lives? What are some ways that he can let his friends that he's a Christian? How would they expect Ramiro's life to be different?
5. Ask the kids to look up the verses and read those that deal with hypocrisy. Have them explain the meanings and paraphrase how the verses apply to their lives.

## THE CLOSE

Close the discussion with a challenge to your group members to practice what they preach. Leave room to talk about God's forgiveness. Also, you may want to discuss tolerance—within reason—for other Christians. God doesn't expect others to be perfect and they shouldn't either.

Communicate that it's easy to fake others out and to pretend to be something you're not. But God knows our hearts. He knows us better than we know ourselves—we'll never fool him.

## MORE

- What can each of your kids do during the next week to put their faith into practice? Ask them to write their ideas on a 3x5 card (kind of like a pledge) and give them to you. Then, a week or so later, go through the cards and talk about how they did. What was easy or hard about living their faith? What long-term changes can they shoot for?
- Or you may want to talk with your kids about how tolerant they should be of others behaviors. At what point should they draw the line? Possibly have a role-play situation in which one kid sees another doing something irritating. How are they going to handle the situation? What is hard about confronting fellow Christians about their behavior?
- On a large whiteboard or poster board, draw two columns labeled "Christian" and "Others." Brainstorm with your youths what characteristics or stereotypes there are of Christians and others. Discuss how Christians are portrayed in the media—on TV shows and movies. How can your kids live in the world without making others feel inferior? How would their lives be different if they weren't Christians?