

# THIS MEANS WAR!

1. When you hear people talk about war, how do you react?

I feel—

afraid

worried

angry

sad

bored

unconcerned

excited

patriotic

anxious

other—



2. What's your opinion—true or false?

The world is becoming a more peaceful place.

3. The president of the United States received a brief letter co-written by junior high and middle school students. The president decided to read the letter at a press conference being broadcast over television and radio. He stated the letter represented the views of thousands of kids from across the entire country and contained an important message about war and peace. Write below what you think the letter might have said.

Dear Mr. President,

Sincerely,

4. Agree or disagree—Fill in the blank with **A** if you agree or a **D** if you disagree.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. I believe world peace is possible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Our government spends too much money on military defense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Christians should not fight in a war.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. It is a sin to build a nuclear bomb.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Killing someone during a military battle in wartime is murder.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. I believe there will be another world war.

5. Flip to 1 Peter 3:8-12 in your Bible and rewrite it in your own words.

# THIS MEANS WAR! [ w a r ]

## THIS WEEK

Unfortunately, kids live in a world full of war, and the news of these wars are brought home via television, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. The threat of nuclear war is a real one. Junior high and middle school kids often see war portrayed in movies and on TV. This TalkSheet allows you to talk about this subject from a Christian perspective.

If you or your church takes a strong position on either side of the war and peace issue, you may use this discussion as a way to help your kids understand your view as well as to form one of their own.

## OPENER

Split your group into smaller groups and give each one a situation to discuss. Encourage them to talk about the different options and the risks on all sides. Make a list of their ideas on a whiteboard or poster board.

**Situation 1:** There has been a report that the Chinese government has developed a biological weapon that destroys human flesh. It eats the flesh, killing people in agony—alive. If they were to drop the bomb, it would destroy an entire nation within three days. You are the President of the United States—you are enemies with the Chinese. How will you react after you are informed of this development? What would happen if the bomb leaked or accidentally was launched? What about the innocent people worldwide that could be affected by this?

**Situation 2:** You are a civilian living with your family in a large city in Italy. You've heard that some Turks are planning an attack on your government due to a bitter rivalry that has exploded. You fear for the lives of your children. But you don't have money to flee. Your city will most likely be hit by an air strike within 12 hours. How do you feel? What are you going to tell your children? What about your loved ones and friends in the same city? What do you think of the Turks now?

**Situation 3:** You are a high-ranking U.S. commander aboard a nuclear ship in the Indian Ocean. You've received word that the Russian government has a nuclear warhead aimed at the U.S. and is ready to launch. You must launch the nuclear weapon on your ship within 30 minutes. If you launch, 75 percent of Russia will be destroyed, killing millions of people. You don't know for sure if Russia has launched its weapon yet. If it has, over 50 percent of the United States has been destroyed, possibly wiping out your entire family. Will you launch? What effect could your command have on millions of people?

## THE DISCUSSION, BY THE NUMBERS

1. If responses are slow on this, ask how they would feel in response to specific headlines, such as: "IRAQ THREATENS NUCLEAR ATTACK ON U.S.," Allow enough time for the kids to share their fears about the possibility of a nuclear or biological war.
2. Poll the kids to see how they voted and why.
3. Have several kids read their letters. Then see if they can come up with some concrete, specific ideas about how to prevent war.
4. Let the Agrees and the Disagrees debate. Provide input for them on items they are confused about. Keep in mind some of these issues are not directly addressed in the Bible, so there are many points of view, even among Christians.
5. Ask how these verses relate to war. Does it also relate to family fights? Disagreements with friends? Run-ins with your teammates or coach? Other verses to consider are James 4:1-2.

## THE CLOSE

Communicate to your youth that war is brutal—it shouldn't be taken lightly. Although war is terrible, it is sometimes inevitable to keep world peace and protect our country. War is the price they pay for freedom and justice. As Christians they should support their country, but strive to be peacemakers. They should fight for and promote peace, acceptance, and love.

Don't leave this discussion in a negative light. Communicate that God is still in control of the world—he knows every person in every corner of the world. They don't have to be afraid.

## MORE

- Show a clip of a movie that portrays war. Be sure to preview the clips before you show them. Suggestions include "Saving Private Ryan", "The Hunt for Red October", "Crimson Tide", "The Thin Red Line", or "Courage Under Fire". Why does government spend millions of dollars each year to prepare troops for war? How does that make your group feel? What scares them about war situations?
- Have your kids look in the Bible to find passages or stories of war. What do your kids think God's view of war is? What does your church say about war and peace?