

WHAT, ME WORRY?

1. Mark an X next to the things you worry about.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What others think of me | <input type="checkbox"/> When my friends will have another fight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What grades I get | <input type="checkbox"/> If my parents will stay together |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How I look | <input type="checkbox"/> When I'll be abused again |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Who I'm going to date | <input type="checkbox"/> When my parent will get help with an addiction. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What kind of job I'll have someday | <input type="checkbox"/> How I'm doing in my walk with Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Who really likes me at school | <input type="checkbox"/> What the world will be like when I'm older |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If I'll make the sports team | <input type="checkbox"/> Other— |
| <input type="checkbox"/> When there will be another war | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> When I'll die | |

2. Check which one makes more sense to you.

The more I worry about something—

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> the worse it becomes. | <input type="checkbox"/> the more I realize worry it doesn't change a thing. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the better it becomes. | <input type="checkbox"/> the worse it gets in my mind. |

3. What would you say to a friend who was worried about—

- Mom and Dad getting a divorce?
- failing a class?
- getting dumped by a boyfriend or girlfriend?
- getting a new—but bad—haircut?

4. How can a person get rid of worry?

5. Look up the following verses then summarize them in your own words.

Romans 8:28

Philippians 4:6-7

1 Peter 5:7



WHAT, ME WORRY? [worry]

THIS WEEK

Adolescents have way too much to worry about—their looks, relationships, grades, their future, and more. Today's teenager deals with more stress and tension than ever before. This TalkSheet will help your group talk about their worries and insecurities and how their faith can help them through.

OPENER

Start with a worry-version of the game Pictionary. Have your kids write down some random, funny worries that they deal with or think about. Some possibilities include—having body odor, getting a pimple on the nose, flunking a math test, not knowing how to kiss, not knowing your fly is open, not being able to get to sleep, going to the dentist, or passing gas. Collect them and have volunteers from each team take turns drawing these worries. The rest of the group tries to guess what kind of worry is being drawn and the team with the most points wins.

THE DISCUSSION, BY THE NUMBERS

1. Some of your kids maybe won't want to open up right away, so start them off by talking about some of the things that worried you as a teenager. Use a whiteboard or poster board to write down worries and insecurities that they face at school, home, church, work, wherever.
2. Your kids will find logical answers to these worries. Point out that worrying really doesn't help make a situation better. But sometimes worry is okay—it can motivate them to do things that are good. For example, a student who worries about gaining weight starts a workout program.
3. Have the kids share their advice with the others. You may wish to role-play the situations, with one student acting as the worrier and the other giving advice.
4. Brainstorm some different solutions to worrying. List them on a whiteboard for everyone to see. Define the difference between worry—that doesn't change things—and concern—that motivates change. Communicate that worry is a waste of emotional energy that can be better spend solving a problem or finding a solution.
5. After reading these verses, talk about what God thinks about worrying. Explain that worrying is actually taking situations into our own hands and trying to control our lives. Encourage your kids to give the situations over to God instead of worrying, and to ask for his peace and guidance.

THE CLOSE

The English word worry comes from the German word *wurgen*, meaning "to choke." Worry, in a sense, is mental agony and can weaken the soul.

It's normal and healthy to have worries, but it can be destructive and self-defeating. It's useless to worry about things that you can't control.

Help your kids realize Christians don't have to worry about the past or the future—both are in God's hands. Jesus says repeatedly in Matthew 6:25-34 that we have nothing to worry about. Whether we know it or not, God is taking care of us.

Brainstorm ways that your youths can deal with their worries. Encourage them to talk about their worries with someone else—a friend, a parent, and another respected adult—someone who is willing to listen. Let them know you are available to listen and help.

MORE

- What happens when people get wrapped up in worry? Have your kids list and talk about what worry does to us physically and the outcomes of worry. Address issues like physical stress, anxiety, depression, and what happens when people can't deal with their worries—like suicide and abusing alcohol or drugs. Communicate that worry is more than just a spiritual battle—it's a mental battle, too. What can they do to help themselves deal with their worries?
- Have your kids find examples of things that people their age worry about. They can find examples all over—in teenage magazines, on the Internet, radio, song lyrics, and more. Help them understand that everyone has worries—even famous athletes and celebrities.
- Time for a little Q & A! Ask your group member to write down (anonymously) things they worry about. Pick them out and read them aloud. What advice or encouragement do they have for each other? What suggestions to you or other adults have? Where can they go to get more information?