

WISE UP

1. Who would you go to for advice if you had to make an important decision?

- | | | |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| mother | youth pastor | coach |
| best friend | teacher | my dog |
| pastor | school counselor | fortune teller |
| grandparent | boyfriend | nobody |
| father | girlfriend | Internet |



2. Check the areas where you need to have more wisdom.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My schoolwork | <input type="checkbox"/> My feelings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My friendships | <input type="checkbox"/> My ability to listen to advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My family life | <input type="checkbox"/> My time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My use of money | <input type="checkbox"/> Other— |

3. What three things listed below would help you become a wiser person?

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Reading more books | e. Choosing wiser friends | i. Studying the Bible more often |
| b. Taking more risks | f. Asking more questions | j. Asking God for more wisdom |
| c. Praying more often | g. Thinking before I act | |
| d. Watching more television | h. Going with my feelings | |

4. What if you read this e-mail?

Dear junior high or middle school student,
I'm a mother of three kids—two teenage daughters and one teenage son. Here's my problem—none of them will listen to my advice. They (especially the oldest, my son) think they know it all. I love them and am concerned for their future and want to give them some of my wisdom. I don't want them to make the same mistakes I made or those I've seen others make. What can I do?
—At The End of My Rope

What advice would you give this mother?

5. The following verses talk about wisdom. Check out each verse and match it with the correct statement.

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Proverbs 1:8: It's wise to— | a. control what you say |
| 2. Proverbs 3:5-6: It's wise to— | b. trust in God wholeheartedly |
| 3. Proverbs 4:23: It's wise to— | c. listen to your parents |
| 4. Proverbs 10:19-20: It's wise to— | d. guard your heart |
| 5. Proverbs 12:22: It's wise to— | e. control your temper |
| 6. Proverbs 22:24-25: It's wise to— | f. speak the truth |
| 7. Proverbs 29:11: It's wise to— | g. choose friends carefully |

WISE UP [w i s d o m]

THIS WEEK

Kids hear advice from friends, teachers, parents, and the media—just to name a few sources. Who do they listen to? What will they believe? How are they able to sort out all these ideas and information? This TalkSheet is created to discuss the need for guidance and ends with a discussion on God's Word as the ultimate source of wisdom.

OPENER

Before this activity, you'll need something to write on (a newsprint, poster board, or white board), something to write with, and a few other items—horoscopes, some large dice, a deck of cards, a Magic 8-ball, "cootie-catcher" (ask a junior high girl), advice column clips (check a newspaper or teen magazine), a Bible, and so on. Start by asking your kids to name the problems they face daily and list them on the whiteboard or poster board. (For example, what to eat for breakfast, what to wear, who to eat lunch with, or how to study for a test). Then split your group into smaller groups and give each a few of the problems listed. Their mission is to solve or answer these problems by using a "tool of wisdom"—one of the "other items" you brought with you—as their only way to make a decision or figure out their dilemmas. Then debrief the group on these sources of wisdom and how helpful (or unhelpful) they are.

THE DISCUSSION, BY THE NUMBERS

1. As the group shares their answers, make a list and find out who your group considers the best advice-giver. Why did they pick who they did? What was the most popular choice? Who do they consider to be most trustworthy?
2. Let the kids share the different areas where they need to have more wisdom. You may want to start the discussion by sharing a experience or story from when you were their age.
3. Compare how this question was answered and talk over each item one at a time. Discuss and encourage those that are positive wisdom builders (a,c,e,f,g,i) and ask why the others aren't such good ways to become wise.
4. This letter from a mother deals with a common problem of parents of teenagers—the know-it-all son or daughter. After the kids share their advice, ask them to think about their own parents' point of view. Are they willing to listen to their parents? Why or why not?
5. The focus here is using the Bible as a source of

wisdom for guidance and help. You may want to include a few verses that deal with the future and God being in control. The Proverbs are filled with great tips for being wise and living life.

THE CLOSE

Discuss with your kids how to seek God's wisdom through prayer, Bible study, and the advice from other Christians. Caution the group to be aware of the advice that they get from their friends, the media, and other outside sources—it's easy to hear the wrong message and make the wrong choices. God has given them the ability to discern and evaluate what is going on. And, remind them that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7)—true wisdom comes from God. The more they love God and keep his commandments, the more wisdom they'll receive.

MORE

- With the group, write down five issues that young people want advice on—choosing friends, dating, dealing with anger, doing drugs, and so on. You may want to have them look for Bible verses that deal with these issues. It may be helpful to use a topical Bible or search an on-line Bible for passages. Have them look through Proverbs as well—Solomon was a smart guy. Then discuss these verses and how they apply. What does God have to say about this?
- Q & A time—you may want to use a panel of adult parents or a combination of adults and kids. Have your kids write questions that they want advice on (make sure these aren't signed). Put these in a box and read them one at a time. Then, have the adults give their advice or opinion on the situation. This is a great way for kids to interact with adults and hear perspectives from other people, not just you or their peers.
- Where do people look for advice in today's society? A few examples include advice columns in newspapers and magazines (such as "Dear Abby"), question and answer columns in teen magazines (such as *Teen* or *Seventeen*), radio or TV shows such as Dr. Laura or Oprah, and self-help books. Which of these have your kids gone to for advice? Why or why not? Take some time to talk about these trends in a society that is seeking wisdom.