

SHINE! SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK 1

JANUARY 8, 2012

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL
SHARE YOUR GRACE STORY
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW GOD BETTER, TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT HIM.



MODERN FAMILY THE ART OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

Great relationships are built on GREAT communication! When we think about "communicating," we may only think about talking - but listening is even more important. Today we'll talk about what healthy communication could look like in your family, and how you can be more like Jesus by being "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."

THINGS TO TALK ABOUT...

- * BE QUICK TO LISTEN. READ JAMES 1:19-27 AND JAMES 3:1-12 TOGETHER.
 - Think of a time, in the last few days, when it was difficult to listen to someone. Why was listening to them so hard?
 - Is there a difference between hearing and listening?
 - Who's the best listener you know? What makes that person so good at listening? What do they do to show that they are listening?
 - How do you need to become more "quick to listen" to your family?
- * BE SLOW TO SPEAK.
 - Have you ever damaged a friendship or hurt a family member's feelings because you spoke too quickly or spoke without thinking?
 - Who is someone you'd describe as being "slow to speak"? What does that person do that others don't? How can you learn from them?
 - What might happen in your family if you were slower to speak?
- * BE SLOW TO GET ANGRY.
 - What is one thing (JUST ONE!) that makes you really mad at home?
 - How does anger affect our ability to communicate well with others?
 - How can you reduce the number of times you let yourself get angry?
- * TAKING IT HOME.
 - Is it more common for your family to resolve things peacefully or to get angry and yell? How would you like to improve those patterns of communication in your home?
 - How do our words (especially those we say when we're angry) reveal about our relationship with God?
 - One way to become a better listener is to learn to ask questions. What is one question that you can ask your family members this week to show that you are willing to listen to them?
 - One way to slow down the effects of your anger is to wait before you speak and let yourself calm down. What is one step you can take to remember this idea? Do you think it will help you?

MEMORIZE: Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry (James 1:19).

JANUARY'S FAITH SKILL

#4 SHARE YOUR GRACE STORY

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW GOD BETTER,
TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT HIM.

WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING TO KNOW GOD BETTER, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT EVERY JESUS-FOLLOWER NEEDS TO KNOW. WE CALL THEM **THE 5 FAITH SKILLS**, AND EVERY MONTH IN SHINE! YOUR SMALL GROUP LEADER IS GOING TO HELP YOU BETTER DEVELOP ONE OF THESE SKILLS. WE CAME UP WITH A FEW IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOU GROW IN THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL, BUT YOU CAN COME UP WITH YOUR OWN TOO...

#1 SHARE SOME GOD STORIES AS A SMALL GROUP

When we talk about the idea of "grace stories," remember that, while your story with God may have started when you gave your life to Him, your story's not over yet! Spend some time in small group this month sharing stories about God - how He rescued you, what He's teaching you, what prayers He's answered, and how He might be using you to make a difference.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS: Pick up a discussion starter guide to help your group get their stories going.

#2 LEARN HOW TO WRITE YOUR STORY SO FAR AND THEN SHARE IT WITH SOMEONE

Sometimes it's hard to figure out how to tell others our grace stories. It can be intimidating, especially if you've never before thought about your story or shared it with someone. So to help you get started, we have a short book that you can take home (for free) to help you think through, write out, and share your story.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS: "The 2nd Greatest Story Ever Told" is available at the Small Group Supply Station!

#3 SPEND 3 WEEKS STUDYING WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT SHARING YOUR STORY IN YOUR QUIET TIME

The last thing that Jesus said before He returned to heaven was to tell us, His followers, to go into the world and tell others about Him - to be His representatives. This month, spend some time in God's word learning about this important message from Jesus, and how you can be on mission with God by sharing His story, and your story of His grace, with others.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS: This 3-week reading plan is available at the Small Group Supply Station.