

SALVATION



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

There may be one word that best describes teenagers and the phase they're in right now: ownership. They're looking at the world around them and the things they've inherited from their family—the traditions, morals, values, and faith. And they're making decisions about whether what they've observed is something they want for themselves. The decisions that students make now about salvation and a relationship with Jesus carry a lot of weight because they're old enough to understand what that means for their future. The best thing for a student to understand at this point in their lives is that *God is for them*. And that, in all things, His grace is real, and it covers all of their sin—past, present, and future.

WHAT TO SAY:

GOD LOVES YOU

- You were made in the image of God. God sees you, He accepts you, and He loves you.
- But we're broken. We behave in a way that's harmful to ourselves and separates us from God. That's called sin. Sin convinces us to focus on ourselves—that we matter most and we know best. While God isn't mad at us, He does know our sin will hurt us—it harms how we understand ourselves, how we treat others, and how we view Him.
- Our sin keeps us from seeing what's true about God, ourselves, and others. Sin convinces us that we know best, that God is against us, and that we matter more than those around us. Ultimately, sin keeps us from God Himself.
- **ASK:** How have you seen sin hurt you? How have you seen sin hurt others? What is the biggest problem of sin?

GOD IS FOR YOU

- God knew our sin would make us want to hide from Him and look out only for our best interest with no regard for others.
- God also knew that when we sin, we'd think God would want to come after us to punish us. And that we'd be tempted to distance ourselves from Him to avoid His punishment. But God isn't interested in punishing our sin as revenge. Instead, He wants to free us to live for something better.
- To prove how committed God was to life with us and for us, God sent His Son, Jesus, to go to the greatest length possible to demonstrate His love. Jesus died on the cross for us to show us God is for us. Jesus paid the price of our sin with His death.

- After three days, Jesus was resurrected from the dead, proving He has ultimate power, and that He can do what He says He'll do. And we can know that nothing—not even death—can separate us from Him. When we put our faith in Him, He has the power to transform our lives and to make us new.
- **ASK:** What was the purpose of God sending Jesus to die? How do you feel about someone who is willing to die for you? How did sending Jesus deal with our problem with sin?

WHOEVER BELIEVES IN JESUS

- Believing in what God demonstrated through Jesus is like accepting a gift.
- We accept the gift when we decide to trust that the God who made us is for us—that He is willing to do anything to prove His love and He wants what's best for us. We show trust by living in a way that reflects our confidence in what God says is best.
- We know that God loves us and nothing we do could ever jeopardize our standing with Him. No amount of good behavior and no amount of sin will change the way He feels about us.
- We open the gift when we use our lives to give the same love to others that Jesus showed to us.
- **ASK:** What does it mean to trust what God did for us? How does knowing about God's love change the way we see Him? How does someone live differently when they trust that God loves them?

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

1. "Invite Jesus into your heart."

For students, the phrase "inviting Jesus into my heart" can sound childish and not fully represent the important faith decision being made.

2. "You have to pray like this . . ."

Students are going to express their faith through their own understanding of it. Don't get hung up on the "right words" but rather the heart with which they pray.

3. Any answers you make up

Don't make up answers to questions you don't know yourself. "I don't know" is a legitimate answer to questions that your student has about faith. There's so much we don't understand about how God works and how the Holy Spirit enters our life. And that's okay.

Preparing for and having this conversation with the students in your group might raise some of your own. If so, don't hesitate to reach out to a ministry leader at your church to chat about these things further.