

Questions of Faith for Youth Series I

VHS #2600; DVD #2609

Study Guide

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of this video series is to stimulate thoughtful discussion among youth about issues and faith questions. Twenty-three high-school and college students and young adults from across the country were interviewed on camera. Their comments were edited to create a montage of reflections on each topic.

Their responses are offered not as answers, but as food for thought. You may want, in advance, to get statements of official positions of your denomination or faith or congregation on such subjects as drug and alcohol use and abuse, environment, sex education, AIDS, and other social issues. This guide includes suggestions about Scripture, but you and your group are encouraged to identify other passages you consider helpful as the various issues are discussed.

How This Guide Is Organized

This guide is arranged so that you can copy parts of it for handouts:

- A. For Handing Out Before Viewing
On pages 3-4, the programs are listed with some suggested Bible references
- B. For Handing Out After Viewing
Pages 5-15 contain material to aid discussion. It is strongly suggested that these pages be distributed only after the group has viewed the program in question, so as not to limit viewer reaction. For each program, there is an outline to assist in recalling who said what.
- C. Pages 16-17 contain suggested questions for discussion for all six programs.

A Suggested Procedure for the Sessions

- 1. View the tape all the way through. Discuss.
- 2. Or view the tape twice, stopping the second time for discussion or reflection when the responses show the subject has shifted. Many groups that have used the earlier *Questions of Faith* series say they found taking time for a second viewing to be very helpful. Some groups even spent their next session on a second viewing and further discussion.
- 3. Either way, you may want, after the program has been viewed, to hand out the outline for the program you have just viewed.
 - a. The outline is provided to help keep straight who said what.
 - b. The questions to stimulate reflection or discussion are suggestions only. Use them if they're helpful. People discovered while using the *Questions of Faith* series that they didn't need a half-dozen questions to

stimulate discussion. They also discovered that a very helpful way to begin is simply to ask members to share what struck them most.

A Word about Preparation and Equipment

For a smooth and effective showing, these steps are recommended:

1. Preview each program.
2. Adjust the VCR and the TV set for sharp picture and clear sound in advance.
3. Cue up the tape in advance so the opening titles appear when you turn on the machine.
4. Adjust the room light for comfortable viewing.
5. Rearrange seating for discussion if necessary, and if possible, after viewing. A circle of oval so members can make eye contact is ideal.

THE PROGRAMS

NOTE: These pages may be copied and distributed in advance to help in preparation for viewing.

To get at aspects of the title questions, additional questions were asked. The responses generally reveal which question has been asked. The questions will give you a quick preview of the content of each session.

The Bible references will help in locating passages referred to by participants and other relevant scripture. You may want to read these passages before viewing the program.

WHAT'S GOD LIKE?

What's your idea of God? When do you feel closest to God? What's your idea of Jesus? What's most important about Jesus –his life and teachings or his death and resurrection?

Biblical References: Genesis 1:1-31, 2:1-3;
John 1:1-14; John 3:16-17
Luke 23:29-43
2 Corinthians 5:16-20

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH DRUGS?

Are there drugs and alcohol in your school? How do you decide about using drugs or drinking? How does your faith help you? What if a friend pressures you?

Biblical References: Proverbs 20:01
Luke 21:34
Galatians 5:19-21
1 Corinthians 3:16-17
2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1
Ephesians 5:18

WHAT IS SIN?

What's a sin? Where does evil come from? Do you believe we're born in sin?

Biblical References: Genesis 2:15-25; 3:1-24

WHAT'S A FRIEND?

How do you choose friends? How does a friend act? How do you relate to someone different?

Biblical References: Matthew 19:19
Luke 10:25-37

WHAT ABOUT SEX?

Is there too much emphasis on sex? What do you think God thinks about sex? When is it right to have sex? What about AIDS?

Biblical References: Genesis 1:27-31
1 Corinthians 7:2-5

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO ABOUT THE FUTURE?

What do you think the world will be like in 100 years? What can the church do about the earth's future? If you ran the church, how would you change it?

Biblical References: Genesis 1:1-31, 2:1-3
Psalms 24, 65:5b-13, 104

Suggestions to Aid Discussion

1. View actively (For example, look for conflicting views or note questions that occur to you while viewing).
2. During discussion, the leader need not be alarmed if there are pauses in the discussion. Wait 30 seconds before saying something to stimulate a response.
3. Look for ways to include less talkative group members, but remember that members should be allowed to participate at the level that is comfortable for them.
4. A useful activity might be to list on newsprint all the definitions of God (or "sin" or "friend" or "church", etc.) that occur to group members after viewing. List in members' words and reserve comments until the listing is finished.

WHAT'S GOD LIKE?

(To be handed out after the group has viewed this program.)

OUTLINE

As a discussion aid, listed below are the persons who speak in this program, in order of appearance, with a few key words to assist in recalling their thoughts.

Tobie	...had a more concrete definition of God when I was younger...
Jeff	...it's a work in progress.
Richard	...I don't think there's any color.
Ingrid	...there's a little bit of everything in God.
Nse	...there are so many faces that He or She could have.
Grady	...my image of God is more molded toward the image of me.
Stephanie	...a presence within people.
Ruth Ann	...there's some of God's spirit in everything that has been created.
Phil	...God is also a personal God...
Jennifer C.	...a playmate...
Nse	...now I know that God's there for me at all times...
Mendi	...I think about God as the being who wants the best for the world...
Sam	...I don't think God has a name "God".
Walter	...when I was younger I saw God more as someone I was angry at.
Karen	...there are times in my life when God's not there for me...
Yashica	...at night when I'm lying in bed and I can't sleep...I feel closest to God.
Jeff	...what I would call God is a feeling of wisdom and suffering and pain and connectedness between all that is...
America	...think about God when something good happens...
Daphne	...I hate the fact that he won't talk back.
Karen	...deer walked out... I knew God was listening to me.
Cynthia J.	So, God sent his son, Jesus...

Yashica ...would probably have just been an extraordinary person...

Grady ...as a modern day revolutionary not a guy who is just passive.

Walter Jesus never played by the rules...

Karen ...Jesus' death was just a circumstance.

Kobinah ...the blood in Jesus Christ is what washes away the sins.

Jeff What's not important to me particularly is Jesus's resurrection...

Jennifer C. I think it's a great story of his life and his death...

Tobie ...God really loves us and cares for us.

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH DRUGS?

(To be handed out after the group has viewed this program.)

OUTLINE

As a discussion aid, listed below are the persons who speak in this program, in order of appearance, with a few key words to assist in recalling their thoughts.

- Jennifer M. There are a log of drugs at school.
- Walter ...I was so young and wanted to be liked so much...
- Jennifer C. ...my brother who is two years older than me was heavily involved in drugs...
- Yashica ...when I heard that people I know would be drunk at school, I was just shocked...
- Cynthia J. I've seen people hiding liquor in a thermos at lunch...
- Stephanie It's not obvious to me, you know, if people are doing them or aren't...
- Walter ...disappointed he couldn't tell me...
- Sam ...most of my friends do drugs.
- Jeff ...one in Western Hemisphere least qualified...
- Alyssa I used to do a lot of things I shouldn't have done...
- Sam ...The thing I worry about...when they smoke cigarettes a lot.
- America He said,... "because it's there."
- Jeff ...drugs have consequences, too...that sometimes spin out of control.
- Nse ...people, unfortunately are turned on to drugs because of their parents.
- Alyssa I didn't have to be pressured. Most of the time it was my idea.
- Karen Drugs don't...tell you who you are.
- Cynthia J. People say that alcohol makes you act like who you really are.
- Sam All drugs do is make you feel different.
- Tobie ...but I think they're always gonna be there.
- Krista ...cannot legislate morality.
- Stephanie ...personally I'm scared, you know, to actually get drunk and be out of control.

Walter ...I don't like to be out of control of my body ever.

Karen People are becoming more aware of what drugs can do to your body.

Mendi ...I really am careful about what I put in my body...

Jennifer M. One of my friends wanted me to smoke pot.

Yashica ...I've been out with friends who have gotten drunk and I've had to take care of them.

America I feel that it's something that I would have to pay for physically.

Jordan ...I feel like I'm having a nervous breakdown...

WHAT IS SIN?

(To be handed out after the group has viewed this program.)

OUTLINE

As a discussion aid, listed below are the persons who speak in this program, in order of appearance, with a few key words to assist in recalling their thoughts.

Stephanie	...we're expected to mess up...
America	I think babies are pure.
Grady	I have a tendency to be good and a tendency to be bad.
Karen	I believe that everyone starts good.
Jeff	Sins is a word that doesn't hold a lot of meaning to me.
Tobie	I think it is evil to not do something when you have a compulsion to do good.
Mendi	...if you're in tune with the messages God sends you, and ...ignore them, that's sin.
Sam	I consider sin to be an indifference...
Daphne	I think there are degrees of sin.
Walter	I don't think there's a top ten list like people say in the Bible...
Sam	I don't expect people who've been through negative experience...to react positively.
Grady	I think that people don't want to hear good things.
Yashica	...sin is when you want to do harm to someone else....
America	...He gave us free will...
Nse	...there is some kind of opposing force to God...
Kobinah	Satan is real. He is a real person.
Krista	I don't think Satan is the red devil with the horns and pitch fork...
Yashica	...God doesn't make anything that's not good.
Mendi	I try not to think about evil too much.
Phil	Being good is living in a right relationship with God...

Sam I think greed is the root of all evil.

Ingrid I think materialistic things have gone too far, you know, in the world.

Jennifer C. I think people who have very low self esteem tend to need to sin.

Jeff ...I was concerned about why bad things happened to people I like.

Jordan ...I went through a time when I hated God.

Phil ...I've just wondered if AIDS is just one of his ways of condemning us for our sin.

Walter I've had friends die of AIDS and AIDS is very much a major factor in my life.

Jordan Love always wins.

WHAT'S A FRIEND?

(To be handed out after the group has viewed this program.)

OUTLINE

As a discussion aid, listed below are the persons who speak in this program, in order of appearance, with a few key words to assist in recalling their thoughts.

Jordan	Growing up is not an easy thing and you can't do it alone.
Sam	...is like your brother or your sister, really, really close to you.
Mendi	...I needed one friend to say "I'm sorry this is happening to you."
Stephanie	...people that are different from me really strike me as interesting.
Nse	I cannot stand fake people.
America	...if I feel that this person is not being honest with me...
Karen	I went through a time in my life where I wasn't sure who my friends were.
Alyssa	I wouldn't call it choosing them. I would say just getting to know a person.
Mendi	...didn't like to do the same kind of things I didn't like to do.
Walter	I have more trouble dealing with people who look more like me than people who are different...
Karen	...find out what the other side of the fence is like...
Jennifer C.	I have worked in Appalachia...inner city Chicago...
Tobie	Who am I to say that my background and my views are better than theirs, you know?
Stephanie	...feel really sheltered...in an all girl school...
America	...at first I feel very sheltered...
Sam	...I grew up a minority...So, I'm able to deal with that.
Tobie	...all teenagers...financially cramped...
Stephanie	...it's almost just luck where we're born...
Yashica	I try to treat everyone with the respect I would like to be afforded...

- Cynthia J. ...I recognized the [homosexual] person as an individual and as a person being very human, just like me.
- Tobie ...people have a lot more trouble accepting a homosexual than accepting a lefty.
- Krista I try to treat other people the same way I would want to be treated.
- Phil ...I am not willing to compromise my faith.
- Yashica ...sometimes I feel the need to say, “well, you know, you need to rethink this,”...
- Cynthia A. It seems we’re taking some steps backward as far as racial relationships...
- Sam ...the racism is so covert...it’s worked into the system.
- Jordan Look at the people one person at a time.
- Richard ...I have my great ideas and if we bring’em together we’ll probably have one awesome really great idea.

WHAT ABOUT SEX?

(To be handed out after the group has viewed this program.)

OUTLINE

As a discussion aid, listed below are the persons who speak in this program, in order of appearance, with a few key words to assist in recalling their thoughts.

- Phil ...toughest part of being a youth today is facing the temptation of sex...
- America ...sex is everywhere.
- Walter ...there's too much emphasis on sex on both sides...
- Jordan ...most over-rated activity in the society.
- Jeff ...women were, at least in the eyes of this exhibitor, no different than the car.
- Yashica Rape is very prevalent...
- Jennifer C. Date rape...I think it happens all the time...
- Daphne ...six closest friends...one will be date raped...
- Nse I'm not sure if it's ever been handled the way God expected it to be ever.
- Jennifer M. ...a lot of no-commitment, one-night stands.
- Tobie ...sex serves to confuse relationships...
- Karen ..if it were evil, we wouldn't have been created to be able to have sex...
- Grady ...I don't think God would want sex to be as abusive as it is right now.
- Nse ...most of the people who have had sex just are so unhappy...
- Jennifer M. ...he said, "I'm a virgin..."
- Stephanie ...I need to make up my mind myself...
- Krista ...need to pre-think situations like that...
- Yashica ...it's a double standard.
- Nse They're just in there for the sex.
- Karen ...something that two loving, caring people should share...
- Jordan ...I hate the term "making love," because you can't make love.

Phil ...God sent sex as a gift for marriage...

Karen ...when you feel like you are at one with them.

Cynthia J. ...I'm not ready for the responsibilities...

Walter ...people who get married don't do it for life anymore.

Jeff ...sex has consequences...

Yashica ...parents' big consequence...pregnancy...

Mendi ...don't think people are talking about sex or no sex.

Stephanie ...awful to have the guy think its no big deal...

America ...anybody could have AIDS.

Cynthia J. ...people who preach safe sex, kind of overlook the option of abstinence.

Mendi I'm careful about what I put in my body and that's including other people.

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO ABOUT THE FUTURE?

(To be handed out after the group has viewed this program.)

OUTLINE

As a discussion aid, listed below are the persons who speak in this program, in order of appearance, with a few key words to assist in recalling their thoughts.

- Pam I'd like to have an optimistic point of view.
- Phil ...see countries turned around for God.
- Nse ...deal with abortion problem in a more peaceful sense...
- Jennifer C. I'd like to see people in recovery...
- Mendi ...the earth is gonna be here. It's the people who are gonna suffer.
- Stephanie I think we're gonna keep I guess, messing up the earth.
- Jennifer M. ...starting to get more Earth conscious...
- Yashica It bothers me that the U.S. is so geared toward thinking that we are O.K....
- Mendi ...we're gonna have to not be as greedy...
- Ruth Ann ...taught to look at the 7th generation.
- Yashica ...I really believe the church isn't doing the job that it needs to be doing.
- Jeff ...we have to do something about the stink inside.
- Sam The number one priority is the people who need help.
- Jennifer C. ...what we are called to do here is to be like Jesus...
- Jeff ...the church was a machine that produced just enough oil to keep itself going...
- Mendi ...just ask them what they need.
- Walter ...get rid of the idea that there are people who deserve to be in church and those who don't.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What's God Like?

1. What comment touched you most deeply?
2. How has your idea of God changed since you were a child?
3. What do you think is the most important thing about Jesus?
4. How many images of God can you identify from the program? (Such as "creator," "judge," "playmate," etc.)
5. What images of God do you find most appealing? Least appealing?
6. Do you agree that Jesus died for our salvation? What does that mean to you?

How Do You Deal With Drugs?

1. What comment touched you most deeply?
2. With whose experience do you identify most closely?
3. How do you decide about drinking or drugs?
4. How do you deal with pressure to drink or use drugs?
5. Do you think some drugs should be legalized? Which ones and why?
6. Should the legal age limit for drinking be changed?
7. Are drugs or alcohol a problem for people you know?
8. What is your basic reason for using or not using drugs or alcohol? What does your faith tell you?
9. What is your church's position on drugs? on alcohol? Do you agree?

What Is Sin?

1. What comment touched you most deeply?
2. Do you think some sins are worse than others?
3. Are we born in sin?
4. Are sin and evil the same thing?
5. Did God set out to create sinful people and a world with evil in it or did something go wrong?
6. How free are you to do good? Do you always know what's right? When you do know, are you always able to do it?

What About Sex?

1. What comment touched you most deeply?
2. Do you think there is too much emphasis on sex? In what ways?
3. Is our society "scared to death" of sex?
4. Where do you look for guidance about living faithfully as a sexual being?
5. Is sex education in schools a good thing?
6. If your best friend asked you for advice about having sex, what would you say?

What's a Friend?

1. What comment touched you most deeply?
2. Talk about times when it is hard to be a friend.
3. When do you most need a friend?
4. Do you choose your friends; or do you just get to know people?

5. What differences are hard for you to accept?
6. What do you think Jesus thought about people who were different?

What Can the Church Do About the Future?

1. What comment touched you most deeply?
2. What is main business of the church?
3. Are sinners welcome in our congregation?
4. Are we doing all we can as individuals to preserve the environment? What is our church doing?
5. In what way is our congregation working for social justice? How are we as individuals working for justice?