

## **Let's Get Personal...Our Thoughts and Beliefs about God**

NFTY-CAR Winter Kallah 2005

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### **Goals**

- To define holiness through our visions of God
- To reconcile the existence of God and evil
- To engage in holiness
- To allow all PPs to evaluate their views on God and what role they want God to play in their lives

### **Objectives**

- PPs will develop their individual views and opinions of God
- PPs will go "shopping" for opinions of God
- PPs will discuss problems with God and work out difficulties
- PPs will take home reminders of what their views and opinions of God are
- To give PPs an idea of the different views on the "Role of God"
- To use group discussions as a way for PPs to interact with each other and get a better sense of God in their lives

### **Materials**

Sports Center

God Booklet (one per PP)

Writing utensils for each PP

Poster Board with all of the God Shopping Opinions on them

Masking tape (to hold the embroidery thread while making the bracelets)

Blank computer paper (1 half sheet per person)

Markers

Pre-Cut Embroidery Thread (3 strands per person)

Bell beads (enough for a few per person)

2 Tin Buckets

Matches/Lighters

### **Timeline**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 0:00 – 0:05 | Introduction                                    |
| 0:05 – 0:15 | God Shopping                                    |
| 0:15 – 0:20 | Break up into Groups                            |
| 0:20 – 0:35 | Group Discussion                                |
| 0:35 – 0:42 | Come back as big group and introduce Trust Walk |
| 0:42 – 0:55 | Trust Walk                                      |
| 0:55 – 0:57 | Go Back with Initial Groups                     |
| 0:57 – 1:10 | Venting and Positive Art Activity               |

1:10 – 1:15 Conclusion

**Procedure:**

**0:00-0:05- Introduction**

As the PPs walk in the door they will be handed a "God Booklet" and a writing utensil. They will be asked to be silent as they enter and sit in the middle of the room, but not to look at any of the posters that surround them. The group leader will then get up in front of them and explain to them that all around the room are different views and opinions of God. The PPs will be told that they will have 10 minutes to walk around the room and write down the views and opinions that they agree with. They can write down as many as they want.

**0:05- 0:15- God Shopping**

The PPs will walk around the room and write down views and opinions down on their "God Booklet" that they agree with. The group leaders and board members will be walking around the room making sure that the PPs stay on task. A three minute warning will be given to the PPs. If it seems that the PPs are finishing long before the 10 minutes are up, end the shopping time early and have a longer group discussion. (See Attached Page for God Shopping Attributes)

**0:15- 0:20- Break Up Into Groups**

The PPs will be broken up into groups based on numbers or symbols that are on their name tags.

**0:20- 0:35- Group Discussion**

The PPs will discuss their views and opinions about God and the God Shopping that they did. They will talk about how their views differ and are the same. The discussion should start by going around the circle and having each person briefly explain two or three of the views that they chose and have them explain why they chose it. The group leaders need to explain to their groups that everyone has their own opinions about God and that everyone has the right to hold their own opinions about God.

**Discussion Questions:**

Do you think that these quotes adequately describe different views of God?

Do you feel that most of the quotes held some truth to them?

How much do you think God has control over?

What do you think the stereotypical idea of God is?

How do you yourself imagine God?

Do you think that there is more than one way to believe in God?

When do you feel close to God?

When do you pray to God?

How do you pray to God?

What do you thank God for?

How do you know that God is listening?

Do you talk to God when you are not praying?

Do you think that God plays an active role in your life?

Do you believe that there is a little piece of God in everyone?

Do you believe that God created the world?

Does God protect people?  
Is God responsible for all that happens in the world?

**0:35- 0: 42- Come Back Together as a Big Group and Introduce the Trust Walk**

The PPs will be told to come back together into the middle of the room. A group leader will tell them that they will be participating in a blind faith trust walk to simulate the blind faith that the Jews must have. They will ask everyone to stand up and get in a single line along all of the sports center, and place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. The group leader should emphasize that this should be done in absolute silence and that the PPs need to remain silent throughout the entire walk. When instructed to start the line will progress forward being led by advisors. There should be an advisor at the beginning, middle, and end.

**0:42- 0:55- Trust Walk**

The PPs will walk around the perimeter of the sports center being led by advisors. Group leaders will be spread out along all four walls reading their quotes. They will repeat their quotes until the end of the trust walk. The PPs should remain silent in order to be able to hear all of the quotes. They will progress around the room until they have made a complete circle. At that point everyone will come back into the center of the room. The people reading the quotes should be placed around the perimeter of the room. The quotes can be read by more than one person if needed.

**Quotes:**

In 2000, more than 6,500 young people aged 15 to 24 became infected with HIV every day – that is, about five every minute.  
How does God choose?

It is estimated that some 800 million people in the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition, about 100 times as many as those who actually die from it each year.  
When will it stop?

At Auschwitz-Birkenau some 2,000,000 Jews were killed.  
Starvation, disease, gas chambers, the crematorium  
Who will stop the violence?  
Who creates the hate?

Every 2 minutes a woman is raped in the U.S. 72 of every 100,000 women are raped in the U.S. each year.  
How does God Choose?

It is estimated that 98,000-181,000 people have died since March 2003 in the conflict-affected area of Darfur and eastern Chad.  
Will it ever end?

An estimated 100,000 Iraqi Civilians have been killed since the United States invaded Iraq.  
Why does God let bad things happen to innocent people?

Approximately 2,752 people were killed on September 11, 2001.  
When will the violence end?

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24.  
Why does God not stop it?

#### **0:55 – 0:57- Break Up into Small Groups**

The PPs will be told to go back to the same group that they were with at the beginning of the program. They should be divided up by a number or symbol on their name tag. Have a group leader quickly read which group leader was with which symbol so that the PPs will have a reminder of where they are supposed to go.

#### **0:57- 1:10- Venting and Positive Art Activity**

The PPs will each be given a sheet of paper and a writing utensil. They will be told to write down their biggest anger with God. The Group Leader should tell them to think about the quotes that they just heard and have them write what makes them most angry about God. (EX: My biggest anger with God is that God can see everything that is happening around us and yet God does nothing to stop it). The Group Leader will tell the PPs to hold on to their sheet of paper until the very end of the program. They will then tell the PPs that they are going to make a physical reminder of how everyone is holy. The PPs will make braided bracelets with bells attached to remind us that we are instruments of God in creating holiness. This activity will serve as an informal forum for discussion about our partnership with God in creating holiness and striving to be holy.

#### **1:10- 1:15- Conclusion**

The Group Leader will explain that this entire weekend is about God, and how we view God. They should also explain that it is ok for everyone to have their own opinions about God, and that there is never a correct opinion when it comes to the belief in God. The Group Leader should also explain that the "God Booklets" that they made at the beginning of the program are theirs to keep and that they should bring them to other programs during the rest of the event so that the PPs can write down any other views of God that they might have/realize. They can also write down if their idea of God changes over the course of the event. The Group Leader will then explain that as the PPS walk out of the sports center there will be two tin buckets. The PPs should place their papers with their angers about God in the tin buckets. As they leave these will be lit on fire to signify the separation between Good and Bad, and also between this program and the next.

## God Shopping Attributes

### *Jiminy Cricket*

1. God is my conscience.
2. God is inside of everyone.
3. God talks to me, punishes bad people.
4. God lets me know what is right and wrong.
5. God helps me to be just.

### *The Force*

1. God is everywhere.
2. The beauty of nature represents God.
3. The patterns in the world are evidence of God.
4. God does not deal with me personally, fulfilling an agreement.
5. God is in all scientific truths.
6. God is order, times of trouble.

### *Watchmaker*

1. God created the world.
2. God is not involved in our lives.
3. God allows bad things to happen to good people.
4. God is there, but God is silent.

### *Author of Life & Death*

1. God is responsible for all that happens in the world.
2. Reward and punishment are given out in the afterlife.
3. God has reasons for doing things that we will never understand.
4. I cannot argue with God.

### *Ruler of the Universe*

1. God plays an active role in our lives.
2. God protects and cares.
3. God rewards good people and
4. God hears my prayers.
5. God works miracles.
6. God gives order.
7. God is just.
8. God holds us up in times of trouble.

### *Partner in Creation*

1. God gave human beings free will.
2. We are made in the image of God.
3. God recreates the world continually.
4. I am God's partner; we are both
5. I can argue with God.
6. God helps us to hold ourselves up in

### *Goodness, Love, Dreams, Ideals*

1. God represents potential.
2. God is a role model for perfection.
3. God acts through me.
4. God is the best I can possibly be.
5. God is our dream for a united humanity.

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