



November 9, 2011

CONFLICT- Conflict with Authority

Leader Notes

We live in a society that is chock full of conflict. Our students face it in almost every aspect of their days. In our quest to help our students become 'thinkers' we are going to seek out God's truth on the topic, and give them tools to help navigate the ins and outs of the various forms of conflict they are probably facing as they sit before you during your time together on Wednesday night.

Listen well, don't undermine parents, friends, authority, or God- and try and walk in their shoes!

Opening Prayer

Make sure you take time each week to open in prayer.

It sets a precedent for your students to expect, and invites the Holy Spirit into the presence of your group. Feel free to use this area to write down notes, or things you want to be sure to hit in your prayer as you open your time together.

KICKER

Think about the best teacher you have EVER had. (Besides me of course). Think about what made that teacher so good.

Think about the best boss you ever had, if you have had a job. What made that boss effective? Think about it.

Now I want you to get a clear picture of the worst boss/ teacher/ coach you have ever had. What did they do that was so bad?

Instead of talking about it, I want you to show it. I dont want you to name names, just show them to us. Let's see some examples...

Leader: Students don't need to do full on imitations, and they don't have to if they don't want to. Press them to give specific examples. Consider your own comfort level with mockery- yes, you are encouraging your students to show disrespect in a way, but that's the point of this lesson, turning that around into a healthier attitude.

How does it make you feel when you have a boss/ teacher/ coach like that?

How do you usually respond?

Kicker Notes:

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DISCUSSION

What stood out to you in the final interview with Alex and Brett Harris? What are they trying to do? (Countering the idea that American teens are irresponsible and apathetic. They're challenging teens to make a difference)

Yeah, but isn't it more fun to be "immature, irresponsible, and rebellious? What's the "hard thing" about NOT acting this way?

Earlier in the video Cameron said, "They say that you should respect authority but I feel like authority should gain my respect."

Should we respect authority figures because they're right or merely because they have authority? (In an ideal world every person of authority would handle their position in a way that would cause us to trust them, but people are imperfect)

Have you ever been surprised by a leader- someone you didn't respect at first, but later they turned out to be pretty nice?

Do you remember Beth's tough situation with a teacher? Do you think teachers and coaches have some purpose in being like that, or are they just being egotistical?

What can you say when a teacher or coach is just impossible to please? What approach do you usually take?

Beth had an interesting problem. When she tried to apologize, the teacher thought she was being sarcastic. Has that ever happened to you?

Doug said something about catching more flies with honey than with vinegar. What did he mean by that?
(A sweet attitude will be more effective than a sour one)
Do you agree? Why or why not?

Ricco had some bad interactions with police. Have you had any interactions with police? How did they go? Do you think Ricco kind of likes the fact that the cops are giving him a hard time? Is there something "cool" about having the cops against you?

In your sphere of influence, is it cool to be the "bad boy/girl?" What is it about being bad that is attractive to some people?

Discussion Notes:

BIBLE

Use this week's CRUNCH handout as your Bible study. Here's a few thoughts...

Here we have three scriptures that say similar things. But I want to give you some background.

Peter and Paul and Timothy lived in the Roman empire. That meant there was a hierarchy of leaders, with the emperor at the head of the government and various governors leading local regions. These rulers were generally worshippers of the traditional Roman gods; they weren't Christians at all. In fact, the Roman government was beginning to be wary of Christians.

The emperor at the time when all these texts were written was Nero, who was a little wacko. The first big Roman persecution didn't start until the year 64 AD. The book of Romans was written well before that time, and maybe Paul hoped that God would use Nero to do good things. But the other 2 scriptures- 1 Timothy and 1 Peter- were written just around the time when Nero was launching a brutal persecution against Christians, arresting them and crucifying many.

With that in mind, take a look at these scriptures. Jot down any thoughts you have as you read them, and then see if you can fill in the blanks of the SO WHAT portion.

Are there particular teachers, coaches, bosses, leaders, directors, police, etc that you need to commit to? You could put the same names several times or several different names.

CRUNCH

Leader Divide your group in half. *(If your groups is tired of breaking up, this could be handed out individually, with students reading scripture on their own.)*
Distribute the “Your serve” handout.

Give your students 6-8 minutes to work through the scripture, then gather them and hear their thoughts on each passage. Here are some comments you could add.

Text A: Romans 3:1-7

Here we find the idea that God establishes the authorities for our benefit. Paul assumes that an orderly society is good for everyone, so even rulers who don't believe in God can rule as God's agents. Note vs. 5, that its not just about avoiding punishment but doing the right thing. Verse 6 tells us that taxes are legitimate– something you will want to remember for the future...

What specific ways of honoring did you list in this commitment? Anything you would like to share?

Text B: 1 Timothy 2:1-2

You might imagine that persecution has just begun, or its brewing, and Paul is telling Timothy to lie low, to live a ‘peaceful and quiet’ life, not to make waves. Pray that the leaders will do the same thing– and leave the Christians alone. Still, it's remarkable that the tone is gracious, supportive even. Even when things aren't going well for the Christians, we need to pray for the authorities. Note that the prayers include “thanksgiving.”

Do you think there's a difference between requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving? How do they differ?

What specifically will you be praying for as you remember your leaders?

Text C: 1 Peter 2:13-15

Elsewhere (Colossians 3:23, etc) we find the idea that we serve earthly masters in order to serve the Lord. Here it's “for the Lord's sake: that we submit to authorities. Again we read that these rulers are God's agents. The “Ignorant talk” probably involves the notion that Christians are traitors, disloyal to the government. By being good citizens they could prove that wrong.

(That's interesting to think about in a time when people accuse Christians of being judgmental, proud, and hypocritical. Could this be a way to diffuse that notion?)

What did you write down that makes it difficult to honor your leaders?

SO WHAT

In closing today, I want to read these commitments out loud, and I'll leave a pause where the blanks are. Read silently along with me and think about the blanks that you filled in. Let's make this as genuine as possible, not just a class exercise, but a real commitment to God.

Commitment A:

Based on scripture, I should honor _____ because I believe that God has put this person in the position of _____ to have some authority over me, which would ultimately be for my benefit. I believe that I owe this person _____ and I will give it.
Here's what I will do differently in my relationship with this person of authority.

Commitment B:

Based on scripture, I will pray regularly for _____ and _____ because of their positions of authority over me.
Specifically, I will pray for _____ and I will pray for God's help in being a good _____

Commitment C:

I will honor the Lord by submitting to _____ as my _____, believing that God has put this person in this position to help lead me. Here are some things that make it difficult to do so:

I pray for God's power to overcome these obstacles and help me submit properly.

So What Notes: