



Accountability.

It is something that we all need and yet sometimes we have given this important part of Christian community a bad name.

So, what is accountability and why is it important for the students we serve?

We were created for community. The race of faith was never meant to be one that run alone.

Let me ask you a tough question before you teach this lesson: Who makes up your strand of 3? Who holds you accountable?

Do you think that you are above that or don't have time? You are wading in dangerous waters. None of us are immune to the dangers that happen in lone waters.

So, before you even begin to teach this lesson, take a long look at who you could ask to stand with you and hold you accountable. This doesn't mean that you have to meet together with them for hours on end or gripe to each other about all that you aren't doing.

Find those friends, whether near or far, who know you best. Those friends who have the courage to call you out when you need it and hold your hand when you need prayer.

We all need support.

We all need to hear the truth and we all desperately need to know that there are those who are holding us in prayer and encourage us.

Use this lesson to remind students that we were never meant to live our faith out alone: we need each other.

YOUTH GROUP LESSON ON ACCOUNTABILITY

Written by: Tiffany Hollums

Bible: Ecclesiastes 4:12

Bottom Line: We need each other.

SUPPLIES

- 5 feet of Rope tied in a circle (enough for each group of 3 to have a circle)
- String, which by itself will break easily, but when braided with 3 will not break (use this for a teaching object lesson)
- Wristbands (like what you get at a concert)
- Pens

OPENING GAME: THREE TO THREE

Have the students get in groups of three and give each group a rope tied together in a circle.

Say: Today, we are running a race... sounds simple enough, right? Nope.

Each group of three has a rope.

Right now place the rope in a circle on the ground, have the three people in your group stand inside the circle, grab the rope and bring it waist high on each of you.

You might have to spread out to keep the rope from falling and that is the point of this whole game: to keep your rope up around each of you at all times, which means you will have to work together.

But this rule will make this game even more challenging: you cannot touch the rope with your hands.

Have the teams line up, choose where they have to run to (preferably a pretty good distance away), and then run back to the starting line.

If you drop your rope or one of the people on your team uses their hands - Start over!

TEACH

Share a funny story about you and a good friend (or friends) which illustrates how important it is to have good friends.

If you have embarrassing photos that will help to make this funny and a great way for the youth to heckle you the next few weeks!

We all need friends.

Not 'frenemies' or the kind of friends who talk about you when you aren't around, but real true friends.

How can you tell if someone is a true friend?

Write down what the youth say and go back to these traits as you continue the lesson.

But sometimes really good friends, you know the kind who will tell you when you have a giant hole in the back of your pants or a piece of broccoli in your teeth, can be tough to find.

If you have these kind of friends, be thankful because most of us know that true and real friendship is a rare thing.

Look around this room.

I have a challenge to share with you.

Around this room are people who have your back.

And if we don't, then we need to start today agreeing and committing to be each other's 'people'.

The Bible describes this kind of friendship using a really cool image.

Read Ecclesiastes 4: 12.

I need 3 volunteers.

How strong are you?

Give one volunteer a string and challenge them to break it.

Now, let's have each of you take your strings and weave them together.

You could even get really creative and have them braid them, but don't take forever.

Now, ask for one of them to try to break the three-corded string.

Hopefully, it doesn't break for the illustration!

What do you think the point of this scripture is?

Give them a chance to really share their thoughts.

We are stronger together.

A fancy word for this is 'Accountability'.

We need to have friends who love us, but will also be honest with us when we need to hear a hard truth.

Being a friend and always nodding and smiling and agreeing isn't really being a friend.

The test of a true friend is whether they will tell you when you are wrong.

Maybe you have been a real jerk this week and being awful to the people around you - a real friend will pull you aside and say 'Hey, is everything ok? I'm worried about you. You are kinda being a jerk'.

Holding each other accountable doesn't mean that you take cheap shots or tell each other every single time you do something wrong.

Holding someone accountable begins with loving them and truly caring for them; wanting them to be a better person and expecting the same from them when you are struggling.

What are some ways that you can hold each other accountable?

Get in your group of three from earlier and come up with 3 examples of how friends could hold each other accountable and then choose one to share with the group.

You could even get super creative and act it out for us.

Give each group a chance to share.

Maybe you are starting to hang out with friends who make poor decisions, a true friend would tell you the truth and challenge you.

Maybe your friend has started using really bad language around certain people - how could you hold them accountable?

You see a friend from youth group share a pic on Snapchat that isn't who you really know that they should be: how do you hold them accountable?

Now here is what accountability is not - It isn't getting together with others and sharing with them how you saw someone screw up.

That's just gossip.

Accountability is going directly to the person and caring for them.

Before we go into our small groups I have a challenge for you all to take on this week.

Give each youth a wristband and sharpie.

Take a minute in your groups to ask how you can pray for one another because accountability really can start here.

Share how you might struggle this week and you can make it something like you procrastinate for schoolwork and you need a friend, during the week, to ask how it's going.

Maybe it is more serious and you have something you struggle with that they need to pray for you during the week.

Be as specific as you want, but commit to keep everything private within that circle.

Then, write down each person in your groups' name on your wristband and put it on your wrist as a reminder to stand together with them throughout the week.

Give the groups time to share and then end with a group prayer.

Close in prayer.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can we pray for you and help you stand strong this week?
2. What struggles are you facing? What temptations are you fighting? (They can share 'unspoken' if they don't want to get specific). *As each person shares, write their name on your wristband to remember to pray for them.*
3. Why is accountability important?
4. Are there 2 or more other people who you could ask to help hold you accountable?