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S E S S I O N 1

Are You Sure?

OVERVIEW

- Key Concept* Spiritual growth can begin when we are confident that God has received us as His children.
- Memory Verse* 1 John 5:11
- Goals* *Individual Growth:* To confirm and thank God for salvation made possible through Jesus Christ.
- Group Life:* To accept and affirm one another as important members of the group.

BEFORE THE MEETING

1. Pray for each group member by name and ask God to give you wisdom in guiding each one into a life of committed discipleship.
2. In *Following Jesus*, do Session 1, writing your personal answers to each question. In the margins jot down other observations you may want to share or discuss with the group.
3. Memorize 1 John 5:11.
4. Contact each person who attended last week's session. Answer his questions and remind him of the meeting time and place. If for some reason he has decided not to join this Discipleship Group, assure him of your continued love for him and the hope that he will be able to join a future group.
5. Make a list of the names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of all the group members (from the 3" x 5" cards filled out last week). Make a copy of the list for each person.
6. Gather materials for the meeting:
 - Bible
 - *Following Jesus*
 - List of group members' names, addresses, and e-mail addresses
 - Memory verses

THE MEETING



BUILDING THE GROUP (20 minutes)

Greet each person. Make him feel at home. Welcome him as an important part of this Discipleship Group. Have everyone turn to the "Personal Commitment" sheet (page 11, *Following Jesus*). Read it together. Ask anyone who hasn't already done so to sign his sheet. (Be sure to sign yours too!) Then, as a symbol of mutual commitment and support, have everyone sign everyone else's commitment sheet.

Ask each person to say one word that describes how he feels about committing himself to the Discipleship Group for ten weeks (fear, excitement, uncertainty, etc.). Briefly discuss how any negative emotions can be overcome. Ask volunteers to offer short prayers about the emotions expressed and ask God to give everyone a vision for what He wants to do in your lives during the next nine weeks.

Enthusiastically assure the group of your availability and desire to help each one successfully complete this discipleship study.



FOCUSING ON LIFE (10 minutes)

Discuss: **Have you ever belonged to a group (band, baseball team, school club, etc.) and doubted your acceptance by others in the group? If so, how did you feel? How was your contribution to the group affected? How did your doubts cause you to react to others in the group?**

Explain that we can have these same feelings and reactions toward God and other Christians if we have doubts about our salvation. Share an example of this from your own experience or ask volunteers to give examples.



EXPLORING GOD'S WORD (35 minutes)

[NOTE: Each week this section is based on the work students have done in *Following Jesus*. The discussion questions are usually not identical to those in the book, but they draw from the same Scriptures and assignments. This technique helps students think through what they've studied rather than just parroting written answers.]

Allow time for everyone to review his written responses to Session 1 in *Following Jesus*. Then discuss:

1. What would you tell a person who says, "I feel fine just the way I am. Why should I become a Christian?" Response can be based on students' answers under "What is a Christian?"

2. In what ways did you find it hard to take any one of the five steps to salvation listed on pages 16-20? (For example, someone

might say that he was too proud to admit his need of Christ until he faced a huge problem in his life that helped him see his need.)

3. How can you know if you're truly a Christian? Refer to the “How to Know if You're Really A Christian” section, page 22. In summary, answers should include:

- John 2:3-6 True belief leads to obedience.
- 3:14 Love for others develops.
- 3:24; 4:13 Christ's Spirit lets you know that He is with you.
- 4:15 Christians tell others about Christ.
- 5:1 God promised that by believing in Christ we can be His children.

4. Of the five assurances given in 1 John, which one is most meaningful to you? Why? Give everyone an opportunity to answer. As a group, quote today's memory verse (1 John 5:11). Then offer sentence prayers of thanksgiving for the salvation God has given through His Son, Jesus Christ.



APPLYING GOD'S WORD (10 minutes)

Ask each person to write in response to Session 1: (1) One thing he will do this week to affirm his salvation. (Examples: Thank God every day that He remains true to His promises; tell someone else about what it means to him to be a Christian.) (2) One thing he will do this week to demonstrate his commitment to another member of the Discipleship Group. (Examples: Offer a ride to someone who may have a hard time finding a way to the next meeting; call someone during the week just to encourage him.)

Assignments for Next Week: As you give the following assignments, be positive. Let the young people know that you respect their desire and ability to be accountable.

1. Complete Session 2 in Following Jesus. Don't forget to memorize the Scripture verse.

2. Be prepared to share the results of what you do this week to affirm your salvation and to demonstrate your commitment to someone else in your Discipleship Group.

AFTER THE MEETING

1. Evaluate the meeting: Was the atmosphere relaxed? Did everyone feel free to take part? If not, jot down some possible causes and what you can do to improve the situation next week.

2. If anyone seemed uncertain about his salvation, be sure to get together with him and go through the Gospel. Offer him the opportunity to receive Christ.