

connect



Connect

Humans are by nature social creatures and none more so than middle school students. During these next few weeks we will talk about why we have the need to connect with others and the impact that it can have on who we are. We will examine if who we are around our friends is the same person God is calling us to be. We will identify how to have successful and healthy relationships, and lastly we will discuss how students are to handle the pressures of dating in middle school.

Week 1 – Your Friends

The old adage about friendship goes “be careful the company you keep.” What is it about our friends that seems to impact and influence who we are and how we live our lives? Everywhere these students turn they are involved in and creating relationships. For middle school students their friends are becoming one of the largest influences upon their lives. Friendships are designed by God and are meant to enhance our lives, but how many times do we find our friendships doing the opposite? As we begin to understand the impact our friends have upon us, we are able to identify what friendships to maintain and which ones to let go.

Scripture

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Proverbs 13:20

Become wise by walking with the wise; hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”

Questions

1. How many friends are in your closest most intimate circle? Who has made it in that far? Why?
2. Who do you feel has more influence on you, your friends or parents? Why?
3. Which statement is truer for you? “You influence your friends more than they influence you.” OR “Your friends influence you more than you influence them.”
4. What does the following saying mean to you? “Show me your friends and I’ll show you your future.”
5. Do you feel like your friends are a good influence upon you? Why or why not? Where does Christ fit in to all of this?

connect



Week 2 – Who Am I?

With all of the influences placed upon middle school students, how do we understand who we are supposed to be? There seems to be all of these opinions coming at them from every place in their lives on who they should be. From their friends, parents, coaches, teachers, siblings. These peoples' ideas say who they should be, how they should spend their time, who they should hang out with, the clothes they should wear, movies, music, food, hobbies, etc... There is just so much pressure on them to become someone else's version of themselves. But what does God have to say about who we are supposed to be? He created each of us individually, knows us by name, and has quite a bit to say about who we are. Maybe we should start listening less to others and more to Him.

Scripture

Isaiah 1:16-17

Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4: 3-5; 7-8

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God... For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:15

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy.

Questions

1. Do you ever feel torn between who you want to be and who others want you to be?
2. What things are you involved in that you do only because others want you to or because you feel pressure to do?
3. Why do you think we spend so much time trying to become who others want us to be?
4. If you could do anything with your life or time and not have to worry about what other people thought, what would you do?
5. What do you think God wants for your life?
6. What can you do to become more like who God calls each of us to be?

connect



Week 3 – “Good, Better, Best Friends”

Friendships have an obvious importance and influence upon our lives, but which friendships are worth keeping? What is it that makes a good friend? Do we, and those we allow into our lives, possess those qualities? Friendships are meant to build each other up and make us better than we can be on our own, but how do we make sure this happens? How do we become the best friend we can be, and expect the same from others?

Scripture

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Proverbs 12:26

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Proverbs 17:9; 17

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Questions

1. What does friendship mean to you?
2. What does friendship mean to God?
3. What qualities make up a good friend?
4. How many of your friends match this description of a good friend?
5. Would your friends say that you match this description of a good friend?
6. Would you be friends with you?
7. What can you do this week to have better friendships?

connect



Week 4 – “Property Of?”

Where is the line? How far is too far? If I've already started, why should I stop? It feels good so why not do it? Everyone else is doing it, why shouldn't I? These are just a few of the million plus questions that surround the opposite sex and dating in middle school. Many students have already made up their minds about where they stand on the issue, or have at least acted in a certain manner regarding it. The problem is that students are operating on a myth that is untrue. Culture and society have convinced us, and all of our friends, that our bodies belong to us and we can do with them as we please. But culture is wrong. Our bodies belong to God. Understanding that God created each of us and calls us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him helps us treat others and ourselves with the respect and holiness that we deserve, that God intends.

Scripture

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

1 Corinthians 6: 18-20

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins people commit are outside their bodies, but those who sin sexually sin against their own bodies. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:15-17

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

Questions

1. What stood out to you today from the message? Was anything you heard today new?
2. How much do your friends influence how you think about the opposite sex?
3. What is the most difficult part about the opposite sex and dating in middle school?
4. Why is how we treat our bodies so important to God?
5. What can you do this week to honor God with your body?