

Intimacy

SMALL GROUP LESSON



Lesson Objective:

Be careful who shares your secrets. Being created in the image of God, intimate friendships are life-giving, but these friendships are limited to a select few in life.

Set Up Info:

Supplies Needed:

1. Computer or internet connection to watch the YouTube video
2. Internet access to view each person's Facebook page
3. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
4. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the ones below)
5. A passion to see students transformed in their understanding of proper levels of shared intimacy and the need for close friends.

Instructive Prep:

Intimacy is a tricky word. Usually, people today think of sexual intimacy as if the second word must only live as it is attached to the first word. But Scripture paints a very different picture than our culture does. Relational intimacy is the image in which we were created. It certainly can take the form of sexual intimacy, but it can also describe the relational depth found in the closest of friends (see Ruth & Naomi and David & Jonathan stories in the online journey for examples of this). Deep, abiding, intimate friendships are a longing of our hearts, just like the longing for that kind of relationship with our Creator.

This session is designed to assist your teens in evaluating the purposes of intimacy and how we go about sharing those deeper secrets of who we are. Many kids today have no personal filter for this and the internet doesn't

either; therefore they are prone to being really hurt by intimate stuff being open to public ridicule. Helping them find the right outlets and definitions for intimacy can produce better friendships and more godly wisdom in their life.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: *learn, feel, do and what next*. The aim is for students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some degree, and participate in doing something during the study. Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change in attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, the movement is toward spiritual and emotional transformation in kids' lives, so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

INTRO:

Since most teens are extremely open to sharing about themselves in online venues, it may be appropriate to discuss intimacy in light of this newer reality. The Post Secret experience draws a very different reaction when showed to teens as opposed to their parents. Teens enter into the feelings behind the messages, while parents react to the information being shared. There's a balance we should help kids find, knowing that the need for intimacy is how we were created, but finding the right ways and the right people to share our deepest secrets with can produce wonderfully deep friendships.

INTRO STORY:

[CAUTION: some of the secrets on this site can be pretty raw]

Watch these two Post Secret videos put to music. Note that some roll pretty fast, so it's hard to read it all. You can pause so that people can read, but you may lose the effect of the music. Your call...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAQtbTqDefw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQB1QGhb5Yc>

Intro Questions:

1. Have you ever seen Post Secret or a Post Secret book?
2. Which song did you think went better with the secrets? Why?

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Look at each person's Facebook page and see how many 'friends' they have. The student with the most answers the first question first, the kid with the second most answers the second question first, and so on. (Everybody answers every question)

1. Did you read any secret in those videos that you thought were inappropriate? Which one(s)?
2. Would you feel comfortable sharing secrets this way? Why or why not?
3. What intimate 'secrets' have you noticed posted on Facebook?
4. What do you think are the main reasons why someone would divulge intimate secrets in a public forum like Post Secret or Facebook?
5. Write your own questions: _____

CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES

The following passages are designed to set up a short progression of (1) God made us for intimate relationships, and (2) intimacy is to be guarded and shared with a few trusted friends (and mutual experiences tend to build intimacy).

Genesis 1:26-28

²⁶Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small." ²⁷So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, ²⁸blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.

Comment: *Being made in God's image (Imago Dei) means several things and among them is the capacity for communal relationships – intimate friendship. Later Christian reflection came to conceive of God as a Trinity, and the unique relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a profound example of the*

intimacy we were created to experience in human friendship. God has given us the fellowship of trusted friends with whom we can share our deepest, most intimate part of ourselves with. We truly were made for this.

Mark 9:1-10

(also found in Matthew 17.1-13; Luke 9.28-36)

The Transfiguration

²Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain, where they were alone. As they looked on, a change came over Jesus, ³and his clothes became shining white—whiter than anyone in the world could wash them. ⁴Then the three disciples saw Elijah and Moses talking with Jesus. ⁵Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, “Teacher, how good it is that we are here! We will make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶He and the others were so frightened that he did not know what to say. ⁷Then a cloud appeared and covered them with its shadow, and a voice came from the cloud, “This is my own dear Son—listen to him!” ⁸They took a quick look around but did not see anyone else; only Jesus was with them. ⁹As they came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has risen from death.” ¹⁰They obeyed his order, but among themselves they started discussing the matter, “What does this ‘rising from death’ mean?”

What do you think this shared experience did for their relationship? How do you think you would have felt if you were one of the three with Jesus that day?

Comment: *This represents a pretty cool Bible story of a shared experience that brought about an even deeper closeness and intimacy between Jesus and three disciples. The event is called the story of the Transfiguration. Now, Jesus loved all 12 of the guys he chose to hang out with, but he seemed to have some special – more intimate - moments with three of them; Peter, James and John. This is how the gospel writer, Mark, records the event, and you can see that Jesus asks them to keep their encounter a secret, even from the rest of the disciples. In this way Jesus offers us a picture of intimate friendships with a few trusted people.*

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Write your own Post Secret entry on a piece of paper. Now scribble through it or tear it up, but commit to tell a trusted friend what you wrote. (If the group has the proper level of intimacy, you may try sharing what each person wrote, but be careful not to push that.)
2. Discuss and plan a mutual experience that you can do as a small group. What can you do together that would help in building intimacy within the group as well as among individuals within the group? Plan it and do it, then discuss what closeness developed.

3. Write your own challenge: _____

STUDENT RESPONSES:

1. POST SECRET ENTRY:

2. PLAN SHARED EXPERIENCE: