

# Talk Time Topics

The 42 topics in this document are great for developing intermediate to advanced ESL speaking, listening, and writing skills.

These topics contain images, conversation questions, scriptures, and some video links. You may use these topics in groups or one-on-one conversation sessions.

## Some Ways to Use These Questions

- Begin with discussing the theme picture. Ask the students what they see in the picture and discuss new vocabulary.
- The teacher may ask the questions to the class or individual to start a conversation.
- Or, print out the questions and let students work in pairs asking the questions alternately.
- The final questions can be given as homework as a writing or speaking exercise.

Many of these topics were originally developed for use in the TalkTime program at Westminster Chapel in Bellevue, Washington and adapted with their permission. Additional free English lessons for beginner and intermediate levels from the *Light of the World* curriculum are available at [LightOfTheWorldLearning.org](http://LightOfTheWorldLearning.org). For more information contact [info@LOTWL.org](mailto:info@LOTWL.org)

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## Advice



A bumper sticker said, “Take my advice; I’m not using it!” Do you tend to give advice a lot? Listen to your conversation and see how often you say “you should” to someone.

In novels and movies we often hear of characters who give too much advice too often. But there is a right time to give or get advice. Let’s talk about when those right times are.

In your native culture, is asking and giving advice considered a good thing or a bad thing? Is it encouraged or discouraged?

When have you asked for advice from someone in the past? Why did you choose the person you chose to ask? Was the advice helpful? Why or why not?

### **Times when you might ask for advice:**

- Choosing a college
- Choosing a job
- Choosing a spouse
- Investing money

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Moving to a new location  
Traveling  
In a foreign culture

When do **you** give advice to others? Do you wait to be asked or sometimes volunteer advice? Do people like the advice you give them or act on it? Give an example of someone who benefited from your advice.

Do you think it's a good idea to warn someone if you think they are not doing the right thing? Under what circumstances would you do it?

**The Bible talks about how to get wisdom in the Proverbs:**

- "The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life" Prov 13:14
- "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm." Prov 13:20
- "Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored." Prov 13:18
- "The lips of the wise spread knowledge" Prov 15:7
- "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed." Prov 15:22

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Choose one of the verses above to memorize and write about, explain how it relates to your life.

OR

Watch this video on [Wisdom](#) and write a paragraph about it.



## Age



### **Read these Bible passages about age:**

“Gray hair is a glorious crown. You get it by living the right way.” Proverbs 16:31

“Don’t let anyone look down on you for being young. Instead, make your speech, behavior, love, faith, and purity an example for other believers.” 1 Timothy 4:12

“We live to be about 70. Or we may live to be 80, if we stay healthy. But all that time is filled with trouble and sorrow. The years quickly pass, and we are gone . . . Teach us to realize how short our lives are. Then our hearts will become wise. . . Satisfy us with your faithful love every morning. Then we can sing with joy and be glad all of our days.”  
From sections of Psalm 90, a prayer to God by Moses

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Does your culture value old age or youth, or some age in the middle? Give examples. How do you refer to the various ages of people? What do you consider young, old, middle-age etc.?

We often speak of a “generation gap”. This means that people of different ages have different ways of doing things and may not understand each other. In the U.S., we tend to name our generations – like the baby boomers, the Gen-Xers and millennials. Does your native culture name its generations? If so, give examples of different generations with different experiences in your country. How do these different generations relate to each other?

How does relative age affect friendship? Can you be friends with someone ten years older than yourself? Why or why not? How does an age difference affect your way of communicating with someone?

Would you consider marrying someone much older or younger than yourself? How would your parents or your friends react if you chose to marry someone much older or younger than yourself?

Do you or did you seek out people older than yourself for advice? Have you ever had a mentor? Or if you are old now, do you seek out young people to be around? Explain.

We speak of the “young of heart” at any age from 9 months to 99 years. Do you agree with this concept?

Do you feel your age? What do you like about the age you are now? Do you have any regrets about growing up or growing older? Do you look forward to old age or dread it? Why? Do you have any desire to be younger or “young again?” Why or why not?

Watch [this short video](#) about a woman named Bettie who began a new adventure as an older adult.

Write a paragraph about the video, your favorite age, or choose one of the Bible verses on age to write about.

## Baby Pictures



Have you seen baby pictures of yourself? If so, what did you look like? Do you look enough like yourself, that a friend could recognize your baby picture and say, “Hey, that’s you!” Or do you just look like any old baby?

Did your family take a lot of pictures when you were a child? Did they take more pictures of the first child and less of later children? Do you have some favorite pictures of yourself as a child? What are they? Did your family take videos of family events? If yes, give examples.

Do you like to take pictures? What do you do with pictures? Do you create memory books or just stuff them in a box somewhere? Do you ever go back and look at old pictures? What do you think about when you look at pictures? What memories come back to mind when you look at pictures?

Do you frame family photos? Do you decorate your house with pictures? Do you ever get professional photographs taken? How satisfied are you with professional photographs?

What do you like to do to keep memories alive? Perhaps it's writing in a diary or journal, or writing letters, or drawing pictures or just planning events that create emotions and so create memories. Do you treat pleasant memories and unpleasant memories differently? What is the best way to deal with an unpleasant memory?

Some cultures have traditions of remembering ugly things. For example – some countries hate another country because they remember a terrible war or event from several hundred years ago. Do you think this is a wise thing to do? Why or why not?

**Paul, in the Bible says, think about the good things:**

"Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things." Phil 4:8

**And a song from the Old Testament says:**

"Lord, I will remember what you did. Yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will spend time thinking about everything you have done. I will consider all of your mighty acts." Psalm 77:11-12

Share a favorite photo and write a paragraph about it or tell about it.

## Animals and You



Please pick one or more topics from these ideas about animals:

1. Pets - tell about pets you have had, what they were like, did they protect you, play with you, ignore you? Who took care of the pet - feeding, taking to the veterinarian? How did you name your pet? Maybe you didn't have a pet, but you like pets or made friends with someone else's pet. Tell about that.

2. Domestic animals - these are the animals that would be on a ranch or a farm - chickens, ducks, horses, cows, sheep, goats and more. Did you grow up in the country, or visit someone who lived in the country? If you had the chance would you leave the city and move out to the country? Do you think a farm is a good place to raise children? In your country, is it economical to raise farm animals?

3. Wild animals - do you like to visit the zoo? Or do you like to watch documentaries about animals? What kinds of animals do you like best and why? Do you worry that certain wild animals are becoming extinct? Are there some endangered species in your native country? Do you like to hunt or fish? Are there certain seasons



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for hunting and fishing that you know of? Do you like to hike or camp? What wild animals have you met in the wild?

4. Animals as symbols - if you chose one animal (or more than one) as a symbol of yourself - what animal would you choose and why? What animal would you choose for your close friend, spouse, sister, brother, Mom or Dad?

5. Stuffed animals - what favorite stuffed animals did you have as a child? Do you still have them? Do you collect animals - deer heads, bear skins, figurines, pictures, T-shirts?

**A few Bible passages about animals:**

“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?” Matthew 6:26

“What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?

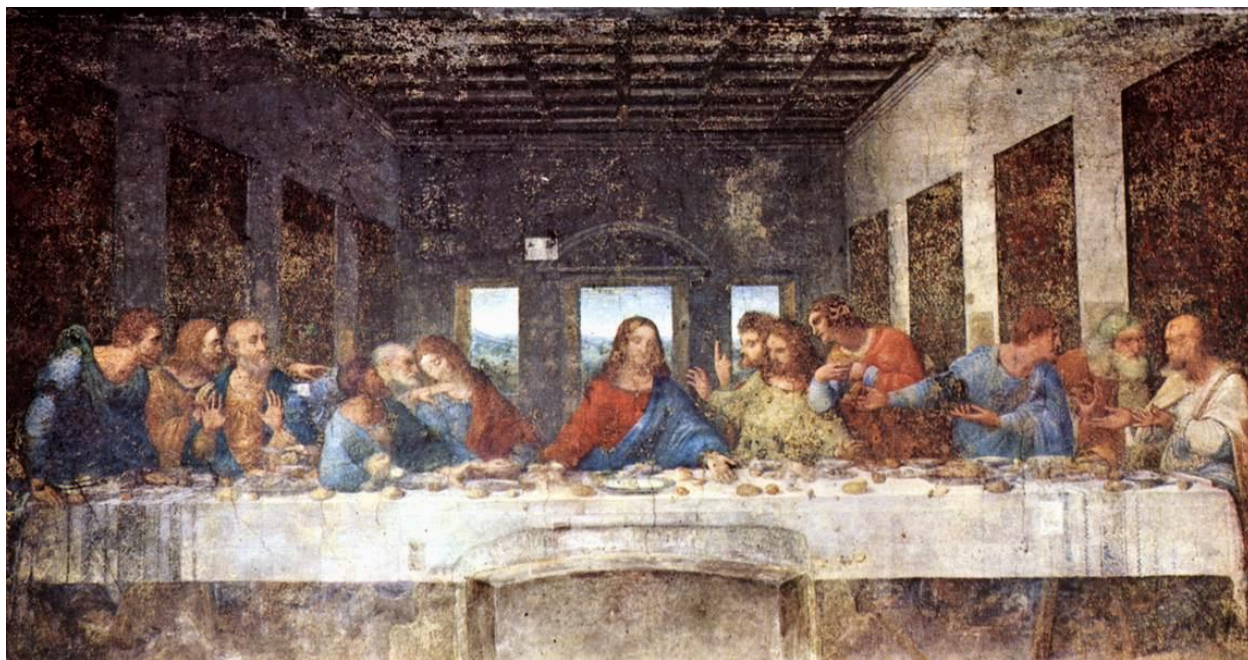
And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which is lost!”

“I tell you in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” Luke 15:4-7

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## Art and Hidden Art



Leonardo da Vinci painted "The Last Supper" between 1594 and 1598. The Italian government spent millions of dollars in the 1990's to restore the painting. Italian artist Pinin Brambilla Barcilon and her team have worked "flake by flake" to repair the painting. Some say the painting has "life and light" again, but others say that the painting is no longer truly by Leonardo da Vinci, but by Brambilla.

Do you think that it is a good idea for governments to spend millions of dollars on art restoration like this project?

Italy is an example of a country that has many relics of the past - buildings, art, manuscripts - but these relics carry a responsibility and financial burden - to protect them, care for them and perhaps manage them so that the public can see them. Does your native country have many relics of the past? How does your native culture value such things?

How do you value art? What is your favorite kind of art - performance arts like theater or music or dance, written art, painting, drawing, or sculpture?

Only a few artists are recognized by society. Yet, most people are artists in some way. This is "hidden art." A mother may arrange flowers on the table for a dinner party. A father may write a beautiful letter to his son. These people have artistic ability and

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when they use it, it gives pleasure to others. Tell about hidden art in you and your family. What kinds of art do you practice in hidden ways?

God is an artist. We see His design of mountains, trees, butterflies and things of nature. Here in the Bible, we also see Him as an artist using the natural things, like stones, to make new and beautiful things. When we see human art today, we think also of the Great Artist, God, who created our imagination and gave us the materials to work with. Do you think about God when you see art? Why or why not?

**God gave instructions to Moses for clothes for priests:**

“Then they hammered out gold sheets and cut them into threads to be woven in with the blue and the purple and the scarlet material, and the fine linen, the work of a skilled workman . . . And he made the breastpiece . . . and they mounted four rows of stones on it. The first row was a row of ruby, topaz and emeralds. The second row of turquoise, a sapphire and a diamond; and the third row, a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They were set in gold filigree settings when they were mounted. And the stones were corresponding to the names of the sons of Israel.” Exodus 39:3-14

Watch [this video](#)

How are you like a work of art created by God?



## A Balanced Life



When you hear the word “balance” what do you think of? Do you think of standing on one foot and trying not to fall? Do you think of the balance beam in women’s Olympic gymnastics?

Suppose we talk about a “balanced” life. Do you think that it is a good goal to balance your life in some way? If so, what kind of balance do you think is good? Or if you don’t think balance is a good goal, why not? What would be a different goal?

**Here are some aspects of balance in a life to consider in your own life:**

Deskwork versus physical activity

Work versus leisure

Serving versus being served

Learning versus applying your learning

Being alone versus being in a group

Material things versus spiritual things

What other kinds of balance are there to think about in life?

Do you know anyone who leads a life in some way balanced? What does their life look like?

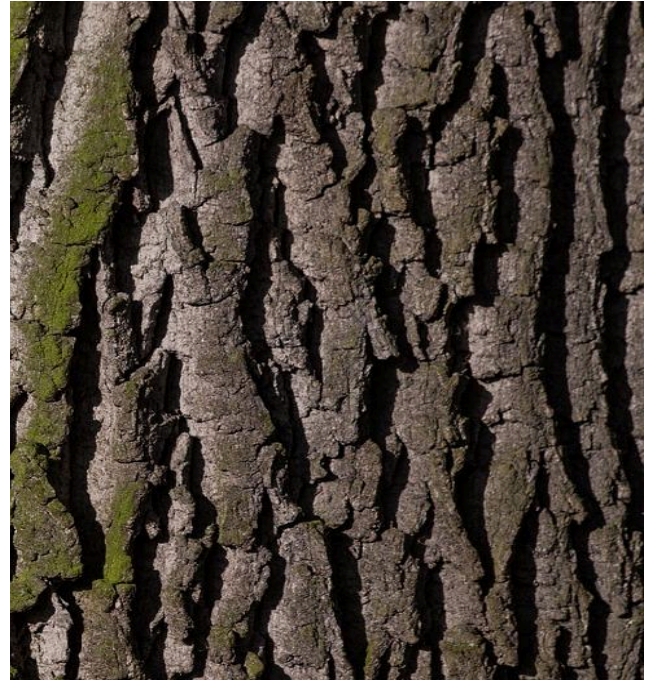
**One Bible writer, Paul, learned to balance both paying for himself and receiving help from others. Here's sections from letters to two different churches at different times:**

Letter 1: "We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it." 2 Thess. 3:7

Letter 2: "It was good of you to share in my troubles . . . In the early days . . not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need." Phil. 4:14-16

Write about finding balance in your own life. Tell about the challenges and how you address them.

## Bark



The word “bark” has a couple of meanings: 1) a dog’s loud call and 2) the surface of a tree trunk. Sometimes we use these in expressions like “You’re barking up the wrong tree,” or “His bark is worse than his bite.”

In Washington state in the USA, people spread bark on their yards to keep out weeds and make them look pretty. It can take many hours to spread bark in a typical suburban yard. First you put the bark into a wheelbarrow with a shovel. Then you dump the bark and spread it with a rake. It’s good physical work!

What kinds of work do you do in your life? Do you work with your hands, your whole body, your mind? Do you relate to other people a lot? How much of your work is physical, mental or social? Do you like a mix of physical, mental and social work in your life? What combination of work is ideal for you?

There is a kind of work that we do as a career, and another kind of work that we do to take care of our home and family. Are these kinds of work very different for you? Or

are they similar? Do you like both kinds of work? Why or why not? How do you and your spouse, family or roommates divide up the work at home? Do you choose by skill or by preference?

How does leisure fit into your life? Do you prefer mental, physical or social types of leisure activities? Give examples.

How do you like the balance of activities in your life right now? Has the balance been better in the past? Do you think it will improve in the future? Why or why not?

What kind of physical shape are you in right now? Think of your lungs (aerobic capacity), your arm strength, your leg strength, flexibility.

**The Bible talks about work in many places:**

“Do everything you can to live a quiet life. Mind your own business. Work with your hands, just as we told you to.” 1 Thessalonians 4:11

“People who don’t want to work say, “There’s a lion outside!” Or they say, “I’ll be murdered if I go out into the streets!” Proverbs 22:13

“I went past the field of someone who didn’t want to work. I went past the vineyard of a man who didn’t have any sense. Thorns had grown up everywhere. The ground was covered with weeds. The stone wall had fallen down . . . I learned a lesson from what I saw. You might sleep a little or take a little nap. You might even fold your hands and rest. Then you would be poor, as if someone had robbed you. You would have little, as if someone had stolen from you.” Proverbs 24:30-34

What are the messages from these three different quotes?



## Beauty



The Bible talks about beauty in many places:

It is not fancy hair, gold jewelry, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. No, your **beauty** should come from inside you—the **beauty** of a gentle and quiet spirit. That **beauty** will never disappear. It is worth very much to God. 1 Peter 3:3-4

Give the Lord praise worthy of his glory. Come into his presence with your offerings. Worship the Lord in all his holy **beauty**. 1 Chron 16:29

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In high school, there was an algebra teacher with an unusually large head, a white face with many large freckles and lots of loose skin around his cheeks and jaw. He was about 60 years old. We didn't think he was very beautiful to look at. However, as we sat in his classroom for many months we changed our opinion. When he smiled his wide smile, we could see beauty in his face. After that, I decided that all people are beautiful when they smile.

What is beautiful to you? Think about people, landscapes, art, woodwork, backyards, plants. Do you have the same idea of what is beautiful as your conversation partner? What makes a face beautiful, or a painting?

A mother asked God to make her baby daughter “beautiful on the inside and on the outside.” How do you value “inside” beauty and “outside” beauty? Is it better for a person to be beautiful only on the outside or beautiful only on the inside? When you watch television or read books in your native culture or in the American culture - what value is placed on beauty?

If you are looking for a boyfriend or girlfriend; or a husband or wife, what importance do you put on beauty (inside and outside) or other kinds of attributes?

In North America, we often feel busy. We say that we live our lives “in the fast lane.” How can a busy person appreciate what is beautiful? What kinds of beauty do busy people miss or not notice? In your native culture, do people take time to find what is beautiful and appreciate it? Explain how.

What do you do to create beauty in your life or in the world? Is creating beauty a necessary or optional part of life? Is creating beauty only for artists or is it for everyone?

This is a simple Christian song about beauty. The “He” in the song is God.

*Something beautiful, something good,  
All my confusion He understood  
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife  
And He made something beautiful of my life.*

Is there a part of your life that was not always beautiful, but has become beautiful? What caused the change?

Watch this video to another song about God making [Beautiful Things](#) How are these lives made beautiful?

## Beginnings and Endings



Job consultants say that when you have many tasks to do at your job, you should try not to begin something and end something else at the same time. Try to begin a new project or end an old project when everything else you do is in the middle. “Middling” is easier than either beginning or ending.

What projects are you working on these days? They could be at school, at work, at home, a hobby or other things. Are you at the beginning, the middle or the end?

People have different skills. Some are better at beginning - they love to start new things, but might not be good at finishing. Others don't enjoy getting started, but once they're working on a project, they really enjoy it and are good at getting finished too.

What kind of person are you? A good beginner, a middler or a finisher? What do you like best? Give an example of what you like best on a project.

There are many kinds of beginnings and endings in life. Think about these and share about what it was like to begin or end some aspect of your life such as:

A friendship

A marriage

A job

A relocation to another country or city

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Adolescence  
An injury  
A college degree  
A new baby  
A new exercise program

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Paul talks about a new beginning for the person who turns to Jesus Christ:

“Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away, new things have come. 2 Cor. 5:17

Do you feel like a new creature? What are some of the old things that have passed away and new things that have come into your life?





## Best Friends

Some people in America say that “A dog is man’s best friend.” Why do they think that? Dogs are thought of as friendly and loyal. Other people say that “Diamonds are a girl’s best friend.” Maybe this is part of an ad for a jewelry store that wants to sell diamonds.

Do you think best friends need to be people, or things, or money, or pets?

Let’s think about best friends in our experience. Here are some questions to think about. Please give examples.

1. Do you have a few best friends or one only?
2. Do you think a spouse can or should be a best friend?
3. Does a best friend need to be the same gender as you?

4. Does a best friend have common interests or a similar personality?
5. Can a best friend be your “opposite” in some ways?
6. Can a best friend live far away from you or must they be near by?
7. Do you need to see or talk with them daily or weekly? Do you know someone that you consider a best friend that you talk to only a few times a year?
8. Does a best friend need to have about the same amount of money or income as you? Or can it be different?
9. List some important traits of a best friend.
10. Give examples of best friends from different ages of your life.
11. How do you lose a best friend?
12. How do you treat your best friend(s)?
13. Describe your best friend. Tell how you met and what you do together.

**We read in John 15:12-14 Jesus speaking about friends:**

“This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command you.”

Jesus is asking us to treat our friends the same way that Jesus treats His friends. How does Jesus treat His friends? How should we treat our friends? What is different about the way we are friends with Jesus than friends with other people?

Here is a short [video](#) about friendship. Watch it and describe what happens in your own words. How is this like or unlike your friendships?



## Choosing a Marriage Partner

Let's talk about how to choose a marriage partner. Some of you have already chosen a partner, others may be divorced or single, or uninterested in marriage. But let's suppose that you have to advise a friend on how to choose a husband or wife. Give examples of your own experience or the experiences of others, values from your religion or any other sources that have influenced your thinking on marriage.

What do you think is most important in finding a marriage partner? How would you rank these kinds of things? Explain your choices.

- intelligence?
- physical appearance?
- love for you? (romantic love? friendship love? forgiving love?)
- abilities in: taking care of house- cleaning, cooking, mowing the lawn, painting, fixing appliances, plumbing, sewing etc.?
- common interests or hobbies?
- educational background?
- ability to make money?
- personality?

- temper? (patient, anger easily, calm)
- faith in religion? (believe, strongly believe, attend church, synagogue or temple, leader in that faith)
- his/her family? (similar to yours, values, personalities, occupations etc.)

How does a couple make a marriage that will last for their whole lives? How does a couple survive when hard times come - losing a job, death of a child, disability of spouse, financial hardship, illness of spouse?

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The following are two different verses on marriage. Why do you think God created marriage? Why do you think marriage will not exist when people rise from death? Explain.

“<sup>6</sup> But when God made the world, ‘he made people male and female.’<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>7</sup> ‘That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. <sup>8</sup> And the two people will become one.’<sup>[c]</sup> So they are no longer two, but one. <sup>9</sup> God has joined them together, so no one should separate them.”

Mark 10: 6-9.

“At the time when people rise from death, there will be no marriage. People will not be married to each other. Everyone will be like the angels in heaven.”  
Matthew 22:30



## Where The Grass Is Greener

"The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." What do you think this American saying means? Do you have any sayings similar to this in your native culture?

Think about your own life as a child. Do you remember times when "the grass looked greener on the other side of the fence?" Tell about a person - friend, acquaintance or stranger, or family member who you envied. (Envy is a feeling that you wish that you could be another person or you wish your life in some way could be like another person's life.)

Think about a time in your life when you made a decision to change to a better situation. Give an example of when the new situation was worse than the old. Give an example of when the new situation was better than the old.

We have another American saying, "Not all that glitters is gold." What do you think is the idea behind this saying?

Think of examples of things in life that "glitter" - that look very good and attractive - but after you get them, you find they are not "gold" - they are not really good or quality or valuable. Give an example when you were offered something that "glittered", but was

not really “gold.” How did you know it was not quality? Give an example when you were fooled by glitter.

America has a high divorce rate. Perhaps one reason for this is that Americans sometimes look for the “greener grass” in their spouse. Since no wife or husband is perfect, it is easy for someone to think, “maybe that new person would be more interesting, cool, loving, fun, committed ...” How would you advise a friend to handle this temptation?

The Bible compares human life to grass.

*“People are like grass.*

*Any glory they enjoy is like a wildflower.*

*When a wind from the Lord blows on them,  
the grass dies and the flower falls.*

*Yes, all people are like grass.*

*Grass dies and flowers fall,*

*but the word of our God lasts forever.” Isaiah 40:6-8*

What kinds of things that seem really important now, may not be important at all after we die? What things might still be important after we die?





## The Annunciation

This is a famous painting by Henry Tanner titled *The Annunciation*. What do you see in the picture?

How does the young woman feel?

When have you received surprising news? How did you react?

When have you given important news to another person? How did the person respond?

What kind of news are you the most afraid of?

What is the best news you would like to hear?

Where do you get news about current events? Do you have favorite news programs or sites? How often do you check the news?

The Bible describes the scene which inspired this painting:

*"God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin girl who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord is with you; you are very special to him."*

*But Mary was very confused about what the angel said. She wondered, "What does this mean?"*

*The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is very pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant and have a baby boy. You will name him Jesus. He will be great. People will call him the Son of the Most High God, and the Lord God will make him king like his ancestor David. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."*

*Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I am still a virgin."*

*The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come to you, and the power of the Most High God will cover you. The baby will be holy and will be called the Son of God. And here's something else: Your relative Elizabeth is pregnant. She is very old, but she is going to have a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant now for six months. God can do anything!"*

*Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let this thing you have said happen to me!" Then the angel went away." Luke 1:26-38 ERV*

How does this scripture make you feel? What can you learn from it?





Second – let's think about gates and doors as a metaphor. A person can be a gate – someone who introduces you to new hobbies, new work, new ideas or new feelings. A class at school can be a door to a new major or a new idea of your future career. A key exam can be a gate that keeps you out of a certain university or gets you in. If you pass the exam, it opens the gate and you can enter. What kind of gates and doors have you already gone through in your life (as metaphors for changes in life)? What kinds of gates or doors do you know that you will face in the future? How will you open the gates? Do you have the necessary key? Do you have to pay something to enter?

Third – what are some of the major gates that everyone goes through in life? What are the different ways that people open those gates of life? (Another way to think of this is as phases of life.)

Fourth – at some time in life, you may fall in love, or someone may fall in love with you. At that time, you or they may ask the question, “What is the door to my loved one’s heart?” Think of someone you love. What is the door to their heart? How about you? What opens the door into your heart?

Take a look at the following metaphor. What could the metaphor mean? Can you think of any people that you could call a “gate”?

*Jesus said, “I am like a gate for the sheep. All those who ever came before me were thieves and robbers. But the sheep did not listen to them. I’m like a gate. Anyone who enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out. And he will find plenty of food. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they might have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.”*

- John 10:7-10



## Hospitality

A shared meal at a restaurant, an afternoon of golf together, doing homework together at the kitchen table - these are all ways to show hospitality to a guest. Hospitality is an act of friendship or giving pleasure to a guest. Hospitality is taking something that is yours and offering it to someone else - it can involve time, money, food or a place to sleep.

Most cultures have certain traditions about taking care of guests. In your native culture, what are the traditional ways of showing hospitality to a guest? Does the host have specific responsibilities? Does the guest have specific responsibilities? Is hospitality a duty on some occasions? Do people have guests often or rarely?

Think about when you were a child. When your parents showed hospitality, what was your role? Did you like it when your parents were showing hospitality? How old were you when you started showing hospitality on your own?

Do you like to show hospitality now? Are there things that prevent you from doing it? How do you show hospitality to family visitors, friends, teachers, coworkers,

bosses or others? Do you regard it as a pleasure or a duty or both? What would you like to improve at in showing hospitality?

Do you need your own home or apartment to show hospitality? Why or why not?

Do you ever show hospitality to strangers? Is hospitality to strangers a part of your cultural tradition? Explain.

What do you think of the hospitality of the woman in the following story? If someone created a room for you, would it be hard for you to accept it? Why or why not?

*"One day Elisha went to the town of Shunem. A rich woman lived there. She begged him to stay and have a meal. So every time he came by, he stopped there to eat.*

*The woman said to her husband, "That man often comes by here. I know that he is a holy man of God. Let's make a small room for him on the roof. We'll put a bed and a table in it. We'll also put a chair and a lamp in it. Then he can stay there when he comes to visit us."*

Read 2 Kings 4:11-37 for the surprising things that happened to the woman after this.

Jesus said: *"My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."* John 14:2-3

What do you imagine the place will be like that Jesus is preparing for you?



## Light

What first comes to mind when you hear the word “light?” It could be reduced-fat cream cheese, a 100-pound wrestler, the long summer sunshine in the Pacific Northwest, the lamp you read by, or the flashlight that gets you to the bathroom from your campsite at night.

What do you know about light as a natural phenomenon? Did you study physics or general science in high school or college? What do you know about the sun and stars as light-producing things? Why can we see in the daytime but not as well at night? Why can certain animals see well at night (like the owl)? Do you know why the sky is blue? Talk to your partners about your knowledge of how light works.

What kinds of light devices or sources are inventions of humans? Give examples and any history that you are familiar with.

How do you feel about night? Do you feel differently when it's light or dark outside? How? Have you ever been afraid of the dark? What are some interesting or



unusual kinds of light sources you've seen or used in your lifetime from childhood until now? Do you wear sunglasses often, or can you handle a lot of sunlight?

Artists, architects and home decorators know how to use light and dark in their work. Can you explain how an artist might use light and dark? How about a home decorator? How do light and dark shades of color, or paint on the wall, affect the feeling of a certain room? Do you like a room that is bright? Or do you like soft, less bright light? What are your light preferences? Think of candles, various kinds of lamps, skylights etc.

Although night and day are both good, we often use day and night, light and dark as symbols of spiritual or philosophical ideas. Do you use light and dark this way? Can you think of any idioms or expressions in your native culture where light and dark are used as symbols? Do day and night have symbolic meaning to you? Give examples.

Here are a few examples of how light is talked about in the Bible:

"In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. . . . God said, 'Let there be light!' So there was light." Genesis 1:1,3

A poet speaks to God – "If I say, 'Let the darkness hide me and let the light around me turn into night,' even the darkness is not dark for you. Night is as bright as day." Psalm 139:11-12.

Jesus says, "I am the light that has come into the world so that everyone who believes in me will not live in the dark." John 12:46

Jesus says, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness." Matt 6:22-23

**Pick one of these quotes and explain why you enjoy it.**



## Hope and Fear

The September 11, 2001 events caused the entire U.S. nation to think about the meaning of these words: hope and fear. Fear came first. “Will this happen again? Will I die soon? Will I fly on an airplane again? Will I work in a skyscraper again?” The feelings of fear revealed or showed our hopes. “I want to see my children grow up” “I want to live and work in a safe place” “I want my friends and family to be safe”.

What kinds of things do you fear? Are there some things you fear once in awhile but choose not to think about? Are there some things that you fear often or all the time? How do you handle your fears? Which of these fears are positive or helpful? Which of these fears are negative or unhelpful? Do you have any fears for the world as a whole?

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Do you remember a time that you would call a ‘fearful’ time of your life? What was the threat? How did you get through that time? Was your fear “realized” or did the cause of fear go away or not happen?

Do your personal fears reveal your personal hopes? If yes, give examples. What are some of your hopes about the future for yourself, or others close to you, or for the world?

How do your hopes and fears fit into your goals and daily activities? Do you feel hope and fear every day? Give examples. How do your hopes and fears affect your mood on a regular basis? Do your hopes or fears have more influence on you?

When you look at people around you, do you see people who are more hopeful or more fearful? Sometimes we describe people as optimists or pessimists. How would you describe yourself? Have you changed as you have gotten older?

Jesus speaks to his friends and followers about fear:

*“Don’t be afraid; believe in God, believe also in me. In my father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.”*

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” John 14:1-2, 27*

How do those verses make you feel?





## **Decision-Making: Head versus Heart**

In our lives, we have to make many small decisions everyday and occasionally some very large decisions. Two parts of ourselves may be involved in making decisions: our head and our heart. Sometimes head and heart don't agree!

First, define head and heart decisions. Give examples of each process.

Discuss the pros and cons of making decisions with the heart or the head. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

How do you make decisions on small things or big things? Do you make small decisions differently than big decisions? Do you involve other people in your decisions such as family, friends, teachers, coworkers or others?

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If and when you are married, how do you expect to make decisions that concern both husband and wife together?

Are you slow or fast to make decisions? For example, do you think for a long time before deciding to purchase a car or house, or take a job or have children? Or do you make decisions fairly quickly? Are you impulsive? Give examples.

Do you like to look back at decisions and say, "This was a good decision. This was a bad decision"? How do you decide if your decision was wise or not? How long do you wait to see results? Can a good decision have a bad outcome? Can a bad decision have a good outcome?

The Christian believes that God wants to be involved in their personal decisions. Here are three examples:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, who must have bit and bridle to direct them." Psalms 32:9

"(God) will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. . . He, your Teacher, will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. And your ears will hear a word behind, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left." Isaiah 30:19-21



## Five Years From Now

Sometimes, in our busy lives, we may forget to plan for the future. Yet we often can or need to take action now to prepare for the future. Talk about both your wild and crazy dreams and your concrete plans for the future. Think of these issues:

What do I want to **do** five years from now?

where do I want to live?

who do I want to live with?

do I want to be married? do I want to have children?

do I want to be in a career? If so, what kind of career?

do I want to develop a hobby or skill? If so, what kind?

Who do I want to **be** five years from now?

are there changes I'd like to make in myself?

what kind of character do I want to have?

This next question may be hard to understand. Ask yourself:

Am I **today** the person I wanted to be five years **ago**?

Am I **doing today**, the things I wanted to be doing five years **ago**?

Why or why not?

The third area to talk about is - what will you do tomorrow that will move you toward your five year goals? What kinds of obstacles might keep you from reaching your five year goals?

How often do you change your goals for the future? Are you sometimes happy when you don't meet your goals because your life turned in a different but interesting direction than you planned? Give examples.

**This quote is from Proverbs chapter 8:1-11, in the Old Testament of the Bible:**

Listen, Wisdom is calling.

Yes, Understanding is shouting for us.

Wisdom stands at the top of the hill,

by the road where the paths meet.

She is near the entrance to the city,

calling from the open gates.

"I am calling out to all of you.

I am speaking to everyone.

You who are ignorant, learn to be wise.

You who are foolish, get some common sense.

Listen, I have something important to say,

and I am telling you what is right.

My words are true,

and I will not say anything that is wrong.

Everything I say is right;

there is nothing false or crooked about it.

These things are clear to any intelligent person.

They are right to anyone with knowledge.

Choose discipline over silver

and knowledge over the finest gold.

Wisdom is better than pearls,

and nothing you desire compares with her."

**What is wisdom? Is it worth more to you than a good job or good education?**



[Holy Family by James B. Janknegt](#)

## Childhood Experiences

***And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*** Luke 2:52

We know very little about the childhood of Jesus. What do you imagine life was like for Him and His family?

I heard a story about a woman who had a scary childhood experience. There was a very bad fire in her house when she was 9 years old, and she was badly burned. Kids at school didn't want to talk to her because her face was scarred. After that she was very afraid of fire - barbecues, fireplaces, gasoline for the car or lawn mower and other things.

Many years later she went to a class on fighting fires (for firemen). She went into a burning house and put water on the fire. She was very, very scared to go into the burning house. But afterwards, she felt better



and was not afraid of fire. It was a very hard thing to do, but afterwards she had peace in her heart.

Today, let's talk about childhood experiences of **any** kind. They can be scary, happy, difficult, or anything, but talk about experiences that were important for you.

Tell about one or more important childhood experiences in detail. Tell about who, what, where, when, why and how. (It might be something that happened on one day, or over many years.)

How did these experiences affect you as an older child and/or adult?

Are your ideas about politics, religion, career, values, home and family affected by some important childhood experiences? Give examples and explain in detail.

If you are or will become a parent, what kind of childhood experiences do you want for your children, or **not** want for your children?

"God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

What does this quote say about childhood experiences? How might God use our childhood experiences? What are ways that something bad might become good?



## See You In Court

Have you ever seen the inside of a courtroom? Have you ever hired a lawyer? America is famous for lots of laws, lots of lawyers, and lots of lawsuits.

Here are some sample problems that some Americans might go to court about:

Your neighbor builds a fence that sits on your property.

Your competitor puts an ad on TV that says your product is terrible.

Your husband/wife moves to another state with your kids without your permission.

You fell off your bicycle onto your head and have permanent brain damage.

You got a speeding ticket.

How do people in your native culture respond to these kinds of situations? Would you consider going to court in the above situations? Why or why not? What are the some of the issues you might consider? What are some other possible responses to these situations?

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Would you like to be a judge? If someone asked you to judge between them and their neighbor - how would you prepare? Would you be comfortable making a decision for them? Why or why not? Have you ever been in such a position?

Lawsuits in the Bible - Paul the apostle speaks in 1 Corinthians 6:5-7

“Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? <sup>6</sup> But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

<sup>7</sup> The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?”

Well, why not?

Jesus makes this comment about avoiding going to court in Matthew 5:25:

“If anyone wants to take you to court, make friends with them quickly. Try to do that before you get to the court. If you don’t, they might hand you over to the judge. And the judge will hand you over to a guard, who will throw you into jail.”

Is this good advice? Why or why not?



## Education

Most governments of the world believe in public education. But the systems can vary a lot between one country and another. For example, some countries have only recently begun to educate girls as well as boys. In the United States, many more students finish high school and go on to college than was the norm 50 years ago.

How many years of schooling is normal in your native country? What age do children start school and finish school? How are the schools set up? Is school usually close to home or far away? Do students have a choice of schools? Are there both public and private schools in your native country? What are some of the reasons why a parent would send their child to public or to private school?

What kind of schools did you attend as a child or young adult? What is the difference between each of the schools that you attended? What schools have had the biggest impact on you? How? What classes are required for graduation from high school? Are sports, theater or music considered important parts of education? How would you like to improve the education system in your country?

What are the important milestones in your own education - graduations, important examinations, completion of certain classes?

How did students relate to their teachers? What was the atmosphere of the classroom? Did you enjoy school? Why or why not?

Did you wear a uniform to school? Was there a dress code or did you wear whatever you wanted?

When do most students decide on their career? What effect does the quality of your high school or the choice of college or technical school have upon your future career?

What important things did you learn outside of school? From where or from whom did you learn them?

Pursuing knowledge of God is a life-long learning process. How relevant or helpful is your own education to your life's work?

"Continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood, you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:14-16





## Forgiveness and Enemies

A 60-year old man named Bill talked about his son, Jeff. Jeff was a small boy when Bill left (divorced) his wife and his kids to marry another woman. As a result, Jeff hated his father for 40 years and could not forgive him. But finally Jeff realized that he could not make progress in life unless he stopped hating his father. This year, Jeff finally forgave his father and now they are friends.

When someone hurts us, there are three basic responses that often occur:

1. the person hurt wants revenge - wants to hurt the person who hurt them
2. the person hurt tries to avoid the person who hurt them
3. the person hurt forgives the person who hurt them and they continue on as friends

What do you think of these responses? What is easier? What is harder? What is best? Why?

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How do you respond to someone who has hurt you, your family or something that is important to you? Do you use one or more of the three common responses? Give an example of how you responded in a hurtful situation.

Some countries or peoples have hated other countries or peoples for centuries. Is it right for one ethnic group to hate another ethnic group for centuries because of a war or hurt that happened long ago? Why or why not?

Have you ever turned an enemy into a friend? How did you do it? Give an example. Have you ever had a friend turn into an enemy? How did it happen?

Do you have any rivals? A rival could be a competitor for a job, an opposing team in sports, or a business that competes with your business. Do you view or treat a rival differently than an enemy? How?

A famous Christian prayer, taught by Jesus Himself, is called "The Lord's Prayer". The prayer is this:

Our Father, who is in heaven. Hallowed (holy) be Your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts (sins) as we forgive our debtors (those who sin against us)

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6:9-13)

The fourth line connects what we do -- with what God does for us in the area of forgiveness. Why is it so important to God that we forgive people who sin against or hurt us?

Jesus spoke on the subject of enemies - Matthew 5:43-46a

"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?"

Why does Jesus tell us to love our enemies? What kinds of actions would result from loving our enemies?

Watch this video, [Signs of Forgiveness](#) . Write a paragraph about someone you need to forgive.





## Seasons

In Fall (Autumn), the weather changes. When I leave my house, I have to think – “Should I bring an umbrella? Do I need a raincoat?” Then, when winter arrives, gloves and a warm winter coat will go with me everyday.

We associate certain things with certain seasons. Some people groan as winter approaches. Some people cheer. Which is your favorite season and why? Think about each of the seasons in turn - Autumn (Fall), Winter, Spring and Summer. What do you associate with each season? Give examples. Think of the:

foods you eat and clothes you wear

places you go and people you see

holidays

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changes in activity or work  
hobbies or sports  
special experiences from each season

What do you think of this poem below about seasons or times of life? Do you agree with it? Do you think this is saying that all seasons are “good”? Why or why not? Discuss one or two of these “times” by giving examples of them from your own life.

“There’s a time for everything. There’s a time for everything done on earth.  
There is a time to be born, And there’s a time to die.  
There is a time to plant. And there’s a time to pull up from the ground.  
There is a time to kill. And there’s a time to heal.  
There is a time to tear down. And there is a time to build up.  
There is a time to cry. And there is a time to laugh.  
There is a time to be sad. And there is a time to dance.  
There is a time to scatter stones. And there is a time to gather them.  
There is a time to hug. And there is a time not to hug.  
There is a time to search. And there is a time to stop searching.  
There is a time to keep. And there is a time to throw away.  
There is a time to tear. And there is a time to mend.  
There is a time to be silent. And there is a time to speak.  
There is a time to love. And there is a time to hate.  
There is a time for war. And there is a time for peace.” Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

What season of life are you in now? How long have you been in this season?  
What have you learned in the difficult seasons?







## Personality

John is very friendly to everyone. Tom is shy and quiet. Susan gets angry easily but then stops quickly. Joann rarely gets angry, but when she does, she stays mad for a long time.

Sam likes to work with a team. But Teresa likes to work alone. Matt often looks worried and sounds worried. Kelly never looks bothered by anything and always says "It'll work out just fine!"

It's personality!

Do you like your personality? How would you describe your personality? Have you ever taken a personality test? One theory says there are 4 basic kinds of personalities – Detail Seeking, Results Seeking, Harmony Seeking and Excitement Seeking. Do you agree? If you agree, how would you classify yourself?

Do you think it's possible to change your personality? If so, how? Have you ever tried to change your personality? Did you succeed? Why or why not?

Where does personality come from? From your genes? From your environment? Explain. Give examples.

Do you think it's good to use medicine to change your personality? Why or why not? For example, if I have a pessimistic and sad personality, maybe I can change it by taking an antidepressant medication. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea? Why or why not?

Do you recommend psychological counseling to people with the following conditions – depression, anxiety or worry, quick temper, violent, insensitive, selfish? Why or why not?

Does personality affect . . . what jobs you take? . . . who you marry? . . . how you raise your children? . . . who are your friends? Give examples.

Do you get along with all personality types? What personality types are easiest for you to get along with? What types are hardest for you?

Jesus was traveling. A woman named Martha invited Jesus into her home. "She had a sister called Mary, who was listening to the Lord's word, seated at his feet. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to him, and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'" Luke 10:39-42

Does this short story tell us more about the personalities or priorities of the two women? Explain.

For extra practice, take this [free Myers-Briggs Personality test](#)

What did the results say about you? Do you feel this is accurate? Why or why not?



## Where do I belong?

It is common in Japan to introduce yourself not by your name only but by the company or other group that you belong to. Some cultures call people by their family names because knowing the family that you belong to is more important than you as an individual. In some cultures the father's first name or the mother's name become part of your name and are very important in describing who you are.

Are names important in your culture? Explain why or why not. What is the meaning of your full name, if any?

What groups do you belong to? Which groups are you part of temporarily? Or permanently? Which groups do you act as a servant in? Which groups serve you? Which groups have both aspects - service by you and for you? Which have the strongest connection with your life? Explain.

When you move from one place to another, do you change what groups you are in, or add more, or do you lose a group to belong to?

Do you define yourself more as part of a group or as an individual by yourself?  
Explain in detail.

Some types of groups:

Companies

Schools

Families

Country, city, state, neighborhood

Clubs, churches, synagogues, teams

Race, ethnic background

Christian, Buddhist, Orthodox, Judaism

Political parties

The Bible talks about where Christians belong:

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Philippians 3:20

“You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household.” Ephesians 2:19

“You also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” Eph. 2:22

Watch this [YouTube video on belonging](#)

Where do you feel that you belong? Where do you feel you don’t belong?  
Why?





## Clutter

Clutter is something that Americans know very well, and try to fight with more or less success. The dictionary defines clutter as “a number of things scattered in disorder; jumble.” For example, in my closet, besides clothes, I see shoes piled on top of other shoes, an electric fan, pillows, blankets, books, notebooks, plastic bags, empty shoe boxes, suitcases, photo albums, clown shoes, hats and music books. It makes me feel tired just to look at it all! Much of our clutter problems come from collecting junk.

Is clutter a problem for you in your home, office or life in general? What are some of the common ways that junk comes into your home, office or life?

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Look at the questions below. If you answer “yes” to some – tell whether or not you think that this area is a clutter problem for you. Do your conversation partners agree with you? Get their advice.

Do you keep out-of-date magazines? For how long?

Do you have clothes in several different sizes?

Do you have photographs that you don’t look at because they’re stored and hard to find?

Do you keep broken things in hopes of fixing them some day? Do you ever fix them?

Do you have file cabinets full of files that you never look at, or with old bills and bank statements that are more than 7 years old?

Do you have medicine, cosmetics, after-shave or toiletries that you never use?

If clutter or “junk” in your life is not an issue, please explain how you keep clutter and junk away (and write a book for Americans to read). How do you handle junk mail?

How do you deal with gifts – especially a gift that is not useful to you? Do you feel you must keep it, display it, wear it, even if you don’t enjoy it? Have you ever gotten rid of a gift from your mother, your best friend, your spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend or some significant person? What is most important about a gift – the item itself or the feeling behind it? Explain. If you give a gift to someone, how would you feel if they gave it away, threw it away or sold it? Give examples!

How do you deal with mental clutter – news, books, movies, TV, radio, even people who want to talk to you – so that you have time to just think and discover who you are? Do you have to fight mental clutter?

How do you deal with food clutter – the potato chips at the party, the donuts at the office or cookies at school? Do you eat more than you like, or eat things that you consider junk for your body? How can you keep the food clutter under control?

*“Anyone who loves money never has enough. Anyone who loves wealth is never satisfied with what he gets. That doesn’t have any meaning either. . . . The sleep of a worker is sweet. It doesn’t matter whether he eats a little or a lot. But the wealth of a rich man keeps him awake at night.”*

Do you agree with these words of King Solomon from Ecclesiastes 5:10-12?

Take this fun [quiz](#) to see how much of a hoarder you are. Look up definitions of at least 5 new vocabulary words you see.

## Dreams



We speak of dreams in many ways. Sometimes we are talking about the stories our mind creates while we are asleep. (A bad or scary dream is called a “nightmare”.) Sometimes we speak of “day dreams” – when our mind wanders away from the present and we are imagining something or creating a fantasy in our minds while awake.

Do you remember very many of your dreams from sleeping? Do you have good dreams, nightmares or a mixture? Do you like to remember your dreams or not? Why?

Do you often daydream? Does your mind easily wander from your present life and into a fantasy world? When does this happen the most, if ever? What kinds of fantasies do you create in your mind?

Do you enjoy fantasy or science fiction literature? If so, give an example.

We often speak of a “dream” as that goal or future plan that we really, really want. Often it is difficult to “make our dream come true.” What kind of dreams do you have for the future?

Imagine that a young man of 19-years old dies in a car accident. When he dies, some dreams die at the same time. His mother and father had dreams of seeing their son grow, marry and have children. He had his own dreams for his life too. Does it seem unnatural and tragic when children die before their parents? Have you seen this happen in your own experience?

Have you ever seen a dream die? What caused it to die? How did you recover from the loss? Did you make new dreams/plans for the future? What were the new dreams?

Have you seen a dream come true? Describe it to your conversation partners.

Here is a kind of dream of the future from the last book of the Bible called Revelation. Someday there will be a new earth, different from the earth we live on now. Here is a small part of the description of the new earth in the future:

*“Now God makes his home with people. He will live with them. They will be his people. And God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be.”* Revelation 21:3-4

Do you ever dream of a world without crying or pain or sadness or death? Do you think you would miss things like war, conflict, pain, or sadness in a new world? Why or why not?

Write a paragraph to describe one of your dreams.

## Wonder of Wonders



In the Smithsonian Natural History Museum in Washington D.C. there is a wonderful display of rocks – minerals, crystals and gems. There are samples of beautiful crystals – 1 foot in diameter, even several feet in diameter – in many colors, sparkling with light and beauty. The gems are crystals that a skilled person has cut to show even more light. They also are beautiful, but the natural crystals seemed the most beautiful of all.

At the Smithsonian, some people have a “wow” experience. They see these crystals - things that are wonderful and marvelous. They are marvels and they are wonders, and we marvel and wonder at them!

Tell about a “wow” experience that you have had – an experience when you don’t say “been there, done that”, but you feel an excitement in your soul and your whole self says, “WOW!”

What are some examples of things that you think are wonderful and marvelous? Please don’t stop at one story, please give several examples and make sure every partner gets to tell more than one story. Listen carefully



and see if you feel “WOW” also as your partner tells a story. Here are some possible types of WOW experiences:

- an experience of the natural world
- an experience with people
- an experience with small children or babies
- an insight into the meaning of life
- a book that changed your life
- a poem that inspires you deeply
- a story that you’ll always remember

The Psalms in the Bible often speak of the natural wonders of the world:

*“The heavens tell about the glory of God.*

*The skies show that his hands created them.*

*Day after day they speak about it.*

*Night after night they make it known.*

*But they don’t speak or use words.*

*No sound is heard from them.*

*At the same time, their voice goes out into the whole earth.*

*Their words go out from one end of the world to the other.*

*God has set up a tent in the heavens for the sun.*

*The sun is like a groom coming out of the room*

*where he spent his wedding night.*

*The sun is like a great runner who takes delight in running a race.*

*It rises at one end of the heavens.*

*Then it moves across to the other end.*

*Nothing can hide from its heat.* Psalm 19:1-6

Write a paragraph about a “wow” experience in your life.



## Travel Time

What are some places you've traveled to? Were you a tourist or did you have a business or study purpose? Did you know anyone in the country you visited? What do you like least/most about business travel? What do you like least/most about tourist travel? Why?

Where do you like to travel to in your native country? What would you recommend as the important places to visit or things to see?

Describe personal travel experiences that were . . . . enjoyable, educational, physically challenging, culturally challenging, inspiring, crazy, a disaster or romantic. (If you haven't traveled much, tell stories about life in your hometown.)

What are some places you would like to travel to in the future? Do you like to travel with others or alone? What would be your "dream" vacation? Would you like to go on a planned tour or make your own arrangements each day?

What do you most enjoy when you travel - museums, natural beauty, the city, the countryside, meeting people, music or theater, experiencing a very different culture, a sense of history of a new place, using a language you've studied?

Do you like to sample new kinds of food from different countries? What are some of the most delicious things you've tried? What are some of the weirdest foods you've tried?

Have you experienced various ways of traveling? If so, which do you prefer? For example - travel by bike, bus, train, car, airplane, boat or on foot.

What places do you recommend to visit in the world? Why do you recommend them?

What kinds of things have helped you when you faced trouble when you were traveling? Here's a small piece of a shipwreck story that took place in the Mediterranean Sea:

'When Paul was on the ship during a terrible storm, he gave comfort to his shipmates in this way:

*"I urge you to keep up your courage, for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying,*

*"Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you."*

*"Therefore, keep up your courage men, for I believe God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on a certain island."*

Acts 27:22-26

Write a paragraph about the most interesting place you have visited or would like to visit someday. Tell about the people, landscape, food and other features that make it interesting.

## Retirement



What do you think of when you hear the word “retirement?” Does it sound soon or far in the future? Does it sound good, relaxed, boring, scary, or fun? Would you like to retire someday, or would you rather work until you die?

The retirement age keeps getting higher and higher as people live longer and longer. Does your country have a retirement age when you must retire or when you can begin collecting a pension. What is your opinion about requiring someone to retire at a certain age? Is it a good or bad rule? Give examples of good or bad effects.

One American man had two, long careers. He spent 20 years in the Navy and then retired. Then he spent 20 years as a Superior Court Judge and retired again. Now he’s working at least part-time as an attorney. What do you think? Has he retired one-time, two-times, or never???? (Your answer depends upon what you think retirement is.)

One model of life is that you work for 20-40 years and then you rest for 10-20 years. A second model of life is that you alternate work and rest during all your years. (Some people want to make sure they relax and have fun while they are young and in good health, instead of waiting until they are older.) Which model of life do you prefer for yourself? How will you do it?

What do you want your own retirement to be like? Where do you want to live? What do you want to do with your time? Will you have many friends or just a few? Do you expect to work until you are 80 or 90? Why or why not?

If you're already retired, tell us what it is like. Are you satisfied with what you're doing? Did you prepare in the right ways for your retirement? What advice would you give to younger people?

The more retirement years we have, the more money we need to support ourselves in retirement. By working longer, we can shorten the retirement years and save more money. What have you done to prepare for retirement? In your native culture, how much preparation for retirement is needed? Does the government support people in retirement? Or do companies support people? Where does retirement money usually come from?

What is Jesus' message in the following story? Does it mean "don't save for retirement" or does it have another meaning? Defend your opinion.

*'The land of a certain rich man was very productive. And He began reasoning to himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?" And he said, "This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry"'*

*'But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

Luke 12:15-21



## Money Matters



Consider this Jewish proverb about money:

Give me neither poverty nor riches;  
Feed me with the food that is my portion,  
Or else I might be full  
and deny my God, saying “Who is He?”  
Or else I might need something and steal,  
And throw mud on the name of my God.

Do you have any similar types of proverbs in your native culture? What kinds of lessons do fathers and mothers teach their children about money as they’re growing up in your native culture? Do school teachers and the government teach the same things? Give examples of common wisdom about money in your experience.

How does money fit into the normal goals of an adult in your country? How does money fit into your own personal goals? Has your view of the role of money in life changed as you have grown older or as your circumstances have changed? Explain.

How do you define “poor” or “poverty”? How do you define “rich”? Do you think most people agree with your definitions? Would people in the U.S., China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Guatemala or other countries agree with your definition? Explain why or why not. Do you believe that the definitions of “poor” and “rich” have changed over time in your native culture, or in the world? Explain your answer.

How do you like to handle your own money? Are you free with your money? Do you save a lot of money? Do you like to borrow or do you avoid borrowing? Why or why not? If you have a spouse, do you prefer to handle the bill paying or do you like to have your spouse do those tasks? What do you think is a safe investment for the future? Are you saving for your retirement?

What do you think of this?

*“Jesus said, ‘Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who have it all to enter God’s kingdom? I’d say it’s easier to thread a camel through the eye of a needle than get a rich person into God’s kingdom.*

*“Then who has any chance at all?” others asked.*

*“No chance at all,” Jesus said, “if you think you can pull it off by yourself. Every chance in the world if you trust God to do it.” Luke 18 (The Message)*

**Writing exercise:** If you won a million dollars, how would you spend it and why?

## Mountain Top Experiences



Have you ever had an experience where you felt very excited and happy for several hours or even several days? Perhaps it was on a special trip or retreat, a party or wedding, graduation ceremonies or working hard on a project that you felt passionate about - some time that was not ordinary but extraordinary in your life. You wished it wouldn't have to end. We call these mountain top experiences.

Mountain top experiences always come to an end. And then we must return to normal life, responsibilities, annoyances and tasks. Perhaps for a while, we still feel a "glow" from our mountain top experience. Or perhaps we feel a bit depressed when we come back to normal life after our mountain top experience.

Please describe one or more times in your life that you would call mountain top experiences as I've defined them. Give details of what made the experience so special for you. What were the circumstances? Was it a mountain top experience for others too, or just for you? Why did it affect you so strongly?

Did you have the desire to live your life differently after this experience? Did the experience change you permanently in some way, or was it a temporary effect?

How did you react to normal life again after the experience? Was it difficult to return to normal things?

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Saul is a man who tried to kill Jews who followed Jesus. But then one day he had a “mountain top experience” – but not on a mountain, just on a road.

*“Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground. He heard a voice speak to him, “Saul! Saul!” the voice said, “Why are you opposing me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.*

*“I am Jesus,” he replied. “I am the one you are opposing. Now get up and go into the city. There you will be told what you must do.”*

*The men traveling with Saul stood there. They weren’t able to speak. They had heard sound. But they didn’t see anyone. Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eye, but he couldn’t see. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind. He didn’t eat anything.” Acts 9:3-9*

What was the purpose of this mountain top experience in Saul’s life? How would you react to such an experience if you were Saul?

What mountain top experiences would you like to have? Do you have a bucket list of things you would like to do someday? Take a look at this example [traditional bucket list](#) or [spiritual bucket list](#) write about two things you would like to do and explain why.

## Love



What is love? How can we define it? Let's do an association game – in any language, write all the things, words, people, places, whatever that you associate with “love”. Take a few minutes to do this and then share your lists with each other. If you still need a topic after that, read on!

Is love a feeling, an action, an attitude, a decision or something else? How would you define love? Give examples of love from your own personal experience.

What is it like to love? Does it feel good all the time? Does it sometimes feel bad or sad to love someone? Give examples of love that makes you sad and love that makes you happy.

Describe a very loving person that you know. Tell about their background. How did they learn to love? What do they do that shows they are loving?

What do you think about crushes? Is it love or something else? If it's not love, what is it? What is the best response to a crush – when you have a crush on someone else and when someone else has a crush on you? Give examples from your own experience, or from advice that you've received.

What is your favorite love story that is about romance?

What is your favorite love story that is NOT about romance?

How do you teach someone to love? Who were your teachers? Were they parents, school teachers, friends, a boy or girl-friend or others? How much of your idea about love was formed by things you've read or studied? How much of your idea about love was formed from people that you've known?

Who is the first person that deeply loved you? Who is the first person that you deeply loved?

Here are quotes from the Bible – writing about love:

*"We know what love is because Jesus Christ gave his life for us. So we should give our loves for our brothers and sisters. Suppose someone sees a brother or sister in need and is able to help them. If he doesn't take care of them, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, don't just talk about love. Put your love into action."* **1 John 3:16-18**

*One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

*"The most important one" answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* **Mark 12:28-31**

What does love in action look like? What does it mean to you to love God and love your neighbor? How have you seen God's love in your own life?



## In My Room



When I am in my room, I see trees from my window. I see a bedspread with many shades of blue and purple. Above my end table are tacked a Picasso poster showing two hands exchanging flowers, a T-shirt showing the Russian alphabet and several grade-school art pictures by my daughter. My desk, the floor and the top of the file-cabinet are piled with books, papers, notebooks and letters.

Rooms can speak. What does your room say about you? In your mind's eye, look around your room (or rooms) and describe what you see. Describe a room from your home growing up and a room in your current home. Then tell what those things mean to you. For example:

What kind of furniture is there in your room?

What do the walls, ceiling, floor look like? What colors are in your room?

Is there a window? What can you see? Do you open the curtains or leave them closed a lot? Do you like the view from your window? Why or why not?

Is your room used for many kinds of things? Is it for resting, for work, for hobbies, for thinking, for talking? Is it decorated for beauty? Or is it organized to be very useful and functional? Explain.

Is it a private place, just for you, or do many people visit?

What do you like best about your room?

What do you like least about your room?

Do you like your room kept very clean, or is it messy ok? What kinds of “clean” do you care about - dust? dirt? clutter? windows? floors? walls? spider-webs? organization? clothes on the floor? Who cleans your room, if not you?

Have you ever wanted your “own room”, perhaps as a child? What did you want most in a room of your own? Do you like to share with a roommate or sibling?

Describe a favorite room from your childhood.

About rooms in the Bible:

*“And Mary gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7*

\*\*\*\* When Jesus started life, he didn’t have a room at all! If Jesus is an important person, why did he begin life so poor? What is your guess?

*“When you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”*

Matthew 6:6

\*\*\*\* Why is it valuable to pray in secret? Are there risks to public prayer?

*Jesus said, “Don’t be troubled. Trust in God, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with me, so that you can be where I am.” John 14:1-3*

\*\*\*\* How do you feel to know that Jesus has a place prepared for you?

## Inheritance



A Jewish proverb from the Bible says - "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children." An inheritance is something that you own because of a birthright. A birthright is a right you have because of the family or country or culture you are born into.

Do you agree that families should leave an inheritance for their children or grandchildren? Should all children share equally? Why or why not? Do you think that elderly people should try to use the money they have for pleasure in their retirement or save a lot of money for their children and grandchildren? Does your opinion stay the same when you think of yourself and when you think of your own grandparents or parents?

What have you inherited? Do you have a treasured possession passed to you by a loved one? Do you have heirs - people who will receive an inheritance from you at the time of your death? Have you made a will - a document that says who your heirs are? Is it common to make a will in your native culture? Why or why not? Have you heard of families arguing over a will? Give an example of that.

We also speak of inherited traits. What are some characteristics that you have inherited from your parents or grandparents - for example, eye or hair color, body type, certain skills or personality traits?

Some inherited traits may not be good. Do you think you can inherit a bad temper, a habit of lying or depression, alcoholism, perfectionism or other negative traits? Give examples. If your parent is an alcoholic, will you be an alcoholic? Why or why not?

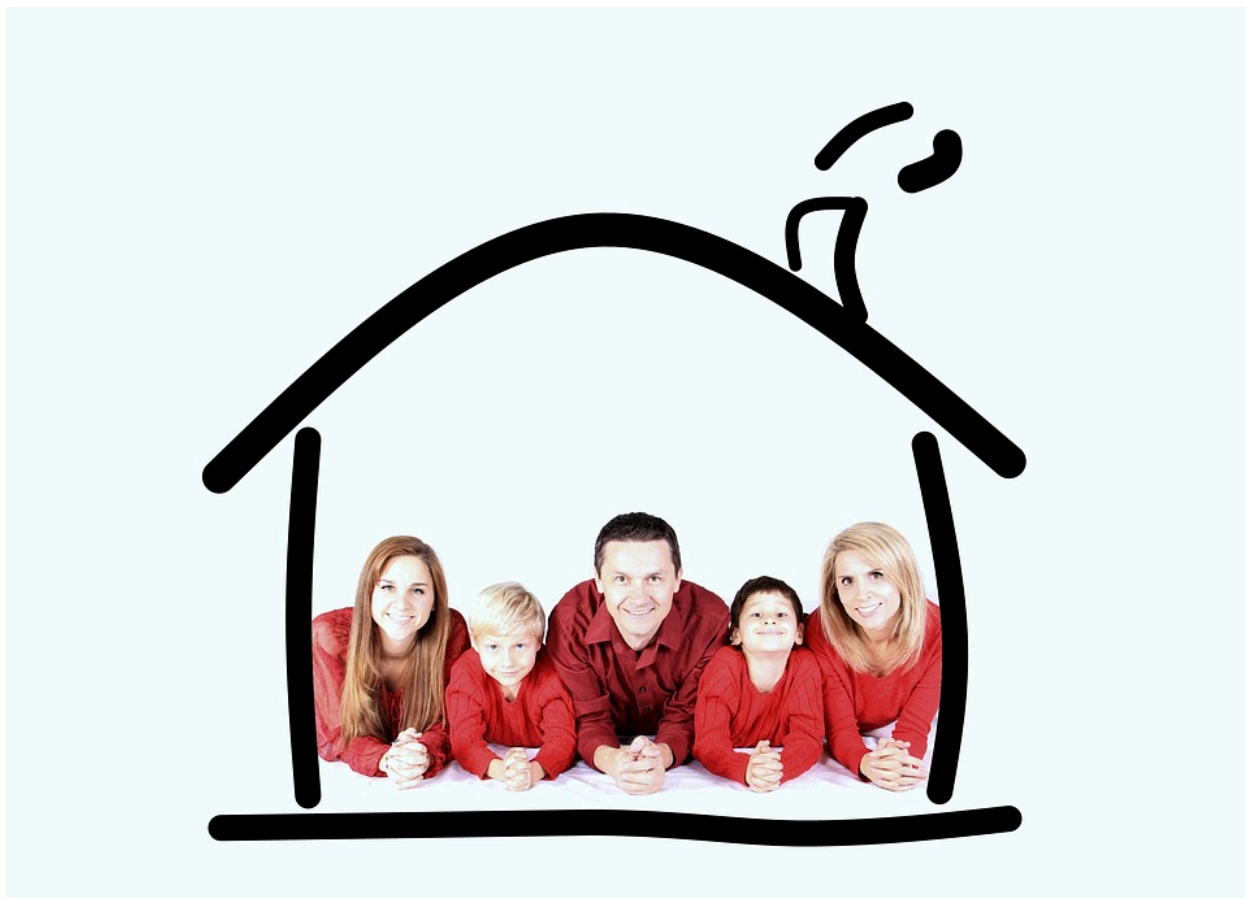
Adoption is somewhat popular in the United States. When a family adopts a child, that child, along with any biological children will then inherit the wealth of the family. Is adoption popular in your native culture? Why or why not? Have you known anyone who was adopted?

The Bible talks about adoption of people by God. You keep your human family, but in addition you inherit a very, very large family of people who believe in and obey God.

*“God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created. He chose us to be holy and without blame in his eyes. He loved us. So he decided long ago to adopt us as his children”* Ephesians 1:4-5

\*\*\*\*How might God raise his children? What would it be like to consider God your father?

## Home is . . . .



A young lost girl named Dorothy, in the movie “The Wizard of Oz”, found a way to go back to her home and family by repeating: “There’s no place like home, there’s no place like home, there’s no place like home.” It was a truth that Dorothy had forgotten.

How do you feel at home - is it comfortable? Are you accepted? Is it your favorite place to be? What do you like best about your home? What do you like least about your home? Describe your home and the most important things about it, for you. Compare your current home to a home as a child. How are they different or the same?

Sometimes we say “I feel at home here” and we’re talking about a friend’s house, a special place by the ocean or even a job where we are comfortable. Do you have any “homes” that are NOT the place where you live? For example, it could be an entire city, a job, a special group of people, someone else’s home or a favorite vacation spot. Why do you feel “at home” there?

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What is it like to leave home? Tell about that experience in your life. How do you make a new home? Give an example. How many “homes” can one person have at one time? Why? How many different homes have you had in your life? Tell about one or more of them.

There is a very large canary named Big Bird that is on a TV show for children called Sesame Street. Big Bird says that “The more sad you are at saying good-bye to someone, it just shows how much you have loved each other.” Have you had a sad good-bye to someone that you loved and who loved you very much?

We also have a saying in the U.S. “Home is where the heart is.” Where is your heart most at home, most comfortable? Why?

In your native country, are there any homeless people? What is their life like? Is there any way for their life to improve?

Does your native country receive refugees from other countries? What would it be like if you had to leave your own home because of war or famine? If you could carry only a few things, what would you take with you?

What do you think of this statement? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer. Do you have such a saying in your native culture?

*“A prophet is not honored in his hometown. He doesn’t receive any honor among his relatives. And he doesn’t receive any in his own home.” Mark 6:4*





## Famous People

Have you ever wanted to go back in time to the past and meet some famous person? Perhaps there is a political or military leader, philosopher or author, or other influential person who lived long ago that interests you. Who would you like to meet from the past?

Perhaps there is a famous person who is now living that you would like to meet. Who is it and why?

Tell your conversation partners about at least 2 (or 10 or 20!) famous people that you are interested in. Explain why you find them interesting.

What kinds of questions would you ask these famous people if you could meet them now?

If you could trade places with a famous person for a year, which one would you choose and why?

What famous person would you not want to trade places with – and why not?

Some ordinary people would like very much to be famous. There are many TV programs such as “America’s Got Talent” and “Master Chef” where people compete to become famous. Why do people like to watch these TV shows? Do you think it is a good goal to try and become famous? What do you think that you might be famous for?

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What are the pros and cons of being famous? What are the pros and cons of trying to become famous?

Can you name some of the famous people in the Bible? Some names that many Americans would know are Jesus Christ, Moses, Abraham, Daniel, David, Noah, Mary and Paul – are these people famous in your native country?

Here is a conversation between Jesus and some of his students:

*Jesus asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?”*

*But they kept quiet. On the way, they had argued about which one of them was the most important person. . . Then He said,*

*“If you want to be first, you must be the very last. You must be the servant of everyone.”*

Mark 9:33-35

\*\*\*What do you think of Jesus’ way of becoming important?

\*\*\*Write a paragraph about a famous person you admire from the Bible, history or popular culture. Why do you admire this person?

## Children



We all were children once. Do you remember what it was like to be 5 or 10 or 15 years old? When you were a child, were you in a hurry to grow up and do adult things? Or did you love being a child and only reluctantly grow up into adulthood? What was your favorite age and why?

When do you have opportunities to be around children? Do you have children of your own? Do you like to spend time with other people's children - teaching, baby-sitting, visiting, playing? Why or why not? Do you prefer to spend time with adults? Why? What is your favorite age group?

Do you think that it is useful for adults to remember what it was like to be a child? Is it useful to still be like a child in some ways? Or would it simply be childish to act like a child now? Explain your thinking.

Sometimes we describe a fun experience, movie or game as being for the young or for the "young at heart". What does it mean to you, to be "young at heart." Do you feel that you are young at heart? Why or why not?

A woman of 40 years old that I know still feels that she is “growing up.” Yet in some cultures, a boy or girl of 12 is considered an adult. When do you think that a child becomes an adult? Are you still “growing up”?

In your chosen career, do you (or would you) prefer to work with children, adults, both or neither? Please explain your answer

When Jesus was on earth, He had much to say about children. One time, his followers (disciples) were trying to keep the children from getting close to Jesus. But Jesus said, *“Let the children alone, and do not stop them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”* Matthew 19:14.

Jesus saw something important in a child that adults could learn from:

*“2 Jesus called a little child to come to him. He stood the child in front of the followers. 3 Then he said, “The truth is, you must change your thinking and become like little children. If you don’t do this, you will never enter God’s kingdom. 4 The greatest person in God’s kingdom is the one who makes himself humble like this child.*

*5 “Whoever accepts a little child like this in my name is accepting me.*

*6 “If one of these little children believes in me, and someone causes that child to sin, it will be very bad for that person. It would be better for them to have a millstone tied around their neck and be drowned in the deep sea.”*

Matthew 18:2-6

Questions -

1. What are some important lessons that we can learn from children?
2. What does it mean to become like children so that we can be close to God and enter God’s kingdom?

## Fitness and Health



Do you think you have a healthy lifestyle? Why or why not? Which parts of your lifestyle would you like to improve? Why do many people try to have a healthy lifestyle? What is the main purpose of it?

Is physical activity (exercising, going to a gym, walking) an important part of a healthy lifestyle? What exercises do you like to do? Why do you enjoy them? Which exercises do you dislike?

What is healthy food? Do you pay much attention to what you eat? Do you think it is more important for you to eat healthy or tasty food? How many meals do you eat each day? Do you try to eat your breakfast, lunch and dinner at a certain time every day?

Do you have a snack every time you are hungry or do you wait for lunch or dinner?  
Do you agree with the saying: "Eat your breakfast, share your lunch with a friend and give your dinner to your enemy"? Why do people say so?

Is obesity a great problem in where you live?

Why are there so many obese people in the US? What are the most efficient ways to lose weight?

Do you think diets are useful or not? Have you ever tried to go on a diet? What kind of diet was it? Did it work?

What do you think about fasting?

How many hours of sleep do you need daily?

If you don't sleep enough, how do you feel and look?

Do you try to go to bed and get up at certain hours every day?

What is good about your sleep schedule?

The Bible talks about caring for our 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 6:19-20

*For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.* 1 Timothy 4:8

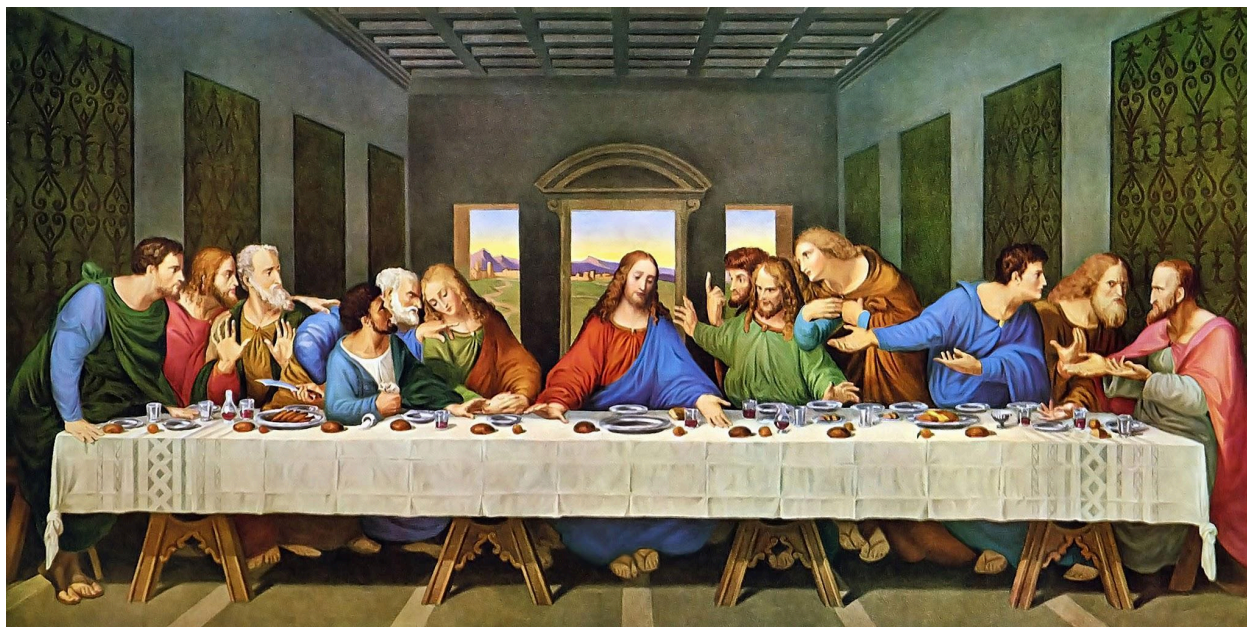
*Don't consider yourself wise. Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. Then your body will be healthy and your bones strengthened.* Proverbs 3:7-8

*Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* Matthew 4:4

Choose one of the verses above and write a paragraph explaining how it applies in your own life.



## Gestures



What are the gestures for "I don't know", "You are crazy", "Money", "Come here" and "Be quiet" in your country?

What are some positive gestures in your country?

What are some insulting gestures in your country?

Can you think of some gestures that have different meanings in different countries?

Has your teacher ever used a hand and/or facial gesture that was okay in the teacher's country but an insult in your country? If so, did you tell the teacher so it would not happen again?

What are some gestures that you have seen but you don't know the meaning of?

What are some gestures you know that relate to the sporting world?

Have you ever made a social mistake using wrong gestures in foreign countries?

What gesture in your culture do you think is unique from other cultures?

What gestures, in your opinion, are understood by people anywhere in the world?

Do gestures help you to understand others and express yourself, or are they sometimes confusing and distracting?

Can you say anything in sign language?

How much do people in your country move their hands when they talk?

Do you know any gestures you can make with your feet? What do they mean?

Why do you think people express themselves with gestures?

How do you signal a waiter in your country?

What's your country's gesture for peace? What if you show it backwards? (E.g. In Hong Kong, if the back of the hand faces the audience when you're using a "V" peace sign, it is an insult).

How do you signal that you're bored? tired? angry?

How do you gesture "Go away!"?

Have you or anybody like your friends or family ever made their own new gesture?

What are some universal gestures for "help"? Choking?

How do you count on your fingers in your country?

When is it appropriate to point?

Do you "talk" with your hands? Do you know anyone who does?

Which gestures do you think are universal?

At the last supper, Jesus and his disciples used gestures to communicate:

*After Jesus said these things, he felt very troubled. He said openly, "Believe me when I say that one of you will hand me over to my enemies."*

*His followers all looked at each other. They did not understand who Jesus was talking about. One of the followers was next to Jesus and was leaning close to him. This was the one Jesus loved very much. Simon Peter made signs to this follower to ask Jesus who he was talking about.*

*That follower leaned closer to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"*

*Jesus answered him, "I will dip this bread into the dish. The man I give it to is the one."*

*So Jesus took a piece of bread, dipped it, and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. When Judas took the bread, Satan entered him. Jesus said to Judas, "What you will do—do it quickly!" No one at the table understood why Jesus said this to Judas.*

*Since Judas was the one in charge of the money, some of them thought that Jesus meant for him to go and buy some things they needed for the feast. Or they thought that Jesus wanted him to go give something to the poor.*

*Judas ate the bread Jesus gave him. Then he immediately went out. It was night.*

**John 13:21-30**

What questions would you like to ask Jesus if you were sitting with Him?

## Cars and Driving



According to insurance statistics women are better drivers than men. Do you agree?

In the US, you must be 16 years old to get a driver's license. Do you think this is a good age? At what age can you get a license in your country? Do you think the age for driving should be raised or lowered? How old were you when you first learned to drive? Who taught you? How long did it take you to learn? What was difficult about learning to drive?

Do you have a car now? If so, what kind of car do you have? What are the advantages and disadvantages of owning a car? Do you prefer driving or riding public transportation? Do you know anything about repairing or maintaining a car? What do you know how to do? Where did you learn how to do this? Can you change a flat tire?

Do you think self-driving cars are a good idea? Why or why not?

Are you a good driver? Have you ever been in a car accident? Have you ever been pulled over by the police? What happened?

Tell about a memorable car drive in your life. What is the longest trip you have ever taken by car? How do American drivers compare to drivers in your country? On what occasions do you honk your car horn?

What is the price of gasoline in your country? Do you think that there is a relationship between global warming and cars?

What kind of laws does your country have about drunk driving? What is the penalty for drunk driving? Do you know anyone who has been in an accident related to drunk driving?

Are the traffic laws in your country strict or lax? Is it common for traffic cops to accept bribes? Have you ever bribed a policeman in your country after he pulled you over? Do people often jaywalk in your country? Is it legal?

Have you had your car vandalized, stolen, or car radio taken?

Have you ever broken down and been stranded on the side of the road? Who helped you?

Jesus told a story about a man who was helped on a road.

*Jesus said, "A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some robbers surrounded him, tore off his clothes, and beat him. Then they left him lying there on the ground almost dead.*

*31 "It happened that a Jewish priest was going down that road. When he saw the man, he did not stop to help him. He walked away. 32 Next, a Levite came near. He saw the hurt man, but he went around him. He would not stop to help him either. He just walked away.*

*33 "Then a Samaritan man traveled down that road. He came to the place where the hurt man was lying. He saw the man and felt very sorry for him. 34 The Samaritan went to him and poured olive oil and wine on his wounds. Then he covered the man's wounds*

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*with cloth. The Samaritan had a donkey. He put the hurt man on his donkey, and he took him to an inn. There he cared for him. 35 The next day, the Samaritan took out two silver coins and gave them to the man who worked at the inn. He said, 'Take care of this hurt man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again.'"*

*36 Then Jesus said, "Which one of these three men do you think was really a neighbor to the man who was hurt by the robbers?"*

*37 The teacher of the law answered, "The one who helped him."*

*Jesus said, "Then you go and do the same."*

- Write about a time you were in need and someone helped you.





## Turning Point

Sometimes in life we are moving in one direction when we realize we need to turn around and move in a different direction. This is called a turning point. Who do you know that has changed the direction of their life? What caused the change?

What have been some of the turning points in your life? Have you changed your job, your home, your friends or your habits?

How have you changed as you have gotten older? Do you feel good about the direction you are going now, or would you like to change?

Have you ever made changes that you disliked and then gone back to your original plan? Why did that happen?

Complete the following sentences to tell about yourself:

I used to think \_\_\_\_\_ but now I think \_\_\_\_\_.

I used to be \_\_\_\_\_ but now I am \_\_\_\_\_.

I used to do \_\_\_\_\_ but now I do \_\_\_\_\_.



The Bible tells a story about a corrupt tax collector who changed his ways:  
*Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. In Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a wealthy, very important tax collector. He wanted to see who Jesus was. There were many others who wanted to see Jesus too. Zacchaeus was too short to see above the people. So he ran to a place where he knew Jesus would come. Then he climbed a sycamore tree so he could see him.*

*When Jesus came to where Zacchaeus was, he looked up and saw him in the tree. Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, hurry! Come down! I must stay at your house today."*

*Zacchaeus hurried and came down. He was happy to have Jesus in his house. Everyone saw this. They began to complain, "Look at the kind of man Jesus is staying with. Zacchaeus is a sinner!"*

*Zacchaeus said to the Lord, "I want to do good. I will give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone, I will pay them back four times more."*

*Jesus said, "Today is the day for this family to be saved from sin. Yes, even this tax collector is one of God's chosen people. The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them." Luke 19:1-10*

- Why do you think Zacchaeus changed?
- What changes would you like to make in your life? Why?