



Secret Faith

Week Three

Scripture: Matthew 6:1-21, 24

Learning Focus: The world says, “If you’ve got it, flaunt it!” But Jesus tells us that there are things we should do in secret so as to receive God’s reward instead of the reward of glorifying ourselves. Ultimately, we are to strive for genuine inward faith. Then God can really shine through us.

Supplies Needed:

- Blank, white paper
- Writing utensils
- 2 sheets of thin, blank paper per youth (check that the first paper will bleed through to the second using the permanent markers)
- Permanent markers
- Lined notebook paper

Prep Needed:

- None

Opening Game: Secret Snowballs

Hand each person a piece of blank, white paper. Instruct them to write down something that is unknown to the rest of the group, but that they will be comfortable sharing. It might be a secret talent, a 1-2 sentence story of something they have done in secret, or anything else that works as a shareable secret.

When all youth have had a chance to write something down, lead everybody to crunch up their paper into a ball so that it looks like a snowball. In your designated small area, give about 10 seconds for youth to have a quick snowball fight, throwing their snowballs all around the room until they are completely mixed up. At the end of the 10 seconds, each youth should pick up a new snowball.

Take turns reading the secret out loud. Each person gets 1 guess as to whose secret they have. If they guess right, you can allow the person whose secret it was to share a little more about their talent, story, etc. If they guess wrong, move to the next person in the circle. Keep guessing until all secrets have an owner.

Discuss

- Why do we keep secrets?
- Do the things we do in secret mean anything about who we really are? Why or why not?

Reading Together

Divide youth into four groups and assign the following passages:

Matthew 6:1-4 (Secret Almsgiving) and Matthew 6:24

Matthew 6:5-6 (Secret Prayer) and Matthew 6:24

Matthew 6:16-18 (Secret Fasting) and Matthew 6:24

Matthew 6:19-21 (Secret Treasures) and Matthew 6:24

In small groups, have youth discuss:

- What does Jesus say we should keep a secret?
- How should we keep it a secret?
- What's the purpose of keeping this a secret?

Acting Out the Story

Have each group come up with a creative skit, song, or illustration that compares a person who does this thing in secret and a person who does this thing publicly. Walk around to each group to see if they have any questions or need further prompting.

After all groups have been given enough time, allow them to share their interpretations with the large group.

Large Group Discussion

Use the following questions to lead your youth toward understanding that Jesus does not want us to do these things so that we will get public acknowledgement and praise, but so that we will be focused on growing in authentic, inward faith. We are not hiding our faith, but we are making sure that it is what is on the inside that counts.

Why does Jesus say that these kinds of things should be done in secret?

What should be our motivation to do these things? What should not be our motivation?

What does it say about who we are on the inside when we are not concerned with other people knowing that we do these things?

Does this mean that it is wrong if people find out that we do these things? Why or why not?

Two weeks ago, we learned about letting our light shine before others. How are we supposed to let our light shine if we are doing things in secret?

What might be appropriate situations in which we would share these things with others?

Can we be honest about who we are without seeking a reward? Why or why not?

Activity: Genuinely Me

Hand out the two thin sheets of paper to each person and permanent markers.

Keeping both pages stacked together, have youth write on the first page things that are true about who they really are and/or who they really want to be. What are the really important things about their character, their inner faith, and their true self? What do they want their character, their inner faith, and their true self to grow to be?

After giving a few moments for youth to write down these things, have them look at the second sheet, where the permanent marker bled through to the other paper.

Point out how who we are on the inside should naturally bleed through to the outside. For example, if we are truly honest, we will act honestly. Of course, the opposite can be true as well and we can internalize our behaviors. We may immitate an honest person and begin to become truly honest.

Either way, what is happening on the inside is very important. We can learn all the rules of being a “good Christian” and follow them perfectly, but unless we let our faith become a genuine part of who we are, our reward will only be on the outside.

Creative Prayer

For this time of prayer, give youth a piece of lined notebook paper. Tell them that this is a time of personal prayer between them and God. They will not be asked to share. In the background, play prayerful music.

Lead youth to write a letter to God about where they are in their secret faith. Tell them not to worry about what others think, but only to consider their current relationship with God. What’s going well in their secret faith? What’s not going so well? What has God been teaching them? How would like they like to grow?

End in prayer that your youth would find the strength to be honest with themselves and with God about who they are on the inside and to continue learning to live out genuine faith.