

# INFLUENCES

A session for youth

Leaders Guide

**Session length:** 20-30 minutes

**Supplies needed:**

Copy of Questions for Discussion in small groups  
Chalk Board, White Board, or Flip Chart w/ large Paper  
Chalk, or markers, accordingly

**Preparation:**

Make a copy of the "Bad Influences" Worksheet for each person in the group

**The Plan**

SHARE WITH THE PARTICIPANTS THE FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION:

*People we hang out with can influence us to do, or not do, things, both good and bad.  
Some people choose behaviors that hurt others - this is abuse.  
Some people encourage others to behave in ways that hurts others – this is abuse*

**ACTIVITY:**

1. **Good Influences:** (Full group)

Invite each person to write a word or short description in response to the following question (so you will end up with a group or list of good qualities.)

*When you think of the kind of friends you would like to spend time with, what are the qualities you are looking for in a friend?*

2. **Bad Influences:** (in Small groups if you have more than 6-8 people)

Invite each person to use the worksheet individually (The worksheet appears also on page 4 for easy copying)

**WORKSHEET**

Please read through the following list and mark items based on this question:

*Have you ever experienced, or seen someone, doing any of these types of things?*

- Lying to you or other friends.
- Making fun of other kids who are different from them.
- Stealing something and, when caught, blaming it on you or someone else.
- Daring you to do something where you could get physically hurt.
- Using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs even though it's illegal and unhealthy.
- Making rude comments about teachers or parents.
- Borrowing money from a friend, but never paying it back.
- Making prank phone calls to someone they didn't like.
- Teasing someone about the clothes they wear.
- Starting a rumor to hurt someone's feelings or get them in trouble.
- Provoking someone into an argument or fight.
- Grabbing, pushing, or hitting someone.

When everyone has had time to complete the worksheet, invite youth to share (in small groups if they are already divided up.)

*Briefly share how you feel/felt about what you experienced or saw.*

#### DISCUSSION:

##### SCRIPTURE Discussion:

Psalm 119:64-68 The earth, O LORD, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes. You have dealt well with your servant, O LORD, according to your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments. Before I was humbled I went astray, but now I keep your word. You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.

- *What are some things people say to influence others to do something?*
- *What are some ways you can follow God rather than people who lead you into problems and trouble?*

Proverbs 10:9-10 *Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever follows perverse ways will be found out. Whoever winks the eye causes trouble, but the one who rebukes boldly makes peace.*

- *How hard is it to be the peacemaker instead of just standing by?*
- *Instead of just watching someone cause trouble, or hurting someone, what are some actions you could take to stop it or get appropriate help?*

#### WRAP-UP STATEMENT:

*“Every day you make choices about what you will or won’t do. It is difficult to always choose the right thing to do. When you have an opportunity to choose doing something wrong or dangerous, remember that you are strong enough to resist. The influence of others may be a healthy and positive thing, but if they do things that are hurtful and abusive, you can choose NOT to hang around with them. It is your own responsibility to make a good choice.”*

#### Prayer:

*We are thankful, God, for your love and guidance. We ask that you help us to be peacemakers and to help us lead by the example of our own good actions and words. Amen*

## WORKSHEET

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For use with "Influences" youth curriculum