

Questions – Role Play

Episode 1: Who do you trust?

Leaders Introduction

This opening episode goes closely together with episode two. Episode 1 opens up the issues of trust in our thoughts and experiences of the world. Episode two then goes on to focus on the need to trust something as an ultimate authority. You will need to watch the animation at least once before your session and think through the questions below carefully.

Given that some of the ideas might be new to people and the animation is fairly fast paced, you might consider playing it through once to your group and then handing out the questions below and reading them through before watching the animation again. We've provided a separate document that has the questions and role plays without leader notes, so you can print and hand out to those in your group.

Leader's Questions

1. Which characters did you like best and least in the episode and why?

This question aims to just get people talking and thinking about the characters, what they've said and how they've said it.

2. How do Chris and Holly go about talking to Damien about faith and trust? What approach or style do they use?

This is the opportunity to draw out that Chris & Holly use a conversational style which includes lots of questions about what Damien thinks and why. Chris and Holly are not simply looking to tell Damien things, but explore things with him through questions.

It might be considered rather confrontational at times, but that comes out in question 7.

3. We'll come back to thinking about the questioning approach later on. What sorts of words does Damien use to describe Chris and Holly's faith compared to his own position? Why do you think he uses these?

Damien uses the phrases: 'closed minded', 'blind faith' and 'indoctrination' when it comes to Chris and Holly and 'free thinking' when it comes to himself.

This allows him to position himself as the neutral objective thinker that is not bound by what others say, whereas Chris and Holly are the ones who have just gone along with what they've been told and haven't really thought about things.

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Leader's Questions

4. **Chris and Holly ask Damien about trust. Why does trust prove to be a useful and important idea in talking to Damien?**

Damien thinks he is a free thinker, but in reality there are all sorts of things he takes on trust, even really big things in life. There are several examples you could look at (for example, buying a house) but the one Sam brings up is love and the one Chris and Holly use is the beer. When someone says they love us, we have their word for it and can observe their deeds for clues as to their genuineness but in the end we choose to believe them or not. Also, we don't constantly test if our drinks have or have not been spiked. That kind of belief is reasonable in all sorts of situations and is appropriate for belief in God. This issue will be explored further in episode two and what (or who) Christians are trusting in will come out in due course.

5. **How does Holly deal with Damien's statement about indoctrination?**

Firstly she asks him to define what he means (another question). Then, once he defines it, she shows him why, even given his definition, what they are doing is OK. If it's about whether something is true or not then it's only indoctrination if the claims of Christianity are false, so let's talk about the claims of Jesus..... If it's about people with power over others then yes, it is indoctrination; but that's not unreasonable it happens all the time (this happens in lessons at school).

6. **What are the advantages of asking questions like Chris and Holly have?**

Asking questions does the following:

- They help you to understand exactly what the other person means by what they say. What are they actually saying or asking? What is behind the question? (is the question of suffering merely intellectually interesting or has their gran just died?!);
- They help you show the other person that no one is neutral, everyone has a faith position and a foundation on which they base their faith;
- They help people learn – It's an active form of learning and is more likely to encourage people to think critically about their own views or position than is a straight assertion or statement;
- They help you find common ground and language on which to build a conversation, they show respect and a desire to understand the other person;
- They buy you time – if you don't know what to say, or what the answer to a question is, asking a question can allow you space to breathe!;

7. **How well do you think Holly and Chris did in sharing the good news of Jesus with Damien?**

They didn't directly share the gospel with Damien at all. But what they did do was open up a conversation which was headed in that direction. It was making Damien think about his own position (including beginning to show him that it is a faith position).

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Leader's Questions

8. 1 Peter 3:15 tells us to be ready to give a reason for the hope that we have but to do so with gentleness and respect. How well do you think Holly and Chris did with both halves of this verse?
9. They did well at engaging with Damien and getting him to start thinking about faith, but they didn't always do so with gentleness or respect. The characters have been made to be human in the sense that they don't get everything right. There is space here to learn from a bad example. Allow the group to critique how Holly, Sam and Chris have not been as gentle and loving as they should have been.
10. Can you picture yourself having a conversation like this? If so who with? And if not why not?

This is an opportunity to explore what might be the barriers to the people in your group opening up conversations like this and will provide a good way in to the role plays below. The best way to have these conversations is to start having them (even if they are role played!). In role playing discussions the group can practice the questioning approach but also staying calm, being gentle and respectful!

It would be good to spend some time in prayer asking God to help people in the group to think about those that might be interested in conversations about faith.

Role Plays

In pairs, in turn, have a conversation starting with one of the following:

- You're a Christian!?! You must have been indoctrinated by your parents or church!
- It seems to me that Christianity is all about being gullible – gullible to believe in stuff which is basically just like a fairy story.
- I'm not like you Christians, I'm a free thinker!

Remind them that they are focussing on responding with a question back to the other person.

If these conversations don't go well, don't worry and tell the people in your group not to worry, it is likely that it's the first time most of them have tried any of this and like anything else it takes time to get used to. You could finish your time together by thinking through one of the role plays as a group, pooling ideas of questions that could be asked.

Questions - Role Play

Group Member Questions

1. Which characters did you like best and least in the episode?
2. How do Chris and Holly go about talking to Damien about faith and trust? What approach or style do they use?
3. We'll come back to thinking about the questioning approach later on. What sorts of words does Damien use to describe Chris and Holly's faith compared to his own position? Why do you think he uses these?
4. Chris and Holly ask Damien about trust. Why does trust prove to be a useful and important idea in talking to Damien?
5. How does Holly deal with Damien's statement about indoctrination?
6. What are the advantages of asking questions like Chris and Holly have?
7. How well do you think Holly and Chris did in sharing the good news of Jesus with Damien?
8. 1 Peter 3:15 tells us to be ready to give a reason for the hope that we have but to do so with gentleness and respect. How well do you think Holly and Chris did with both halves of this verse?
9. Can you picture yourself having a conversation like this? If so who with? And if not why not?

Role Plays

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