

WEEK 1: ATTITUDE MATTERS

School.

Some love it. Some loathe it.

Chances are young people spend more waking hours at school than in any other context.

How can you equip them to not just survive, but really thrive at school?

This series is designed to help you do exactly that by looking at practical topics like: attitude towards school, pressures students face, bullying, how to get along with teachers, and sharing your faith.

This week you will need:

- A bag of M&Ms
- 2 pieces of butchers paper
- Pens/markers

CONNECT

Invite your group to grab as many m&ms as they want, but let them know they can't yet eat them.

Let the group know that they will need to answer a question for each m&m they have in front of them.

Green - something you like about school

Blue - something you don't like about school

Orange - a funny moment at school

Brown - a teacher you like & why

Yellow - something you want to do after school

Red - something that is unique about your school

(Leaders: let young people know they can trade M&Ms if uncomfortable with a particular question)



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DISCUSS

This week we are looking at our attitude towards school.

- How would you define the word attitude? (*Leaders: 'a state of mind. How you think or feel towards something'*)
- What do people usually mean when they say someone has 'a bad attitude'?
- Do you think our attitude has much impact on how life turns out for us? Why/why not?
- Quote: *"Attitude changes everything"* (Winston Churchill). Do you agree with this quote? Why/why not?
- What about at school? Do you think our attitude to school can effect our experience there? Why/why not?
- Can anyone make you have a bad attitude or do we decide what our attitude is?

Ask for volunteers to look up the following verses:

Colossians 3:23 - *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for The Lord and not for human masters."*

Colossians 3:17 - *"Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

Proverbs 6:6 - *"Take a lesson from the ants you lazybones! Learn from their ways and become wise."*

Proverbs 14:30 - *"A relaxed attitude lengthens life."*

- Colossians 3:17 and Colossians 3:23 suggest we should approach school as though we are doing it for God. Why do you think it suggests this? What difference would it make if you had that attitude?
- Colossians 3:17 tells us to approach school 'giving thanks' to God. When it comes to school education - what do you have to be thankful for? (*Leaders: e.g. Free education!*) What difference would it make to have an attitude that focuses on the things you are grateful for?
- Proverbs 6:6 says we should be like ants. What do you think this means? (*Leaders: They plan ahead, they help each other, they are focused, they work hard*)





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- Do you think this contradicts Proverbs 14:30 where we are told that: “a relaxed attitude lengthens life”. How do you have a relaxed attitude but also work hard?
- Do you think Jesus cares about your attitude? Why/why not?

ESTABLISHED CHRISTIANS

(Leaders: use the questions below if you want to go deeper with your group)

Ask someone to read Jonah 4.

- Can anyone summarise the story of Jonah before Chapter 4?

Jonah was called by God to go preach a message of destruction to the city of Nineveh. Jonah was scared though, and decided to ignore God’s call and run the other way. As a result, God sent a big fish that swallowed Jonah, holding him for three days before spitting him up on a beach. After that Jonah went to the city of Nineveh and preached God’s plan for destruction unless they repented.

- What was Jonah’s attitude towards God in Chapter 4?
- Do you think Jonah’s attitude was justified? Why, why not?
- How did Jonah’s attitude stop him from seeing God’s plan unfold?
- How does our attitude towards School affect how we view/act at school?

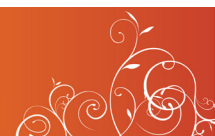
INVOLVE

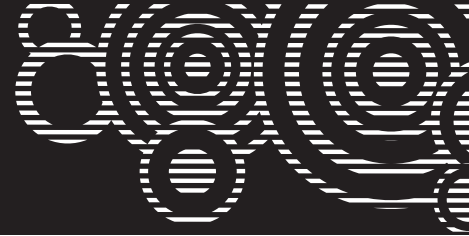
Using 2 pieces of butcher’s paper, write “Negative” on the top of one, and “Positive” on the top of the other.

As a group, brainstorm under each heading a list of negative and positive attitudes that young people have about school. Encourage them to identify a negative and positive attitude in themselves, as well as attitudes they’ve seen in others.

Some examples may include: *I enjoy learning new things, I like hanging out with my friends, It’s a waste of time, My parents make me go.*

Once your lists are complete, as a group choose 1 from each list and discuss what the consequence of that attitude may be. For the negative attitude, also discuss how you could change it into a positive attitude





WEEK 1: ATTITUDE MATTERS

APPLY

Choose one positive attitude that you will try to develop this week.

LEADER'S NOTES

Text your group during the week to encourage them with their positive attitude challenge, and remind them that it's not too late to start.



WEEK 2: UNDER PRESSURE

What you need:

- 2 pieces of butchers paper
- Coloured pens/textas (a different colour for each person in your group)

CONNECT

Ask your choice of the following:

- How did you go with the Apply section from last week?
- What is the funniest thing that has happened to you in the past month?
- What is your favourite Youtube clip of all time?

INVOLVE

Grab 2 pieces of butcher's paper.

1. On sheet one, as a group brainstorm:

Pressures at School to DO or BE

These may include things such as pressure to do well at school, to have a successful career when they leave school, to fit in, to be popular, to drink alcohol, etc.

2. On a second sheet, brainstorm:

Things you feel pressured BY

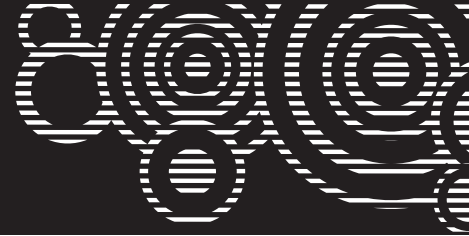
Examples of these may include the media, teacher, friends, parents, etc.

Ask each person in your group to look at sheet one and tick the top 3 pressures they face. (*Leaders: you might like to remind your group that these may not be pressures they are giving in to. They are just acknowledging that the pressure is present in their lives*).

Are there any pressures that are the same for everyone in your group?



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WEEK 2: UNDER PRESSURE

DISCUSS

- What are your observations about the lists you just made?
- Do you think your parents had it easier or harder when they were your age? Are there any pressures they might have faced that you don't?
- Can you think of a time when you felt a pressure on the list and were able to overcome it? How did it happen?
- Going around the circle, what are 2 of the pressures you ticked? How does this pressure make you feel? (*Leaders: don't forget that these aren't necessarily pressures that they are giving in to.*)
- Can you think of an example of positive pressure? (For example, a teacher encouraging you to do a presentation in front of the assembly at school may cause you to feel pressured, but it also helps to challenge you to try something new and develop your skills.)
- What are some practical ways you can respond to pressure? Are there people you can talk to?

There are lots of great verses in the Bible that talk about how we should respond to pressure.

Give everyone a copy of the handout.

Ask some volunteers to read the verses out loud. (*Leaders: if your group is comfortable reading out loud, you might like to go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to read out a verse.*)

- Which is your favourite verse? Why do you like it?
- What do these verses say we need to do when struggling with pressure?
- How do you think turning to God will help?
- Based on these verses, does being a Christian mean that all of our pressures go away? (*Leaders: See John 14:27.*)
- Do you think that being a Christian makes coping with pressure easier?

APPLY

What is one thing you can do differently this week based on what we've discussed?

AND/OR





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WEEK 2: UNDER PRESSURE

This week, challenge your group to choose and memorise their favourite verse from the handout.

Memorising scripture is a great way for us to remember God's promises when faced with pressure.

Encourage your group to pray these verses out each day and believe that God will help them in their situations.

(Leaders: you might like to text your group throughout the week, encouraging them to continue to apply their verse to their lives).

LEADER'S NOTES

Pressure is a big deal to young people, but there are a number of websites out there that offer support and tips for coping with pressure.

Some good ones that you might like to check out or share with your group are:

- Beyond Blue - <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/>
- Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) - <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>
 - * Exam stress - <https://www.kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/helping-kids-cope-exam-stress-0>
 - * Risky Behaviours - <https://www.kidshelpline.com.au/search?key=risky+behaviours>
 - * Body Image - <https://www.kidshelpline.com.au/search?key=body+image>





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WEEK 2: UNDER PRESSURE

PROVERBS 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

JOHN 14:27

I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart.
And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give.
So don't be troubled or afraid.

JOHN 16:33

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me.
Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.
But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

1 Corinthians 10:13

The temptations in your life are no different from
what others experience. And God is faithful.
He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand.
When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that
you can endure.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.
Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

1 PETER 5:7

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.



WEEK 3: BEATING BULLYING

What you need:

- Butchers paper
- Pens

CONNECT

Ask your choice of the following:

- Can you recite your scripture verse from last week?
- If you could choose any actor/actress to play you in a movie, who would you choose and why?
- What is the nicest thing anyone has ever said to you?

INVOLVE

As a group, brainstorm different types of bullying. (*Leaders: Make sure you include some of the more subtle forms of bullying. For more examples, see Leader's Notes*)

Ask each group member to tick the 2 types of bullying they think is most common in their school.

Why do you think these occur most often?

DISCUSS

- Why do you think bullying happens?
- Does it only happen in school? Where else might bullying occur?

Ask volunteers to read out the following verses: Matthew 7:12, Mark 12:31, Romans 12:18, Ephesians 4:29-32.

- Which of these verses do you find most challenging and why?
- What do these verses say about how we should treat others?
- If we're told to *"live at peace with everyone"*, does this mean that we have to be friends with everyone? Why, why not?



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WEEK 3: BEATING BULLYING

- Matthew 5:39 says *"But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also"*.
What do you think this verse is saying? Does this verse mean that we have to stand back and do nothing if we're being bullied? Why, why not?
- Have you ever been bullied? How did it make you feel?
- Have you ever bullied someone? How do you think it made them feel?

If you have internet access you might like to do the following:

Watch this anti-bullying video with your group
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA5C-1N_r1w)

- How did watching this clip make you feel about bullying?*
- According to the video, what are some practical ways we can stop bullying in schools? Are there any other ways?*
- What are some reasons why people don't stand up for people who are being bullied?*

ESTABLISHED CHRISTIANS

Ask someone to read 2 Timothy 1:7 and 1 John 2:9

- What do these verses tell us about how we, as Christians, should respond to bullying?
- What should our response be when we see someone being bullied?

APPLY

What positive choice towards bullying will you make this week based on what we've talked about?

LEADER'S NOTES

- The definition of bullying is: *the repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.*
(<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/>)





WEEK 3: BEATING BULLYING

- Bullying can take many forms, and it's important that young people can identify both the obvious and subtle types that exist. Below are examples of different types of bullying that you may wish to refer to in the INVOLVE section:
 - * **Verbal** – name calling, teasing, sarcasm, insults, threats, abusive language
 - * **Physical** – hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, spitting, tripping
 - * **Social** – ignoring, excluding, gossiping, ostracizing, alienating, making inappropriate gestures, pressuring someone to do something they don't want to
 - * **Psychological** – spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of phone cameras.
- The “I Choose” campaign is a challenge and movement for change. It's about recognising bullying for what it is: a choice. This campaign challenges people to consider their choices and to recognise that their choices matter.

WEEK 4: GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR TEACHERS

What you need:

- Piece of paper and envelope for each person in your group
- Pens

CONNECT

Ask your choice of the following:

- How would you rate your week at school out of 5? Why did you give it this score?
- Name 1 person who has had a big influence on your life, in a positive way.
- If you could be any age right now, what age would you choose? Why would you want to be that age?

INVOLVE

Leaders: this week you can choose from a few different INVOLVE options, two before the DISCUSS section and two after. Please choose the one/s that suit your group best.

Ask 1 or 2 volunteers in your group to spend 2 minutes teaching the others in your group something about a topic they are passionate about (e.g. their favourite sport, hobby, etc). Set a phone or timer so that the alarm goes off after 2 minutes.

For the volunteers:

- Did you find it hard or easy to teach the group about the topic?
- Did you feel respected? Did you feel that your peers were really listening?

OR

As a group, try to think of all the characteristics of good teachers. For example, it may be that they are trustworthy, honest, good at communicating, fun, wise, etc. Go around the room as many times as you can until you can't think of any more.

Which characteristic/s do you think are most important for a teacher to have? Does everyone agree? Why, why not?



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WEEK 4: GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR TEACHERS

DISCUSS

Ask some volunteers in your group to read the following verses out loud:
1 Peter 5:5, 1 Timothy 4:12, Romans 13:2

- Based on these verses, do you think it is important to respect your teachers? Why, why not?
- What does it mean to “*submit yourselves to your elders*”? Why is this important?
- Can you think of anything that teachers aren’t allowed to do? (e.g. be offensive or abusive to students). How do we deal with it if it happens?
- Have you ever had a teacher that you think didn’t like you? How did it make you feel?
- Based on these verses, how should we respond to teachers that may not like us? Do they say that we must like every teacher equally?
- What are some practical ways you can show respect and love to your teacher? (*Leaders: go around the group in a circle until you can’t think of any more*).

INVOLVE

Leaders: this week you can choose from a few different INVOLVE options, two before the DISCUSS section and two after. Please choose the one that suits your group best.

Spend some time praying for the teachers at your schools, and that we as students can learn to show more respect to them.

AND/OR

Have each person in the group write a note of encouragement, apology or thanks to one of their teachers.

APPLY

What is one thing you can do differently this week based on what we’ve discussed?

AND/OR

Encourage your group to give their note of encouragement, thanks or apology to their teacher this week at school.





WEEK 4: GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR TEACHERS

LEADER'S NOTES

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/teacher-relationships.html>



WEEK 5: SHARING JESUS

What you need:

- Butchers paper
- Pens/markers

CONNECT

Ask your choice of the following:

- What is 1 good thing and 1 not so good thing that has happened this week?
- What is something that you are frightened of?
- Would you rather be in a room of snakes or spiders?

DISCUSS

- What is great about knowing Jesus/being a Christian? (brainstorm on butchers paper)
- Do you have any friends who don't know Jesus?
- Do people at school know you're a Christian/go to church? If yes, how do you they know (e.g. you have told them, they have asked about it, etc.)
- Have you ever told someone about Jesus? How did it go? How did you feel?
- What stops you from telling others about Jesus at school?
- From the list you created, which would you find easiest to share with your friends?

There are a number of ways that we can be practically sharing Jesus at school.

1. Show you are a Christian

Read Matthew 5:14-16

- What do these verses mean for you?
- How do these verses effect what you do at school?



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WEEK 5: SHARING JESUS

- What could you do at school to let your light shine?

2. Pray for opportunities to share your faith

Read 1 Peter 3:15-16

- Have you ever prayed for opportunities to share your faith? If yes, what happened?
- What are some ways to share your faith without a theological discussion? (e.g. talking about what you did on the weekend and saying went to church, reading the bible at school)
- Do you know some other Christians at your school? Are you able to talk with them/pray with them about your school?

3. Communicate with love

Read Matthew 22: 37-40

- What do these 2 commandments from Jesus mean for you at school?
- Do you find it easy to show love? Why/ why not
- What does love look like at school?
- Can you think of a time when someone has shown love towards you? How did it make you feel?

INVOLVE

If Jesus was in charge of your school what would it look like?

What is your vision for your school? Spend some time praying, asking God to show you what he would want your vision to be. Find a creative way you can share this with your group (e.g. draw a picture, make a word collage, etc.)

AND/OR

As a group, spend time planning a practical initiative for how you can be more like Jesus at your school. Some examples may include starting a prayer group or social justice group, or holding a BBQ for the teachers. Plan out who will do what jobs and when it will happen.

(Leaders: if the people in your group go to different schools, encourage them to think of other people at their school who could be a part of this with them).





WEEK 5: SHARING JESUS

APPLY

What is at one thing that you are going to do this week based on what we've talked about?

LEADER'S NOTES

- Follow up the action plans that the young people make for their schools and encourage them in what they're doing.
- If you would like to use a video clip to help motivate and encourage your group, here are some examples of ways they can get involved in their school
 - * Kimberly Douglass has a passion for social justice and wants to change culture in her school
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3Vw9-4CO6g>
 - * School EXO Days is an outreach initiative from Youth Alive NSW
<http://vimeo.com/69296594>

