



WEEK FIVE: HOW DO I BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

Appetizer

What chores do you have to do around the house? What does each chore require of you?

(Teachers: As your students name some of the chores they are responsible for, write them down on a white board or poster board. Write "To-do List" on top of the list.)

The list of our chores ranges from things like feeding the dog to making the bed to cleaning our room to taking out the trash to folding clothes to cutting the grass to many other things. This is hard work! Why do we do all these chores? There are two reasons. The first is that you receive some sort of compensation for them. Some of us are paid money for the chores we do around the house. Others are paid in different ways, like having permission to have a friend over to spend the night or getting a favorite dessert. The other reason you do your chores is that you will get in trouble if you don't complete them. In other words, we do our chores to get paid and to get out of trouble.

Still, our chores aren't usually a lot of fun. Not many of us look forward to doing our chores. One of the things that steals the joy of following Christ for many people is that they see building a relationship with God as a list of chores that we must do. This week in our *Snack Pack* devotions, we talked about a lot of different ways to build a relationship with God.

What are some of the ways that we can build a relationship with God?

(Teachers: Write the responses such as praying, reading the Bible, obeying, and others on a list beside the "To-do list.")

The problem is that when we see opportunities to get to know God as a list of chores, we do not experience all the fullness of what God has in store for us in our relationship with Him.

Main Course

(Teachers: Have your students get out their bibles. Let different people read some or all of the following passages, depending on how much time you have: Genesis 2:7, Deuteronomy 30:19-20, John 1:4, 3:15-16, 4:13-14, 6:35, 6:47-48, 10:10, 11:25-26, 20:31. Ask the students to think about what these passages have in common as they are read aloud. It may be easier to write these passages on small pieces of paper before the session so that you can pass them out to different students.)

What words or phrases do you hear over and over in these passages?

(Teachers: On the same board, write down your students' responses. They should land on the words **live** and **life**.)

In both the Old and the New Testament, God makes it clear that He loves to give His people life. When we have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, we experience life as it was intended to be lived. God gets no pleasure out of boring people with to-do lists. No, He wants for us to constantly move toward Him in relationship so that we can experience everything He has in store for us. When we fail to build a relationship with God, He does not spank us. But we will miss out on the extraordinary life God makes available to us. On the other hand, when we do pursue a relationship with God, He does not pay us cash, but He does give us a destiny full of meaning, purpose, joy, and life. That's the reason He created us and sent His Son to earth to die for us. And the great news is that we don't have to wait until we get to heaven - we have that abundant life today!

Dessert

(Teachers: Divide your students into five different groups. Give each group a marker and a piece of paper or poster board.)

This week in our *Snack Pack* book and also earlier today, we discovered several ways that we can build a relationship with God and experience the life He has in store for us. There are many ways we can build a relationship with Him in our everyday lives. I'm going to give each group a topic so you can think about how we can build a relationship with God in some different areas of our everyday lives. Be as creative as possible!

(Teachers: The topics are: at home, at school, on vacation, with your friends, and in a car. Feel free to add or substitute other topics to better fit your group. When the groups are finished, hang their posters on the wall and have a group representative present its list. Leave the posters up in your meeting area.)

It's awesome to think that we can actively build a relationship with God all the time. You do not have to be a church to do it, and you do not have to have a Bible in your hand to experience it. You can build a relationship with God in the bathtub as you enjoy the truth that He has washed you clean on the inside and given you grace, mercy, and forgiveness. You can build a relationship with God when you are at the beach or standing in the mountains by realizing that He holds the whole world in His hands. You can build a relationship with Him in your parents' van by listening to Christian music and having conversations with your family about Him. You can build a relationship with Him when you paint, when you write poems, when you sing, when you walk down the sidewalk, and in so many other ways.

Want to know the best thing of all? After you start doing these things, building a relationship with God is no longer a chore. It starts to become a habit. The best habit you can ever have is to constantly think about ways to further and deepen your relationship with God. The more you practice this, the more it becomes a natural part of your life. The more this becomes a part of your everyday life, the more you will experience all that God has in store for you. Let's pray that the Lord will help us know this week how fun building a relationship with Him can be, and together let's continue dreaming about all the different ways we can do this in our daily lives.