

THE DECISION IS YOURS!

Aim: to communicate how essential it is for Christians to have a Bible in their own language.

Audience: older teenagers. Any number of people, minimum 4.

Duration:
20 minutes.

Description:
small group discussion.

Equipment:
Bibles, Discussion Sheets (photocopy masters provided).



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Leader's Instructions:

1. Four different Discussion Sheets are provided. Photocopy enough in advance of the meeting so that you have a sheet per 4 - 6 participants.
2. Divide the participants into small groups of 4 - 6.
3. Read out the Audience's Instructions.
4. Give each group a Bible and a Discussion Sheet to work through.
5. After 10 minutes bring the groups back together to share their conclusions using the Talk Back section below.

Audience's Instructions:

For this discussion, you need to imagine that you are Jur young people living in Sudan. The Jur number about 40,000 and live way out in the country with no towns or shops anywhere around, no electricity and no mains water. Their work involves growing their own food, hunting for meat and gathering honey and edible plants in the woods. Their social life revolves around family and clan and consists of talking and making music together, visiting friends and going to church.

Each group are going to be given a Discussion Sheet and a Bible. The sheet includes a description of a real situation that has been faced by Jur young people. Read this scenario aloud, putting yourselves in the shoes of the person whose situation is being described. Then discuss the questions which follow. Some Bible references are included that you may find helpful. Try and come to a consensus of opinion in your group about what you would do — the decision is yours!

Talk Back:

Briefly invite each group to summarise their situation and explain why they made the decision that they did. Then discuss the following:

- What do you notice about the situations that the Jur young people were facing?
- What factors did you take into account when you made your decisions?
- How do you think a Jur person would go about making similar sorts of decisions?
- Are there things that may be wrong for Christians of one country, but permissible for Christians of another?

Comments to use in discussion:

The issues of alcohol, fortune telling, sex, and slander are as relevant to teenagers in British culture as they are to Jur young people.

A mature church is one which is finding for itself appropriate answers to thorny problems such as these.

Discussing these issues has been made easier for us because we have Bibles which help us to work out how to apply our faith to the situations we find ourselves in. The root of the problem for the Jur people was that when they faced these particular issues, they did not have any Scriptures in their own language. They could either base their decisions on the advice of expatriate Christian workers or copy what they saw other Christians doing but they could not make decisions that they could call their own.

The Jur church began in 1955. It is growing fast and expanding into areas where there were previously no known Christians. The New Testament and parts of the Old Testament have now been translated into the Jur language.

DISCUSSION SHEET

Scenario 1: Bitter Choices

Wisley does not know what to do. Tea is so expensive these days and he's hardly got any money left. How will he find money to buy enough for his guests? It's not long until Christmas when all his relations will visit and expect him to entertain them for several days. Sugar is a problem too. All Jur people take lots of sugar in their tea but there is a shortage at the moment and none is available in town. The area is too dry to grow either tea or sugar.

Before becoming Christians, all Jur people drank beer. Drunkenness was common and fights would often break out. To prevent this, the Christians started serving tea instead of beer. Wisley can easily make beer from the grain which he grows in his fields and it won't cost him anything. Even though he is a Christian, maybe this would be his best option since apart from

water, there are no other drinks available. No one would dream of only serving water to their guests!

1. What should Wisley do? The decision is yours!
2. What good reasons can you see for not serving beer?
(Romans 14:13 - 17)
3. What should a Christian's attitude to alcohol be?
(Ephesians 5:18)

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DISCUSSION SHEET

Scenario 2 : Changes of Fortune

Eliya does not know what to do. His three-year-old son is seriously ill and there are no doctors or hospitals anywhere nearby. As a result of the civil war, there are no medicines on sale either.

The Jur people believe that there are many spirits in the world which cause both good and bad fortune in peoples' lives. Fortune tellers are always consulted when magic power is needed for successful hunting, or for safety on long journeys. The Jur also believe that only a fortune teller can tell them which spirit is responsible for a particular illness and how to get rid of it. Eliya's wife wants him to take their son to a well-known fortune teller who lives in the next village but Eliya has become a Christian and isn't sure whether he should or not.

1. What should Eliya do? The decision is yours!
2. What does the Bible have to say about fortune telling?
(Deuteronomy 18:9 - 13)
3. If he doesn't take his child to the fortune teller, what could he do instead?
(James 5:13 - 14)

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PHOTOCOPY MASTER

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DISCUSSION SHEET

Scenario 3: Boys Like Girls

Maria does not know what to do. Three young men have arrived in her village from another village 25 miles away. Everyone knows what it means when young single men come visiting. Jur are not allowed to marry someone they are related to, however distantly, so men often have to look for wives in far-off areas. Jur custom is for the older teenage girls to host a party for the visitors by cleaning out a room, putting several beds in it and inviting other girls from their village to come along. In theory these parties are just opportunities for young people to get to know one another. However, very often they lead to rather more and girls end up getting pregnant.

Some of Maria's family have become Christians and have been teaching the young people that these kind of parties were wrong. Maria doesn't want to upset her family but on the other

hand if she doesn't go with the other girls how will she get to meet a husband? If she doesn't get married people will laugh at her and she will have to stay in her father's house for the rest of her life.

1. Should Maria go to the parties? The decision is yours!
2. What does the Bible say about sex between people who are not married to one another?
(1 Corinthians 6:18 - 20)
3. What should a Christian be looking for in a future husband or wife?
(2 Corinthians 6:14 - 17)

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DISCUSSION SHEET

Scenario 4: Going for a Song

Some Jur young Christians in the Domeri village don't know what to do. They are having an argument about the traditional Jur songs that are sung when crowds gather together for events like weddings or funerals. On such occasions the young people from different villages take it in turns to perform songs they have made up. These songs boast of their successes in hunting and make coarse jokes about people of other villages. Naturally the rival villagers respond with even more insulting songs. Quite often this sort of singing leads to some people getting annoyed and starting a fight. Since the Jur people always carry spears with them for protection against wild animals, fights can result in bloodshed and loss of life.

Many of the Christians think that they should give up their traditional songs for this reason. Others are saying "How can we give up something like this which everyone does? It would be unsociable not to join in. We just have to make sure there's no fighting."

1. What should the Jur young people do? The decision is yours!
2. What does the Bible say about Christians making jokes at other peoples' expense?
(Colossians 3:8)
3. How could the Jur Christians spend their time together without singing insulting songs?
(Ephesians 5:19 - 20)