

IDEALS

Overview

Speaker: Youth (Experienced Youth or the Peer Leader)

Talk #1

Length: 15-20 minutes

The Aim of the Talk

The purpose of this talk is to help participants begin to consider what they want their lives to look like, what is most important to them. This is done by identifying and evaluating their own values and ideals. This talk encourages them to think about their lives as an active journey of walking with Christ. It should pose questions like: why am I here at this weekend? What is the focus of my life? What values are most important to me? What kind of person do I want to become?

Your assignment is not to give definitive answers to these questions or to give a sermon or lecture but to bear witness. That means to share what you've seen, heard, and experienced on your own life's journey thus far, as you've thought about and clarified your own ideals. The best way to do this is by sharing your own story and faith journey: who your heroes were as a child versus who they are now; how your priorities have changed as you've grown and matured; who are significant people and what are significant events in your faith journey; and how you combine your ideals with your own faith journey as you travel it. What you discover will be the richest content for your talk.

Before Writing Your Talk

The following pages offer resources to help you connect your story and experiences with the theme of the talk.

- Begin with reading through "Exploring the Theme." As you read, highlight points that stick out to you, points you really want to emphasize in your talk.
- Then move to the "Engaging Your Spirit" section. This section is to guide your reflection as you prepare for the talk. You do not need to include them in your talk, but you may include what came up for you during your reflections, if you would like. The participants will engage with some of these exercises during their table discussions following your talk.

- Spend time in prayer over the “Exploring the Theme” and “Engaging Your Spirit” sections. Pay attention to personal stories that come to mind, making notes on the specific thoughts and words.
- Open yourself to God’s love, pay attention, and see what happens. Do not feel like you have to make every point of the “Exploring the Theme” section; rather, use it as a guide for your writing.

Exploring the Theme/Talk Outline

“Will you join me in the ‘Prayer to the Holy Spirit’ found on page 7 of the *Worship Booklet*?”

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations; through Christ our Lord. Amen. You may be seated.”

Introduction

Choose a brief, simple way to introduce your talk that will engage your listeners and give participants an idea about your topic. Examples could include the following:

- Sharing a “Chrysalis Moment,” a time of transformation when you tried to be like someone else and it did not go so well, or
- Sharing about something you cared deeply about when you were little and how it has changed.

“My name is _____, and the title of this talk is IDEALS.”

1. What is an ideal?

- a. Ideals are an image of who you want to become, a goal toward which you move, something you live for, an aim you work toward, a priority, something of leading importance in your life.
 - i. Only humans have ideals; they set us apart from the rest of creation. As humans, we can dream and imagine what we want our future to look like.
 - ii. By clarifying our ideals and setting goals and priorities for ourselves, we can reach our long-term goals.
 - iii. An ideal is what one aims for. It motivates and gives purpose, direction and meaning to one’s life. It is what one gives their time, money, energy, and action to, in order to reach it. A person would sacrifice a lot to reach it.
 - iv. This is why evaluating and choosing positive, helpful, healthy ideals is so important.

- b. Everyone has ideals; not everyone takes the time to evaluate theirs. It is important to evaluate your own and be cautious of judging anyone else's.
- c. "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34).

2. Different types of ideals

- a. Ideals can be negative, and those can move us backward rather than forward.
 - i. To be number one at another's expense.
 - ii. To be popular at the cost of your true self or integrity.
 - iii. To fit in or have "feel good" experiences without thinking of the consequences.
- b. Ideals can be positive but short-term. These are excellent things to strive for, even if they are short-term.
 - i. To get the best grades or certain job qualifications.
 - ii. To be a dependable employee, recognized for excellent work, or earn a promotion.
 - iii. To be the best team member possible; to win the championship or contest.
- c. There is one ideal that is both positive and long-term, eternal, big enough for each of us, that can shape and fill our whole life—becoming Christlike. (See Ephesians 5:1-2.)
 - i. This ideal does not happen overnight; it is a life-long journey that each of us is on. It's why we're here.
 - ii. This journey includes trying new things, figuring out what works for us to keep connected with God's love, to keep true to who we are, and to keep relating to others the way we want others to relate to us.

3. "Chrysalis Moments"

- a. Introduce "Chrysalis Moments"
 - i. Often in faith, we talk about transformation. Sometimes this transformation is linear. Sometimes it happens all at once. Something changes and, all of a sudden, we change our way of thinking or living. More often, transformation happens gradually. We may or may not be able to see it. In our faith journey, we are not going to get it right all the time. There are moments where our ideals are

aligned with God, and other times when we are far from becoming Christlike.

- ii. Over the next few days, you will continue to hear talks from many of us who are trying to figure it out. We are all on this Christian journey together—sometimes living it well and other times really struggling. We are going to call these moments of transformation “Chrysalis Moments”—not because they are about this weekend, but because they are moments when God teaches us something about ourselves and about God that helps us to transform, to change, and become more like Christ.
 - iii. “Chrysalis Moments” and this Chrysalis weekend are not about having all the right answers; they are about saying “yes” to this journey with God and with others. They are about celebrating the transformation that has happened in our lives and asking God to continue to transform us into who God has created us to be.
- b. Using some of the “Engaging Your Spirit” tools, share about how your ideals have transformed over time. If you talked about a hero in your introduction, this is an opportunity to share how you feel about that hero now or how your hero has changed. Where has there been a “Chrysalis Moment” for you and your ideals? Use the term “Chrysalis Moment” to help reinforce this new concept.

4. Ideals help shape your journey.

- a. This Chrysalis weekend can be a journey, or it can be a weekend that you happen to be a part of.
 - i. You get to make that decision by
 1. being present to the people around you
 2. being open to the rhythm and practices of this weekend
 3. being open to the changes that may happen this weekend.
 - ii. We hope this weekend becomes part of your journey and that becoming Christlike becomes one of your permanent ideals.
- b. What is your ideal?
 - i. What is your vision for your life?
 - ii. What is the target toward which you want to aim your life?
- c. Reflect on these questions. Really give them some thought. There are not right and wrong answers; there are only your answers. Taking the

time to figure out your answers to these questions will give you a place to start thinking about your ideals.

- i. What do I think about most of the time?
 - ii. How do I spend most of my time and money?
 - iii. What do I want more than anything else in the world?
 - iv. Whom do I look up to and admire? Whom do I really wish I could be like?
- d. Remember you are not on this journey of discovering and setting your ideals on your own. This is something we do as a community, that we do together.

5. Fly with Christ!

Engaging Your Spirit

Your Faith Journey Map

Create a map of your faith journey so far, of the moments that have brought you to where you are now. Be as creative as you like. Really consider the people, places, and events that have shaped you. Don't consider if they are 'important' or not; only consider how they have influenced you. Now imagine where you want your journey to take you—and add that to your map. Be as general or as specific as you like, but give it some thought and prayer. Know that it could change—and probably will change—but having a focus and a dream is a good thing. Once the map is made, look at those people, places, and events that shaped your ideals today. Take some time to celebrate them, and use this map to think about the dreams and goals that you hold for the future.

Reflection

Reflect on these questions. Really give them some thought. There are not right and wrong answers; there are only your answers. Taking the time to figure out your answers to these questions will give you a place to start evaluating them. Then you will be able to share your reflections and experiences with the participants.

- What do I think about most of the time?
- How do I spend most of my time and money?
- What do I want more than anything else in the world?
- Whom do I look up to and admire? Whom do I really wish I could be like?

Ideals and Your Story

Discover your own story of who or what you have set as an ideal and how that has changed over time.

- “As a child . . .” think about a person you looked up to when you were younger. What kinds of things did you do in order to be like them? This could include ways you dressed, things you bought, how you acted, what you daydreamed about, and so on.
- “Now who I idolize has changed.” Think about who you look up to now. How do they differ from who you looked up to when you were younger? What efforts do you put forward now in order to be like that person? Or consider how you still idolize the same person but now for different reasons.

Writing Your Talk

- Use the “Exploring the Theme” section as your main guide as you write.
- Allow what you have learned and the experiences you have remembered to point to ideas and stories that will help you outline your talk and begin writing.
- You will want to speak from the heart, ***to be honest and real***. As you share personal stories, make sure to do so in a way that does not pretend to have all the answers or everything figured out. Share authentically about the joys and the challenges of living out the topic of your talk.
- As you write, continue to remain open to God’s love and presence in your life. Let writing your talk become a spiritual practice, a creative exercise that engages both mind and spirit to help you express your own thoughts, understanding, and experience. By doing so, you will be helping others experience God’s love.

Be Sure to Include

- An invitation for participants to reflect on why they are here at his weekend: who invited them, why they accepted, and what they hope to gain from this weekend.
- An invitation for participants to think about what their ideals are, where their priorities lie, and what the focus of their life is.
- One or two “Chrysalis Moments” that illustrate the parts of this talk that are most meaningful to you. You could also share your answers to any of the sections of “Engaging Your Spirit.”

- Reference the scripture that is in parenthesis in the outline when writing your talk. Do not just say the scripture reference, but instead write the scripture out.
- In order to have the participants focus on their own ideals, and to ease into the flow of talks, only use one or two scripture references throughout this talk.

For details and tips about how to write, rehearse, and present your talk, see the “Preparing Your Talk” section in the *Chrysalis Team Manual* (pp. 35-38).

Table Discussion Guide

1. What do I think about most of the time?
2. How do I spend most of my time and money?
3. What do I want more than anything else in the world?
4. Whom do I look up to and admire? Whom do I really wish I could be like?