

youthESource Retreat

Listen, Listen, Listen

by Kenneth Haugk and William McKay

ABOUT THIS RETREAT

The purpose of this retreat is to equip youth with some very basic tools which they can use to do "peer counseling." This is a big order, and the retreat reflects this in being very intense and very structured. The youth who participate in this retreat should know that they are in for a weekend of learning and hard work as well as fellowship and fun.

TO THOSE WHO WILL LEAD THIS RETREAT:

You will have to do quite a bit of preparation beforehand. You should become very familiar with the exercises in the retreat so that you will be able to lead them effectively.

The subjects of this retreat—reflective listening, accurate empathy, and role playing—may be subjects with which you are not very familiar. Two suggestions you may want to take to familiarize yourself with the subject matter are:

1. Read *The Helping Interview* by Alfred Benjamin (Second Edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1974). This is an excellent overview of the art of helping conversations written in easy to understand language.
2. Discuss this retreat with a local counselor or mental health professional. He/she may be able to fill you in on points about which you may be unclear.

This retreat can be a beginning for the youth of your church. Encourage them to think of ways to put what they will learn into use. Perhaps you can schedule "continuing education" meetings in the months after the retreat. You might invite resource people from the mental health professions to speak at these meetings.

Good luck and good retreating.

THINGS THAT WILL NEED TO BE PREPARED BEFOREHAND

1. Obtain a copy of *For Mature Adults Only* by Norman Habel (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1969). Choose two or three poems to read on Friday evening.
2. Make copies of the ten True-False questions to be handed out on Saturday morning.
3. Bring one blindfold for every two participants.
4. Bring pen and paper for each participant.
5. Make sure you will have a blackboard and chalk or newsprint and markers.
6. Obtain the movie, projector and screen.
7. Prepare a printed liturgy and obtain Communion elements and vessels (if you plan to celebrate Holy Communion).
8. Make copies of the five questions for the processing questionnaire to be handed out Sunday morning.
9. Obtain song sheets/books and a guitar player, if possible.

THE RETREAT

FRIDAY EVENING

5:00-7:00 p.m.

Arrive, stow gear, eat dinner.

7:00

Group singing, name game (if participants do not know each other's names). Introduction to the Retreat.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RETREAT

Read the following as an introduction to the retreat experience.

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him;
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.
And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.
And he was rich—yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace;
In fine, we thought that he was everything,
To make us wish that we were in his place.
So we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

"Richard Cory" by Edwin Arlington Robinson from **THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT** is reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons and is fully protected by copyright.

Richard Cory seemed to have everything. Everyone admired him. Everyone envied him, was jealous of what he had, of what he was. And yet he killed himself.

Obviously, nobody knew him. Nobody realized the ways in which he was really hurting inside. Imagine the pain, frustration, and anger he must have felt to kill himself. Imagine how lonely it must have been to have no one to tell about his hurts and angers.

Have you ever felt like that? Like you had to tell someone about the anger or the frustration or the confusion that you were feeling, but there was no one who would listen? So lonely. So sad.

There are a lot of people in the world right now who feel like Richard Cory did. Nobody recognized it in Richard Cory. In fact, most people do not even recognize it in their friends, their families, their schoolmates, or their teachers.

There are people in *your* life who are hurting. People at school, at church or maybe even in your family who hurt, but cannot tell anyone about it. People who are dying inside.

Jesus was a person who listened. He was a person whom others could talk to. He listened to people telling how they were dying inside, and after he listened and understood and comforted them, they were able to start living again.

We can be people like Jesus. Christian means *Christ-like*. The purpose of this retreat is to learn to listen, to learn to understand how people feel, to learn to recognize the Richard Corys around us. To recognize them and to listen to them talk about their pain. And, in this way, to help them to begin living again.

Sounds like a lot to do in one weekend, right? Right! This weekend will only make a beginning. We will learn some things, think about some things, and practice some things that will help us start a whole life of learning to be like Jesus is—a person who listens to and cares for others.

7:30 p.m. GROUP RELATIONSHIP EXERCISE

This is an exercise to help the participants get to know one other person much better.

Have the participants form twosomes, pairing up with a person they do not know at all, or the person they know the least. With each twosome remaining together, have the group spread out as much as possible while still being able to hear the leader. Each twosome should sit facing each other.

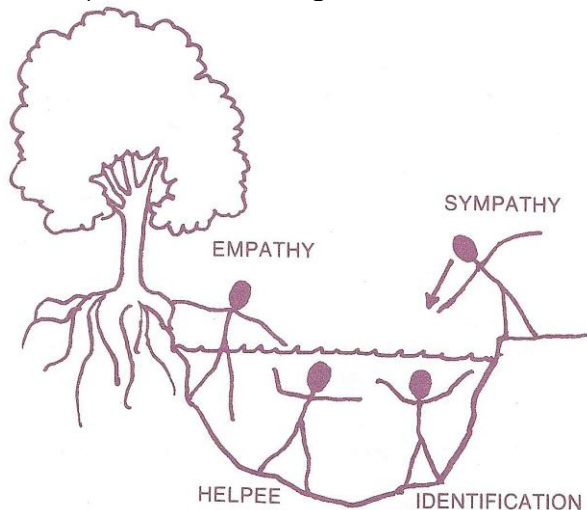
Read the following questions one at a time and instruct the twosomes to take turns answering each question. Be sure to give enough time for both to answer each question. When you have explained the exercise, ask if there are any questions. When all questions have been answered, read the first question.

1. I feel _____ about my name.
2. If I could change my own name, it would be _____.
3. I feel _____ about school.
4. If I could change one thing about school, it would be _____.
5. I feel _____ about church.
6. If I could change one thing about church, it would be _____.
7. I feel _____ about my parents.
8. If I could change one thing about my parents, it would be _____.
9. I feel _____ about my body.
10. If I could change one thing about my body, it would be _____.
11. I feel _____ about my whole self.
12. If I could change one thing about my whole self, it would be _____.
13. One word that seems to me to describe you is _____.
14. One word that I think describes me is _____.
15. I feel _____ about this exercise.
16. If I could change one thing about this exercise, it would be _____.

If you finish this exercise in less than one hour allow the participants to continue talking until the hour is up.

8:30 p.m. THE MUDHOLE

This exercise illustrates how to relate to people who are hurting. Below is the mudhole diagram from which you will be working.



During this exercise you will be forming a human sculpture for which you will need five volunteers. You will also need tables or chairs to make the sides of the mudhole. Have the volunteers come forward and wait for further instructions.

You will also need a chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and felt tip markers. Position the chalkboard or newsprint so everyone can see it.

Read and do the following as written:

When we are listening to people, there are three ways that we can respond to them. We can sympathize with them, identify with them, or empathize with them. To show you what this means, I am going to draw a picture of a mudhole, and we are going to also build a human sculpture of what I draw. (Draw mudhole and tree with roots. Do not draw any of the people yet. Tell your volunteers to use tables or chairs to make the mudhole and designate one volunteer to stand on one of the sides of the mudhole and be the tree. Introduce the tree.) In this mudhole there is a

person with a big problem. We will call this person Helpee because he/she needs help. (Draw Helpee in the mudhole and designate the volunteer who is to be Helpee. Introduce Helpee and tell him/her to lie in the mudhole.)

Now there are three people trying to help Helpee. There is Ms. (Mr.) I. Dent. Ification, whom we will call I.D. for short, and there are the Pathy twins, Sym and Em. (Introduce each of these characters.)

The first person to try to help is Sym. Now Sym does not like to get dirty, so he/she decides that the best way to help is to stand up on the edge and shout words of encouragement. (Draw Sym Pathy and instruct Sym to stand on the edge and shout some words of encouragement.) Doesn't help much, does it? (Ask Helpee if Sym is helping.)

The next person to try to help is I.D. Now I.D. is not shy. In fact, he/she has a sort of superman (or superwoman) complex. He/she figures that the best way to help is to jump right in the hole with Helpee. (Draw I. Dent Ification in the hole and instruct I.D. to jump into the hole and lie down.) The only problem is that now there are two people stuck in the hole and neither can get out. Not a lot of help. (Ask Helpee if I.D. has helped him/her to get out of the hole.)

The last person to try to help is Em. Em is a bit brighter than Sym and I.D. Em knows that you cannot help unless you get into the hole, but if you jump in, then no one can get out. Em looks around and sees a tree, and a light goes on in Em's head. Em grabs hold of the root of the tree, reaches down and grabs Helpee's hand, and helps Helpee get out of the mudhole. (Draw Em Pathy holding tree root and reaching to grab Helpee's hand. Instruct Em to do this and to gently pull Helpee out of the mudhole.)

And so the story of the mudhole ends happily. I think all of these people deserve a big hand. (Tell the five volunteers to remain where they are.)

Now let's talk about this. Sym did not help because he/she was not willing to get involved in the problem. That is like a person telling you about problems that they are having and you saying, "That really sounds tough. I'm really sorry. Hang in there." Then you pat the person patronizingly on the back without ever listening. Not much help.

I.D. was not much help either. He/She got too involved in the problem. That is like a person telling you about problems they are having and you starting to cry and starting to tell them about how terrible you feel about their problem or about similar problems that you are having. Finally, they walk away and you have never listened. Not much help.

But now we come to our hero, Em Pathy. What Em did is like a person telling you about problems and you listening to them. After you have listened, then you show them that you understand. Maybe you cry with them, maybe you give them a hug to show that you understand and care for them. But you are always letting them talk and tell you about their feelings, and you give them your own self to hold on to and draw strength from.

After you have finished the above, take time for a discussion of the experience. Allow the participants to ask questions. Encourage discussion with such questions as: Have any of you ever been hurting and had someone who just sympathized or just identified with you? How did that feel? Have you ever had anyone really empathize with you? What did they do? How did that feel?

9:00 p.m. BREAK

9:30 p.m. IDENTIFYING FEELINGS

This is an exercise to help participants learn to empathize accurately. You will need the book *For Mature Adults Only* for this exercise, and you will need to have chosen two or three poems from this book to read.

Begin the exercise by telling the participants about the book that the poems are from. Darken the room and tell the participants that they are to close their eyes and listen to these poems and try to feel the

emotions that the authors are describing. Tell them that this is a form of empathizing, that is, feeling what another person is talking about. After each poem, have participants talk about what they heard and felt. Ask such questions as:

1. What emotions did you feel?
2. What feelings was the author talking about?
3. What kind of person do you think the author was? (Do not read Habel's description of the author before you ask this question. Perhaps read it after you have discussed this question.)

Do the above with two or three poems.

10:00 p.m. EVENING DEVOTION

This devotion should include singing, praying and the reading of a Scripture passage. Psalm 22 or Isaiah 52:13-53:12 could be read as examples of people who are hurting inside and as examples of how Christ has entered into the pain that people experience and brought hope.

SATURDAY

Breakfast

9:00 a.m. TRUE-FALSE QUIZ THAT NOBODY FAILS

The following is a true-false quiz designed to communicate some very important information about the process of listening. The reason nobody fails is because everybody learns.

Have the participants form foursomes and answer the true-false questions below in their groups. Then reassemble the full group and read the answers to the questions. Use the explanations after the answers either to read to the group as a discussion stimulator, or as information for you to use during the discussion. There are discussion questions after almost every explanation. Use these, then give the participants time to ask any questions they may have. If you do not know the answer to a participant's question, say so and ask if anybody has any ideas about how to answer the question. Most of the time someone will.

The following questions should be reproduced to be handed out to all the participants.

1. Listening is hard work.
 2. Everyone is a good listener.
 3. The most important thing for a good listener to do is to want to be a good listener.
 4. People need other people to listen to them.
 5. Some places are better for listening than others.
 6. Your body position has little to do with your listening.
 7. Listening does not involve talking.
 8. Listening involves more than just hearing the words that people are saying.
 9. Listening to someone shows that you care for that person.
 10. "Just" listening is often the best thing that you can do to help someone.
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1. **True.** Although listening is thought by many to be something that you do not have to work at, listening is not a passive thing. It is not an activity in which you are not doing anything. Listening is hard work. Good listeners are very active while listening. Their minds are very busy concentrating on things that are being said and busy trying to understand. Good listening means thinking very hard. A good listener will often be very tired after listening because it is hard work.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: 1) Have you ever known a person who was a really good listener? 2) What did he/she do that was so good? 3) How did you feel after talking to this person?
 2. **False.** Many people are not good listeners. Some do not even try to be. Some people do not want to work that hard. Some people do not know how to be good listeners. Some people think they have all the answers and do not listen because they are too busy giving advice.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: 1) Have you ever known a person who was a really poor listener? 2) What did that person do or not do that made him/her a poor listener? 3) How did you feel trying to talk to that person?
 3. **True.** Almost anyone can be a better listener if they want to and if they will work at it. When you are listening, whether or not you want to listen really shows. A person who does not want to listen will

look at his/her watch, not pay attention, interrupt, and make the person who is talking feel terrible. A good listener will pay attention, let the other person talk pretty much as long as the person needs to, and save what he/she has to say until the other person is finished talking.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: 1) Have you ever talked to someone who seemed too busy to listen? 2) How did you feel talking to that person?

4. **True.** As we heard in the Richard Cory poem and as we can see from our own lives, sometimes people just have to talk to someone. Sometimes hurts and frustrations will explode inside us unless we can let them out by telling someone about them. Also, just talking about your problems with someone sometimes helps you figure out what to do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: 1) Have you ever really needed to talk to someone? 2) If you were able to find someone who would listen, did it help? Why or why not?

5. **True.** If you really want to listen to a person, it is better to be in a place where there are few interruptions or distractions. In fact, if you are listening to a person talk about something serious and there are a lot of other people interrupting, you may want to suggest that the two of you move to a quieter, more private place. If a television is distracting your listening, suggest that it be turned off or move away. Try to listen in a place where you will be able to give your full attention to listening.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Can you think of places at school or at home that would be good places for listening? Places that would not be good places for listening?

6. **False.** A good listener pays attention. One of the ways that good listeners show that they are paying attention is by the way they are sitting. We will do an exercise later to demonstrate this.

7. **False.** A big part of listening is trying to understand. A good listener will ask some questions when he/she does not understand what the other person is saying. A good listener does not, however, interrupt the other person. He/she only asks questions when necessary, and after asking the question, listens to the answer. One way to tell if a person is a good listener is to see how much talking he/she does when listening. The less talking he/she does the better listener he/she is.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: 1) Think of someone who was a good listener. How much talking did that person do while listening? 2) How many questions did he/she ask?

8. **True.** Really active listening involves hearing more than just the other person's words. It also involves hearing such things as the person's tone of voice because that can tell you how he/she is feeling. The expression on a person's face, the way the person is sitting or standing, what he/she is doing with his/her hands can all show you how the person is feeling. You need to listen to what a person is saying without words as well as what he/she is saying with word.

DISCUSSION EXERCISE: This is a kind of "Emotional Charades." Have volunteers (or group leaders) demonstrate tones of voice, facial expressions, and body language that show emotions. Have the group name the emotions.

9. **True.** We have said that people need someone to listen to them sometimes. At these times listening is the most caring thing that you can do. Even when the other person does not have any big problems, listening well shows that you care about what they are saying and that you care about them as people.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Can you think of some people you know who need to be cared for by having you listen to them?

10. This is a trick question. There is no such thing as "just" listening. Listening is hard work, it involves a lot of concentration, it is a skill that we are learning how to do this weekend. Good listening is, however, often the best thing you can do for a person.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Who wants to take a break?

10:30 a.m. BREAK

11 :00 a.m. BLINDFOLD LISTENING

The purpose of this exercise is to temporarily reduce the amount of sensory input so that participants can concentrate on listening.

Instruct participants to get back together with their partner from last night (or otherwise form twosomes). Provide each twosome with one blindfold. Tell them to go outside and find a private place. One of the partners should put on the blindfold and concentrate very hard on listening. (This should not be a time for conversation.) He/she should tell his/her partner the things that he/she hears and the partner should write them down.

After fifteen minutes, have partners switch roles. After the other person has listened for fifteen minutes, gather the group back together and have participants talk about what they heard. What was new or unusual? Did they hear anything that they have never heard before? How much do they think they miss hearing in their everyday life?

Before breaking up for lunch, tell participants that they will have free time until 3:00 p.m. Tell them to pay extra attention to what they hear during the next three hours. Tell them to try to hear things they have never heard before.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH

1:00 p.m. FREE TIME

3:00 P.M. ATTENTIVE LISTENING EXERCISE

The purpose of this exercise is to show the effect that the things one does with one's body has on listening.

Have participants form twosomes. Designate one person in each twosome to be "A" and the other to be "B." Tell those who are B to tell A five things that they like to do. Tell those who are A to sit back in their chairs, look anywhere except at B, yawn, hum a tune, drum their fingers, and basically ignore B.

After they have completed the above, tell those who are B to tell their partners five things that they do not like to do. Tell those who are A to sit slightly forward in their chairs, look B straight in the eyes, pay strict attention to everything that B says, and repeat back what B says when B is finished.

Have the participants form foursomes and discuss these questions:

1. Was the listener really paying attention the first time or the second time?
2. How did you who were talking feel when the listener was not paying attention?
3. How did you feel when the person was paying attention?

After the discussion, close the exercise by saying: The posture of a good listener could be considered very similar to that of a cat ready to pounce on a mouse. Have you ever seen a cat stalking something? What did it look like? (Have the participants describe this kind of activity and perhaps have someone demonstrate what a stalking cat looks like.) The cat is totally attentive to everything that the mouse is doing as it moves in for the kill. So good listeners listen very attentively. They hang on every word that the other person is saying.

When listening, we should focus all our attention on the person to whom we are listening. This will show in the way we are sitting, what we are doing with our hands, what we are looking at, and how still we are.

3:00 p.m. FEELINGS WORDS LIST

The purpose of this exercise is to familiarize participants with the many words that can be used to describe feelings and thus with the many different feelings that they, as well as others, have.

Have participants make a list of all the feelings they can ever remember having. Tell them they will have 20 minutes to list as many feelings as they can.

A feeling word is any single word that can fit into this sentence: "I felt _____."

Examples of what *are* feeling words are: "I felt angry," or "I felt happy." Examples of what are *not* feeling words are: "I felt like going home," or "I felt that she was busy." Feeling words describe how the person himself or herself is feeling, not what they are thinking or what their opinions are.

Tell participants to choose one feeling that they remember having, and be ready to describe the circumstances when they felt that feeling.

After 20 minutes, get the whole group back together and have each person share one feeling and the circumstances surrounding it. It is all right if some of the people share the same feeling word. List each new feeling word shared on the blackboard or on newsprint.

After everyone has shared one feeling word, ask the group to think of as many different feeling words as they can. List each new feeling word on the blackboard or newsprint. Continue this until people run out of feeling words.

4:30 p.m. REFLECTIVE LISTENING EXERCISE

The purpose of this exercise is to acquaint participants with the basic techniques of reflective listening.

Begin the exercise by saying: One of the techniques of listening well is called "reflective listening." This is one technique good listeners use to help the people they are listening to understand their feelings better. When people can realize how they are feeling and why they are feeling that way, it helps them to understand themselves better.

For example, if a man had broken up with his girlfriend and was very angry at her it would help him to understand what he was experiencing if he could realize that the reason he was angry was because he was feeling quite hurt by his girlfriend.

In this exercise, we are going to try to figure out what people are feeling by what they say. I will read some statements that do not contain feeling words, and you will look at our list of feeling words and see which one would fit what I am saying.

(Note to leader: Read and discuss each statement. After each statement is a list of feeling words that may fit the statement. Use these to get the conversation going or to fill in more words. This is not meant to be a list of all of the possible feeling words to fit the statements.)

1. "That stupid friend of mine, he made me look stupid in front of my girl and now I would like to smash his face."
Feeling Words: embarrassed, angry, annoyed, frustrated, furious, unhappy, hacked-off
2. "I don't know if I want to meet your parents, I don't get along well with older people."
Feeling Words: afraid, anxious, apprehensive, frightened, scared, uneasy, insecure, ambivalent, hesitant, reluctant, up-tight
3. "Life for me is now the best that I have ever seen it. Things are going so well, I can't believe it."
Feeling Words: astonished, delighted, ecstatic, elated, glad, happy, joyful, jubilant, surprised, alive, optimistic, good, thankful, excited, together, mellow
4. "I can't believe that he is going out with her. What does she have that I don't have?"
Feeling Words: annoyed, bad, confused, dejected, depressed, gloomy, grieved, jealous, resentful, downhearted, hurt, blue, broken hearted, miffed, angry (at self)
5. "What's the use of studying? I'm just going to fail all my classes anyway."
Feeling Words: bad, bitter, dejected, depressed, discouraged, downcast, frustrated, lonely, miserable, sad, upset, apathetic, defeated, helpless, hopeless, insecure, tired, burned out, out of it, psyched out, uptight
6. "Wow! This is so great. I made the football team and I am going to play first string."
Feeling Words: astonished, delighted, elated, joyful, pleased, surprised, amazed, happy, good, joyous, proud, great, turned on
7. "Things were going so well and now he tells me he doesn't want to see me anymore. I just don't understand."
Feeling Words: bitter, confused, dismayed, downcast, upset, troubled, sorrowful, sad, miserable, lonely, hurt, grieved, empty, lost, beat, blue, broken-hearted, cruddy
8. "My parents are so out of it. First they say I can go away for Easter vacation and now they say I can't."
Feeling Words: aggravated, annoyed, angry, bitter, bad, confused, disappointed, frustrated, infuriated, mad, upset, exasperated, puzzled, down, teed off
9. "The teacher saw that I am having trouble in class and she offered to help me understand the material better. No one has ever done that for me before."
Feeling Words: amazed, astonished, grateful, happy, surprised, taken aback, hopeful, moved, touched, appreciative, excited, great
10. "I'm so tired of life. No matter how hard I try, things just don't work out. I give up."
Feeling Words: bad, dejected, disappointed, downcast, gloomy, melancholic, sad, troubled,

unhappy, apathetic, defeated, helpless, hopeless, insecure, lost, overwhelmed, unsure, weak, beat, blah, blue, burned out, out of it, whipped

After talking about these ten statements, tell participants to form twosomes. Have them take turns thinking of times when they remember feeling specific emotions, and tell them to talk about these times without using feeling words. The other person should try to guess what the feelings were, using the statement, "I think you were feeling _____." (Use a feeling word to fill in the blank. Continue this until time is up.

5:30 p.m. DINNER

7:00 p.m. ROLE PLAYING

Role playing is a very helpful way to put together the different skills that we have been learning. It provides a chance to try them out in a less threatening situation than a "real" one. Emphasize that role playing is a time for making mistakes and learning from them. Participants should not be criticized when they do not do things correctly or when they do not remember something. This is a time for learning and having fun.

Included in this exercise are two role play situations. Explain each role play situation very carefully and allow the participants to ask questions. If you do not know the answer to a question such as, "How many fights have these people had in the last year?", make up something or say, "I don't know."

Begin this exercise by saying: We are now going to practice being good listeners. We are going to role play some listening situations. Has anyone ever role played before? (Give them time to answer.) I want to emphasize that this is a time to learn and have fun. All of us will make mistakes, but that's okay because we will learn from them. We will role play two different situations so everyone will have a chance to be the listener.

Form twosomes now. (Give them time to do this.) Now choose which of you will be the listener and which of you will be the "friend." It does not matter who goes first since you will switch roles later. (Give them time to choose.) Each twosome should sit facing each other. (Give them time to do this.)

Please make sure that you take this seriously. That is the only way we will be able to learn anything from doing this.

Here is the situation: Those of you who are role playing the part of the "friend," you just broken up with your girlfriend or boyfriend yesterday. You are very upset because you really liked this person a lot. You had been going out with this person for about six months and now you feel very lonely. You do not understand why this person broke up with you. You are feeling very sad and need someone to talk to about what has happened. You are at school.

This is the basic situation. You can make up any details you want to. Does anyone have any questions? (Allow time for questions. When all questions have been answered, continue.)

We are going to break this role play into a number of steps. The first step is call "Small Talk." In this step the two of you will just start talking. Talk about the kind of stuff you usually talk about with friends. This is to sort of break the ice and get used to talking to each other. Do not start talking about the problem yet. Just make "small talk" for about three minutes. Just get to know each other better. Do this now. (Give them about three minutes for this step or however long they need. When the conversation dies out or when time is up, continue with the next step.)

Let's move on to the next step now. The next step is called "Bridging the Gap." In this section you will change the topic of conversation from small talk to beginning to talk about the problem. Do this in a way that does not sound really obvious or forced. Say something like, "How are you and your girl/boy friend doing?" or "You look sort of down today. Is there anything wrong?" Start this section with a little more small talk and then bridge the gap and begin talking about the problem. Do this now. Take about three minutes again.

(Give them enough time to bridge the gap, then continue.)

Let's move on again. Would anybody like to share what they said to bridge the gap? (Give time for anyone to do this and to discuss what they said.) Did anyone have any trouble bridging the gap? (Give time for responses and discussion.)

The next section is called "Exploration." In this section you need to talk about the problem and try to understand it as well as you can. Listeners should ask questions to help understand what the friend is feeling. Friends should do most of the talking, however. Take about 10 minutes and try to understand the problem and how the friend is feeling as well as you can. Do this now.

(Give them about 10 minutes or until the conversation dies down. Then continue.)

Let's talk about this now. Did anyone have any problems that you would like to talk about? (Give them time to respond and discuss.)

The final section is called "Closing." This is when the conversation seems to be about over and you want to bring it to a close. You listeners will want to see if the friend would like to get together and talk again. If so, set up a time and place to do that. You will want to show that you understand the problem and that you care about the friend. You may want to give some words of encouragement and let the friend know that you will continue to support him/her. Take about five minutes to do this. Do this now.

(Give them time to close the conversation, then continue.)

Let's switch roles now. Those of you who were friends will now be listeners and listeners will be friends. Friends, here is the situation: You have just had a big fight with your parents. You got home 20 minutes late and they have grounded you for a week. Things have been tense between you and your parents for a couple of weeks and now it has exploded. They yelled at you and said you were irresponsible and childish. You are very angry and are thinking about running away. Any questions?

(Give them time for questions and discussion and then go back to the first section, the "Small Talk" section. Read the instructions for the four sections again, just like you did with the first situation. Go through the whole role play again.)

8:00 p.m. BREAK.

Use this time to fix popcorn and other refreshments for the movie.

8:30 p.m. MOVIE

The movie should be one that shows a helping relationship between a person who is hurting and a person or people who try to help.

Tell the participants to watch the helping relationships between the people in the film. Have popcorn, cookies, soda, etc. for participants while they are watching the film.

DISCUSSION: After the film, discuss the relationships that the people in the film had. Ask such questions as:

1) What did _____ do to help _____? or 2) How could he/she have been a better listener/helper?

10:30 p.m. EVENING DEVOTION

Again have singing and opportunities for sharing and prayer. Read a Scripture passage such as John 4:32-6 or John 11 :17-44 which show Jesus talking with people who have problems.

SUNDAY

8:00 a.m. BREAKFAST

9:00 a.m. LISTENING TO GOD

This is a time for participants to be alone with God, to listen to Him through Scripture, prayers, books about Christian lifestyle or just through experiencing nature. Tell participants to take something along to

meditate on (it will be helpful if you furnish a number of appropriate books) and to go off and be alone for an hour. Tell them that they have three tasks during this hour:

1. To listen to God, to hear what He is saying to them about themselves and their lives.
2. To write a short prayer in their own words—emphasize that "Thees" and "Thous" are not allowed. They should talk to God like they talk to a people. This prayer is to be prayed with the group during the worship service.
3. Think of something to share with the group that reflects what they have heard God saying to them. This could be a poem, a Scripture passage or a part of whatever they have been reading. It could also be sharing in their own words what they have been feeling and what they have heard.

Tell them to be creative and think up their own way to share.

After you have explained this, ask for and discuss any questions and then tell them to come back in an hour.

10:00 a.m. WORSHIP

Choose your own format for worship. If you want to share the Eucharist, you will have to make preparations for this beforehand. Suggested contents of the worship service might be:

- Singing
- Sharing what you have heard
- Praying
- Sharing the peace of the Lord
- Eucharist (if you plan to celebrate this)
- Benediction

11 :00 a.m. PROCESSING

The last activity of the retreat is an opportunity for the participants to think about the entire retreat experience.

To facilitate this, make copies of the questions below and hand them out at this time.

1. What did I hear and see this weekend?
2. What feelings did I hear or see in others?
3. What feelings did I experience?
4. What was new to me this weekend?
5. What am I going to remember about this weekend a month from now?

Give the participants 20 or 30 minutes to write answers to these questions.

When everyone is finished writing answers, have them get together in foursomes and share their answers to the questions. By discussing their answers, they can discuss the whole weekend experience.

Assemble the whole group after the discussion has gone on for about 20 minutes. Take 10 to 20 minutes to talk about how the participants are going to use what they have learned this weekend. Encourage them to be creative. They may make suggestions as talking to friends at church or at school who seem to be hurting. Encourage them to follow up on these ideas and promise to give whatever help you can.

End the retreat with singing or praying or hugging or whatever seems right at the time.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH, PACK UP, DEPART

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