

# youthESource Youth Night

## A Heart Transplant

by Mark Schoepp

### OBJECTIVES

- That youth examine the negative feelings toward the unlovable in the light of competition/compassion.
- That youth explore ways to reach out in love to those people inspite of negative feelings.

### INTRODUCTION

“When the question ‘Who am I?’ is put to the powers of this world—school officials, church representatives, placement officers, athletic directors, factory managers, television and radio announcers—the answer is simply, ‘You are the difference you make.’ It is by our differences, distinctions, that we are recognized, honored, rejected, or despised. Whether we are more or less intelligent, practical, strong, fast, handy or handsome depends upon those with whom we are compared or those with whom we compete. It is upon these positive or negative distinctions that much of our self-esteem depends.”\*\*

This is how a book entitled *Compassion, A Reflection on the Christian Life* begins to look at the tension between competition and compassion. We keep our compassion on the edges of our lives because we fear losing our identities, our “distinctiveness.” The book goes on to say that our deepest illusion is “that we can forge our own identities; that we are the collective impressions of our surroundings; that we are the trophies and distinctions we have won.... It makes us into competitive people who compulsively cling to our differences and defend them at all cost, even to the point of violence.”\*\* This all-pervasive competition prevents us from entering full solidarity with each other. It prevents us from being compassionate.

But take heart! We have new hearts! The Holy Spirit has replaced our old hearts. When Jesus says: “Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate,” He invites us to be as close to each other as God is to us. God can be fully compassionate because He does not compare Himself to us and thus is not in competition with us. After the transplant, we can say with Paul: “I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

For more thoughts and discussion on compassion and competition. see the book *Compassion, A Reflection on the Christian Life* by McNeill, Morrison, and Nouwen.

A Note to the Leader: As you do this youth night, be sensitive that some of the “unloved/unlikable” people may be present in the group. If that surfaces in the discussion, be ready to deal positively with some emotions.

### ICE BREAKERS ( 15 minutes)

When the youth arrive, have them make name tags and complete the following statements on their tags. (These will be shared later in the evening.)

- an experience I had (or saw) of being picked last for a team...
- an experience when people you knew (or you) were the butt of a joke...
- the most unlovable kind of person I know is someone who...

When most have arrived and finished this process, play a quick mixer game. (Find games at [youthESource.com/resources/games.](http://youthESource.com/resources/games.))



If you have been in a number of small groups until now, take this time to share any new insights with the total group.

**WORSHIP** (15 minutes)

Gather in a circle. Begin by singing one or two of your favorite songs or hymns.

Have someone read Matthew 1:22-23 and Philippians 2:6-11.

Join in a circle prayer, each person adding a personal prayer, and focus on overcoming competitiveness and becoming more like our "God-with-us."

**AFTERGLOW** ( 15 minutes)

A time for refreshments or to play more games.

\*\*Reprinted from *Compassion, A Reflection on The Christian Life*, by Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison and Henri J. M. Nouwen. Doublday and Company. Inc. @ 1982. Used by permission.

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