

The Ishbane Conspiracy

Peer pressure

Ice Breaker/Game

Book Study:

Positive and Negative Peer Pressure

Time: about 60-90 minutes

Students will learn about the themes of "The Ishbane Conspiracy" by Randy Alcorn, more specifically how to seek out positive peer pressure and guard themselves against negative peer pressure.

Supplies: Bibles, *The Ishbane Conspiracy* by Randy Alcorn, white board, markers.

Start the study out with a discussion of the students' reactions and insights of chapters 1-3.

Ask: **What did you think about the first three chapters?**

What stood out in your mind?

Say: **There is so much we could use from the book to start our discussion, but this week we are going to concentrate on the theme of peer pressure.**

Ask: **What is peer pressure?**

Say: **Here is a definition I found- To define peer pressure, we must break it down into two parts. Peer is defined as a friend, an equal (someone who you see as being equal to you), or a colleague (someone you work with or go to school with). Pressure is a force, something heavy, or something that weighs you down.**

Play an observation game. Form a circle and ask one volunteer to leave the room. Choose one person in the circle to be the leader. Have this person lead actions for others to follow, such as clapping hands, snapping fingers, and patting legs. Encourage the leader to change actions frequently and discreetly so the volunteer will have a hard time guessing who's leading the actions. Ask followers to not be obvious with their glances at the leader.

Have the leader start an action. Then have the volunteer come in. Give the volunteer three chances to guess who the leader is. Play this game two more times with two new volunteers and two new leaders.

Say: **To me peer pressure is when people your own age influence what you do, say, or believe. This can be a positive or a negative influence.**

Ask: **How has positive peer pressure impacted your life?**

We followed a leader in this activity—think of some leaders in your school or church. What do you admire about them?

What things do they do well and make you want to do well too?

Say: **In the Bible God tells us about positive qualities to look for in people.**

Have volunteers read aloud the following scriptures: *Proverbs 14:25; 16:32; 17:9; 22:9; and 22:11* and have the students pick out characteristics that they should be seeking out in friends in each scripture and write it on a white board.

²⁵ A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful.

³² Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

⁹ Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

⁹ The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.

¹¹ One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend.

Then ask: **What would happen to you if you surround yourselves with people like this?**

Say: **With positive peer pressure, we observe good things our friends do, and we're motivated to do good things too. You may not realize it, but you model positive aspects that influence your friends and others.**

Break into the gender specific groups to discuss the following questions and scriptures.

Ask: **How about negative peer pressure? How has negative peer pressure impacted your life?**

What can we do to resist these pressures?

Say: **So it's not enough that we have our peers pressuring us but also the media can pressure us to act, dress, read, watch, who are friends should and shouldn't be and so much more. What can we do? Let's look at what the Bible says when peer, media and social pressure seem like too much for us.**

Read *1 Corinthians 10:13*

¹³The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

Ask: **Does this mean that everything will be just ‘peachy keen’ in our lives?**

Say: **Life won’t ever be free from things that try and drag us away from Jesus, but God will always be faithful and help us when the pressures in our life seem overwhelming. But we also need to be obedient and do our part.**

What different things should we be doing to guard our hearts against pressure from peers and culture? (Examples: finding Godly friends, don’t watch immoral movies/TV shows; don’t go to places that will drag us away from God; giving up immoral music and internet sites.)

End the group discussion with 2 role playing scenario’s like friends trying to get them to go to a movie that has graphic sexual content; or trying to get them to go along with bullying and gossip.

Come back together to end with prayer as a big group.