

Intro to all Studies

These are NOT studies of Dear Bob! They are based on issues that the book highlights - **leaving home, being single and doubting the existence of God.** They are designed to be used with young people aged 14+: church youth groups and school/Uni CUs (the study which is an exception to this is 'leaving home'. This is most suited to young people who will soon be leaving home, or who have recently left home. Perhaps this session could be done in the 1st semester of a year, with the older students sharing their experiences of 'leaving home' and even giving advice!).

For each study there are 3 printable sheets - one for the group leader, one for your group during the session, and one for the group to take away with them. It is all for YOU to use just as you please. All groups differ - ages, ability, likes/dislikes, background, etc. Some may have a mixture of church and unchurched, and so on. You know what suits your group best, so just adapt away!

Have fun...!



Some further comments on how to use these studies:

dearbob-bit:

Options - read it out yourself, get one of group to read, just refer to it and summarise. (You might also be able to think of a suitable topical film clip, or clip from a music video, that will also help to introduce the issue in question.)

intro-bit:

There are tick charts or scenario sheets to hand out to your group to get them thinking about the subject - the feedback from them might steer the emphasis you place on certain issues later in the session. For example, when doing - 'leaving home', if the feedback from the tick chart reveals that many in your group are freaked out about having to make their own (important) decisions when they leave home - worried they might make big mistakes... when you do the bible-bit you might focus mainly on the fact that Abraham made mistakes when he left home, but he always put God first, and God didn't dump him for messing up - he bailed him out and continued to love and help him, etc.

bible-bit:

Options - read it out yourself, get one of group to read, type it up pretty big and stick it somewhere prominent, so it can be seen clearly by all throughout the session. You are given a bit of an 'intro' bit, to read out, or to recreate in your own style!

Arrange your group into pairs (or 3's/4's, etc) ensuring that each 'pair' has a Bible. The questions in this bit can then be given either to all pairs, or you could give different questions to different pairs.

so-what?!-bit:

This will generally involve getting your group to think back to their tick charts/scenarios and relate how they think/feel about the subject to what they've read about in the Bible passage. Use the handout to help prompt them, if necessary, but let them do most of the talking!

extra-weeks:

Sometimes the initial session might raise issues/ thoughts/concerns from some in your group, that they would like to discuss in further detail. For example, you might find that during the session on 'leaving home' a lot of the group express that they have particular problems being tempted by alcohol (!). You might then want to look at this further over the following 2-4 weeks.

This 'extra-weeks' section also includes suggestions of types of people you might like to get to 'visit' your group for a question and answer type thing. For this, get your group to come up with questions the week before. This ensures that they get THEIR questions/concerns addressed, and don't suffer at the hands of what we assume they want/need to know! Also make it clear that if anyone wants to submit questions to you in private during the week, that is OK too. Make the whole 'questioning' thing as creative as possible... write questions out on separate pieces of paper... attach paper clips... get group members to 'fish' them out using a magnet on piece of string... or whatever! If the visitor in question is unable to come to your group... go to them... take a camcorder! You could then play back the answers to your group's questions in stages, giving the group a chance to discuss what's being said.

extra bible-bit:

This is for use in the extra weeks.

books/sites:

See the 'lynx' page at www.dearbob.com for general web sites and books. Mentioned on the leader's notes for each study will be further suggestions of those that specifically relate to that issue.

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leader's notes

The Study

stuff:

Pens, 1 scenario sheet per group member, bibles (enough for 1 per 'pair'), Dear Bob book, video clip or sim (optional), main verse written out big (optional), books to lend to group (optional).

dearbob-bit:

Check out page 71-72 - Jude stresses about being invited to a wedding, where she's expected to bring a 'partner', but she doesn't have one! (This excerpt is printed on the handout).

intro-bit:

Hand out scenario sheets ('Bridget Jones and Joey Tribiani...') to get them thinking about being single. Give them a couple of mins to complete, then spend a few mins doing feedback.

bible-bit:

Have someone read out... Romans 12:1-18 (in a modern version).

"You may not think that you, and the guy who wrote most of the New Testament, have a lot in common... but ya do! He was single! He talks in several places about being single (he seems to feel it's actually better to be single than to marry, coz you can focus more on God's work, etc!). But this study is going to be on something else he said, that can be applied to every stage of our lives, but is particularly relevant for you today, in your 'single' stage!"

Arrange your group into pairs (or 3's/4's). Ask some 'pairs' to look at v 2:- How does our culture expect single people to behave? How does our culture view/treat single people? Should it be any different for Christians?

Ask other 'pairs' to look through the whole passage (but not v2):- Pick out verses that hint at how single Christians should act/think.

IF they need help with this, here are some ideas:

(please read the 'stuh-dee - intro to all studies' page before you read this!)

v 1-2 - We can't sacrifice our lives for God if we're too obsessed by finding a partner!

v 4-8 - We should use the abilities we have, in the situation we are in, for God! If you're single and more independent than those who aren't... use this freedom for God!

v 9-10 - work at having good, lasting, loving friendships.

v11 - don't sit around on your butt, not yet doing what God wants you to do coz you're waiting till you're 'a couple'... GET ON WITH IT!

v12- Ask God to replace any stress/depression you may have with patience/hope/joy!

v13-18 - Don't let your obsession with finding a partner, or time spent tarting around... get in the way of serving God/loving others.

so-what?!-bit:

Have a feedback time on the above activity...

Ask group to think back to the scenario sheets - have they any further thoughts on these, in the light of Romans 12? What are the main things they've picked up from the passage, that relate to being single?

Use the 'handout' (don't give it out yet) to draw out the relevant points from the passage... but let them do most of the talking!

Don't forget to give out the handouts now that you've reached the end of the session!

books:

Single Women: Challenge to the Church?
by Kristin Aune

The Single Issue
by Al Hsu

No sex please, we're single
by Ian Stuart Gregory

extra-weeks:

Possible visitors for question/answer session:

- someone who's single
- someone who's 'going out'
- someone who's engaged
- someone who's married

You could also use the quotes from the 'y's werds' or 'da teem' pages from dearbob.com to spark off discussion on the subject of 'being single'.

Possible subjects to follow-up:

- Dealing with sexual frustration and temptation
- Loneliness
- Friendship



extra bible-bit:

1 Corinthians 7 - Paul's view on being single and on being married.

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On being a Singleton...

Are all single people happy and independent... or lonely and desperate?!

Is it possible to be single and be accepted by society (and not thought of as having a disease similar to leprosy!) and to still be happy, fulfilled, celibate, etc?

YOU DECIDE...!

Whether you're single or not, put yourself in the trainers of the following 2 singletons, and jot some thoughts down about what YOU'D do, and why....

1) You're single... and love it! It's great to have your independence and not be answerable to anyone. You go out with some mates to a pub/party. You have a couple of drinks and are really enjoying yourself, when... you find you're being chatted up by a v hot babe/gorgeous bloke. After a bit of flirting (from both of you) they ask you if you want to come back to their place (they live alone). It's obvious that it's not because they want to show you their CD collection. What do you do?...

- a) Say goodbye, and make a hasty getaway.
- b) Say you'd rather stay at the pub/party (and then continue to chat/flirt with them).
- c) Go back to their place, but tell yourself to be careful - strictly to 'chat' only.
- d) Go back to their place - what's the harm in a friendly snog anyway?
- e) Other.....?

Because...

2) You're single... and fed up with watching your mates pair off, leaving you all on your lone-some own-some. It's occurred to you recently that most of your life revolves around your hunt for a bloke/lass. You only go to church services/CU/youth group when you know there will be potential partners present. You neglect to speak to those in your CU/youth group who tend to get left out, coz you're too busy flirting. All your daydreams are partner-related... most of your prayers fall into this category also. You begin to ponder on your situation. Do you...

- a) Stay as you are - finding a partner is a tough job - bound to take over your life for several years... it's only natural!
- b) Decide to 'move on' - life is out there for the living - Mr/Mrs Right will find ME when it's the 'right time'.
- c) A combination of both of the above?
- d) Other....?

Because...



Tue 30 Nov

'Bit narked that invite is for 'Jude and partner'. What does that mean? Boyfriend? Best pal? Does 'partner' have to be of the opposite sex to qualify? Hmmm....

Wed 1 Dec

Spent most of today's lecture composing the following:

Dear Mr and Mrs Ford,
Thank you for your kind invitation to the forthcoming wedding of Lydia to Johnathan Blake. Unfortunately, I am such a minger that not a single bloke in the entire universe is interested in accompanying me to said wedding. Therefore, it is with deep regret that I inform you that I cannot possibly attend said wedding, as to go alone would be the saddest thing a person in my position could possibly do. With my fondest regards,
Miss Jude (forever-a-) Singleton

Really need a partner asap! Should I advertise on noticeboard outside union bar?!

Don't they WANT me to come alone - is it a CRIME to be single? Why do people always want everyone paired up? Many singletons are fulfilled, interesting, confident people, who don't NEED a trophy partner hanging off their arms (me excluded - I DO need!).

(taken from 'Dear Bob')



SINGLETON CITY !!

'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life... and place it before God, as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.

(Romans 12:1-2, THE MESSAGE)

Check out Romans 12: 1-18 - Turns out the guy who wrote most of the New Testament (Paul) was... wait for it... a SINGLETON! This passage can be applied to all areas and situations of life (so no thinking that it's 'let's-pick-on-single-people' day!) but here we'll examine it to see what it can mean for singles...



v1-2) Our culture says that single people are single because they're unattractive and/or unsuccessful. They are sometimes treated as 2nd class citizens, when compared to those who are paired off. If we are to live DIFFERENTLY to this, as this passage strongly suggests... we need to rethink how we view ourselves (if we're single) and how we view those who are single. God doesn't favour those with a partner to those without one... neither should we! **We should be SATISFIED with the life we have**, accepting that God has a plan for our lives, and it's not always for us to know the whole picture... we need to trust him, big-time.

v1-2, 13-18) If we're obsessed with partner-hunting, to the extent that it pretty much controls our life... **we can't be sacrificing our life for God** in the way he wants us to. Likewise, this could be the case if we're tarting around, snogging everything that moves. God asks us to love and serve others... when we know that the way we live our 'single' life stops us from doing this... let's sit down and think it through again!

v 9-10) Let's work hard at having good, lasting, loving friendships. Think about what qualities we like in our friends. If we're looking to find someone, we need to bear these qualities in mind... but let's not get too hung up on them, or we'll become too picky! Also, let's not nag God with a list of qualities... demanding he give us a Robert Pattinson/Keira Knightley look-a-like with a GSOH, etc., etc... he's God, not Father Christmas!

v4-8, 11) Forget sitting on our butts WAITING for Mr/Mrs Right... let's ask God what he wants us to do with our lives, and then get on with it!

We can all serve God with the abilities/gifts we have and the situations we are in. So, we might find ourselves in a 'single' stage of life... let's go USE this for God! Think of the advantages that YOU, personally, have, because you're single - perhaps you have more time on your hands, or you're more independent and can make your own choices... and, with God's help, we can all live life to the MAX... right now!

'I think that it is a scary thing at this stage in my life to rely on God, to have my future in his hands, because I am the type of person that likes to know what is going to happen! I would just like a comfortable life where I am happily married with about 4 children! But who knows what God has in store?!'

(Debbie, aged 16)

'As young Christians we would ideally like to find a partner to be with, but it's easier said than done! Sometimes we just need to have faith that the right person will come along!'

(Will, aged 19)

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