

Overview

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 are about to leave 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 on 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.

www.dearbob.com

leader's notes

The Study

stuff:

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

dearbob-bit:

Check out page 34 - Jude using Radio 2 to cure homesickness (!) or pages 39-40 - Jude tries to recreate her Mum's 'mushrooms on toast', again, in an attempt to cure homesickness (this latter section is printed on the handout).

intro-bit:

Hand out tick charts to get them thinking about leaving home (use tick chart 1- 'Adios amigos!' if your group have not yet left home, and tick chart 2- 'I want my muu-mm-ieee!!' if they have). Give them a couple of mins to complete, then spend a few mins doing feedback.

bible-bit:

Have someone read out... Genesis 12:1-9 - Abraham leaves home!

"Whether you know everything about Abraham bar his shoe size... or whether you've just sort of heard of him before... 'isn't he some old bloke in the Bible, with a long white beard?'... you're unlikely to think that you and he have lots in common right now... but ya DO!

OK, so he was 75 when he had to pack his largest suitcase, leave his country, family, mates, way of life, etc... but leave home he did, and this brief look at his journey and adventures will hopefully prove useful to us today."

Arrange your group into pairs (or 3's/4's). Ask each 'pair' to use Genesis chaps 12-25 to search for one of the following:

- Abe (or Sarah) made mistakes or had problems (chap 12, 14:1-12, 16, 18, 20, 23:1-2).

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

- Abe (or Sarah) doubted himself, others or God (15:1-8, 17:15-19, 18:1-16).
- Abe talked with, worshipped and trusted God (12:7, 13:18, 15, chaps 18 and 22).
- God looked out for him (chaps 12, 15, 17, 18:17-19, 21:1-7, 25:1-7).

(Example bible references are for YOU, not them, just in case they get stuck!)



so-what?!-bit:

Have a feedback time on the above activity...

Ask group to think back to the tick charts - how do they feel about the prospect of leaving home... or how they feel now they've left home? How do Abraham's experiences of leaving home compare to their own? What can they learn from looking at his story?

Use the 'handout' (don't give it out yet) to draw out the main relevant points from Abraham's story... 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:

Mind the Gap
by Cathie Bartlam

Studentdom
by Matt Stuart

90,000 Hours
by Rodney Green

Thank God it's Monday
by Mark Greene

Wake Up To Work
by Geoff Shattock

Manifesto For Life
by Matt Bird & Craig Borlase

extra weeks:

Possible visitors for question/answer session: people who've left home to start work, marry, Gap year, etc.

Get a parent in for an insight into what it's like from 'the other side'.

Get students in to share their experiences. Particularly a student counsellor or Uni chaplain, to talk about the most common problems students face, and how they would advise avoiding such problems!

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 'leaving home'.

extra bible-bit:

Ruth 1:14-18 - Ruth leaves home.



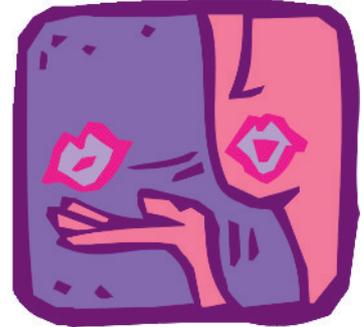
www.dearbob.com


Scripture
union
light to live by

Adios, amigos!...

OK, so it's not that long till you'll be flying the nest... whether you're leaving home to:

- work
- get married
- go abroad
- do Christian work/Gap year, etc
- go to uni/college



It's likely that you've got more than a few thoughts racing round your head. Let's try to get them on paper... it might help!

So, look at the following list, and put a tick next to anything that you are at ease with, or looking forward to, about leaving home, and a cross next to the things that are stressing you out:

- cooking
- washing/ironing/DIY
- being ill (and no Mum to wait on you!)
- controlling your own budget
- homesickness
- finding boy/girlfriend
- change of lifestyle (if abroad - change of culture/climate, etc)
- fitting in - making friends
- peer pressure - temptation to do... naughty stuff!
- independence - making your own decisions!
- staying pals with God
- other

There. That wasn't too painful, was it?!

"I want my Muu-mm-ieee!!"

OK, so it's not that long ago since you flew the nest... whether you left home to:

- work
- get married
- go abroad
- do Christian work/Gap year, etc
- go to uni/college



It's likely that things are different for you now... but is it good-different or bad-different? Let's try to get such thoughts on paper... it might help!

So, look at the following list, and put a tick next to things that you've taken to with ease, or enjoyed and a cross next to the things that are still stressing you out:

- cooking
- washing/ironing/DIY
- being ill (and no Mum to wait on you!)
- controlling your own budget
- homesickness
- finding boy/girlfriend
- change of lifestyle (if abroad - change of culture/climate, etc)
- fitting in - making friends
- peer pressure - temptation to do... naughty stuff!
- independence - making your own decisions!
- staying pals with God
- other

There. That wasn't too painful, was it?!

INDEPENDENCE DAY !!

Fri 23 Oct, 11:23am,

'Am currently enjoying freshly fried mushrooms on toast, precariously balanced on lap. Yeah - tis a tad early for lunch - have always been one to start planning lunch from about 11.

... Am homesick. Miss my room, my bed... and Mum. Not in the sense of meaningful mother-daughter chats (which rarely had) but just the way she would be fussing round me now, knowing I was ill or down or whatever... she'd always fix my fave snack - fried mushrooms on toast, accompanied by a "nice cup-of-tea".

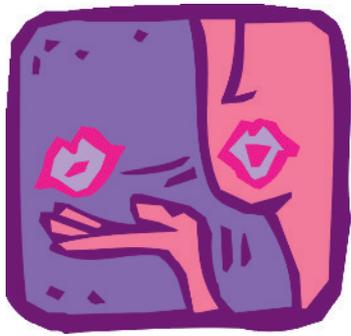
Strange how I spent a couple of yrs longing to leave home, and am now 1/2 wishing I'd never left, barely a month down the line. HMMMMMMMM.

[later] After all the hassle of actually buying some VEG, it didn't taste quite right somehow. Perhaps didn't use right oil...

perhaps is coz didn't have cuppa to go with it...

perhaps is just coz Mum didn't make it for me.'

(taken from 'Dear Bob')



Things that may **worry/excite** you if you're thinking ahead to leaving home.... or things that you might be **stressed/joyous** about if you've recently left home:

- cooking
- washing/ironing/DIY
- being homesick, being ill (and no Mum to wait on you!)
- controlling your own budget
- finding boy/girlfriend
- change of lifestyle (if abroad - change of climate/culture, etc)
- independence
- changing identity
- fitting in - making friends
- peer pressure - temptation to do... naughty stuff!
- staying pals with God...

"Leaving home is always something I think about with mixed feelings! In some ways I want to go far far away just to be able to start again in a place where no-one would know me - but in reality I don't know whether I could bear to be away from my family and friends with such a long distance between us!"

[Tamsin, aged 16]

"When I started at Uni it was nice to have some independence and to have my own money to spend (even though it wasn't really 'mine'). It was good to have lots of Christian friends - they helped me through the tough times. It was also good that there were so many people my own age - it was easy to find both Christians and non-Christians that I got on well with."

[Zoe, aged 23]

Check out Genesis chaps 12 to 25 - Abraham packs his largest suitcase and embarks on the ultimate 'leaving home' adventure!...

- The **outcome of his 'leaving home' was largely unknown....** he had to trust that God was in charge of his life, and knew what was best for him.
- **He experienced a complete change of lifestyle** - he left his familiar surroundings, friends, family, culture... even his style of housing had a revamp (they stayed in 'tents' after his visit to Egypt, this was not what they were used to!).
- This would have led to a **mixture of emotions**: loss of security, loneliness, homesickness, confusion, fear, doubt, etc.
- Not everything about his 'leaving home' was hunky-dory... he encountered **problems a-plenty** - childlessness, family rows, famine... and old Abe himself **messed up**... bigtime! He faced agonising choices, bitter disappointments, and tended to doubt his ability to cope with it all (surprise surprise!).
- He asked God a lot of **questions**, and wasn't a stranger to having a bit of a **moan**, especially when his questions weren't always answered immediately.
- Despite all this, he knew what (whom) he believed, and stuck with it. **He didn't let the newness of it all dislodge his faith.**
- On the whole, **he trusted God and was obedient** to him - he relied on God's ongoing guidance, and was 'in dialogue' with God - even argued with him at one point!
- He had his priorities tested... and passed with flying colours, proving that **God was no.1 in his life**, and that he was prepared to sacrifice what HE (Abe) wanted.
- **God was always there, always in charge, always ready to bail him out and overlook his blunders! He protected, reassured, and blessed him...** Abraham lived to a grand old age of 175, having had 3(ish) wives, 8 kids and 19 grandkids... we are told he lived 'a long and satisfying life'.

www.dearbob.com


Scripture
union
light to live by

Do you **identify** with Abraham in any way? How can we **learn** from his experience of 'leaving home'?