OBEDIENCE

Program Target: To stimulate young people's thinking about the role of obedience in the Christian's life

What to do: Invite a guest speaker with a military or police background to speak to your group for about ½ hour about his or her experiences with basic training–what kinds of things they are expected to do in training, and how the experience of practicing "blind obedience" to superior officers prepares them for the kinds of situations they will face later. After the talk, lead your youth through a ½ hour discussion about obedience in the Christian life, using the discussion questions below.

Discussion:
1. Why are police and members of the military put through such rigorous training when they first enlist?
2. Why is unquestioning obedience important in a career like this?
3. Is this the kind of obedience God expects from Christians?
4. Some skeptics say that if we put the emphasis on "obeying" God, we are downplaying the importance of using our own reason or intelligence. What do you think?
5. Is there ever a time when it's OK to question God's commands? Are we always required to obey without questioning?
6. What kind of "basic training" do we need in our spiritual lives to help us learn to obey?

Preparation Time: Invite your guest speaker at least a month in advance. Choose someone who will be comfortable speaking in front of a group and make the objectives of the program clear so that your speaker will know what to focus on. If possible, choose someone who is a member of your congregation or is active in another Christian church, so that he/she will understand the parallels you are drawing to obedience in the Christian life, and will be able to participate in the discussion afterwards.

Bible Text: 1 Samuel 15:22

Song Service:

"Make me a Servant"
"Trust and Obey"

Vesper or Closing Thought:
God gave us intelligence and the ability to reason–but He also knows there are situations where our own understanding cannot carry us, because we can't see the "big picture." Obedience requires trust–we need to believe that God knows what's best for us. God doesn't always require "blind obedience" – in many situations we have enough information to make an informed, godly decision. But when the path ahead isn't clear, God asks us to trust Him enough to obey even when the outcome isn't clear to us.