

WHO'S IN THE GROUP CHAT?

Love everyone. Forgive freely. Choose access wisely.

BIG IDEA: The easiest fire offers acceptance without accountability. The second fire offers truth, restoration, and true friendship.

START HERE

1. What is one group chat you actually enjoy being part of—and what makes it good?
2. Have you ever changed the way you talked, acted, or treated someone because of the people around you?

If needed: Students may answer generally. Do not pressure anyone to name people or expose private details.

THE FIRST FIRE — JOHN 18:17–18, 25–27

Read the passage together. Peter stood close enough to hear Jesus being accused, but far enough away to pretend he did not belong to Him.

3. Why do you think Peter stayed around that fire instead of leaving?
4. Peter denied Jesus with his words. What might denying Jesus through our actions look like today?
5. Why is the fire where no one holds you accountable often the easiest fire to stand around?

THE PLATE — WHAT DID FITTING IN COST?

6. What “pieces” can people break off themselves when they are desperate to belong?

If needed: Examples: convictions, kindness, honesty, purity, courage, identity, compassion, or public faith.

7. What is the difference between friends who help you fit in and friends who help you remain whole?

DO NOT MISS THIS: True friends do not require you to become less whole so they can remain comfortable.

THE SECOND FIRE — JOHN 21:9–12, 15–19

Read the passage together. Jesus brought Peter back to another charcoal fire—not to shame him, but to confront, restore, and recommission him.

8. What was different about the people around Peter at the second fire?
9. Why is truth part of restoration? Why is accountability part of real love?
10. What does it show you about Jesus that He fed Peter before confronting his failure?
11. Jesus did not only forgive Peter; He trusted him with purpose again. What does that teach us about restoration?

BOUNDARIES ROOTED IN LOVE

BIBLICAL BOUNDARY: A decision that protects obedience and healthy relationship. It is rooted in love—not punishment, pride, revenge, or bitterness.

12. How can you love and forgive someone without giving them the same access they had before?
13. Jesus loved the thousands, lived life with twelve, and invited three closer. Why is it wise not to give everyone the same access?
14. What qualities should someone have before you give them inner-circle access to your life?

PERSONAL RESPONSE

15. Which fire are you choosing right now: easy acceptance without accountability—or truth, true friendship, and restoration?
16. Who are your three—or who could become part of your trusted circle?
17. Is there a group chat, friendship, or circle where you need a loving boundary? What is one wise next step?

LEADER NOTES

- Do not turn the discussion into “bad people versus good people.” Keep the focus on influence, access, and obedience.
- Do not pressure students to leave friendships impulsively. Help them identify wise, specific boundaries and involve a trusted adult when safety is involved.
- If a student discloses abuse, coercion, self-harm, exploitation, or danger, follow your ministry’s safeguarding and reporting procedures immediately.
- Make room for restoration. A student may recognize that they have been Peter at the first fire; remind them that Jesus still invites them to the second.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, show us which voices are shaping us and which fires we keep choosing. Give us courage to leave circles that teach us to deny You through our actions. Restore what we have broken while trying to belong. Teach us to set boundaries from love rather than bitterness. Give us friends who tell us the truth, hold us accountable, and walk with us toward You—and make us those kinds of friends for others. Amen.