

THE CLUBHOUSE BOAT

A TeleKETICS Presentation



TeleKETICS Presents A DIMENSION Film

to explore the Christian experience
in religious education and worship

TEACHING GUIDE

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The theological problem today is to find the art of drawing religion out of man not pumping it into him. The redemption has happened. The Holy Spirit is in man. The art is to help men become what they are.

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STORYLINE / PERSPECTIVE

The old boat would make a fantastic clubhouse for Dave, Eddie, Pete, Tommy and their gang — if Dave's Uncle Joe (who is leaving town) will let them have it. Although Uncle Joe figures the boat is worth \$200, he agrees to sell it to the boys for \$150 — provided they deliver the cash within two weeks. Each boy pledges 30 dollars.

All the boys come through with their shares — except Tommy. Although he earns five dollars a week as a delivery boy, his father insists that his money go into a savings account, and no place else.

The two weeks run out, and Uncle Joe is about to sell the boat to someone else. But Pete "borrows" 30 dollars for Tommy out of a bag in the Lost and Found shelf at the motel his folks manage.

Tommy, frantic to get the cash he owes Pete and the gang, resorts to small subterfuges — deliberately working people into giving him tips, hiding the extra money he earns (including a dollar raise) from his parents, and even keeping small sums given in overpayment. He feels terrible.

And then time runs out — the man is coming back to claim his bag from the Lost and Found. Unless Pete puts back the cash, his father may be fired, Pete could go to juvenile court, the boys' club will be busted up and, of course, the boat will be lost. The boys have scraped up some money, and Tommy has saved some — but they are 5 dollars short. They insist that Tommy make up the difference before the man returns.

On Tommy's next delivery, an old man mistakenly gives him a 10 dollar bill instead of a 5 dollar bill. Tommy can save them all, and especially himself, with that extra 5 dollars. What should he do? At this moment, honesty, friendship and self-esteem all seem, to Tommy, to be in jeopardy as he confronts the very real alternative of justifying the means by its end.



THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

The desire to belong, to experience community in one dimension or other, lies deep in all of us. So the desire of the young boys in the film to obtain a meeting place (in this case, a boat) to celebrate their friendship is readily understandable. Similarly, their sense of loyalty and the obligation they feel to support each other in their plans is basic to genuine and lasting friendship. But there are other loyalties, other obligations just as valued: the loyalty to oneself that we term integrity, or the honest response to others that says we neither use nor abuse them, or the pledge of mutual trust at the heart of the family. All of these loyalties are involved when Tommy, the central figure in the film, has difficulty "doing his share" toward raising money for the clubhouse boat.

Such a lack of money is a common source of tension in daily relationships. For money, though intended as a means, easily assumes, in a given situation, the importance of an end, subordinating all other values to itself. Tommy is caught in just such a dynamic as he finds himself slipping into small deceptions regarding his customers and his family, and ultimately "borrowing" money not his to use.

THE CLUBHOUSE BOAT, then, not only prompts us to explore the ideals of honesty and personal integrity expressed in the Seventh and the Eighth Commandments, but also to consider the role of money in the Christian lifestyle. How much is enough? What is money for? And does even a moderate degree of personal prosperity enjoin us as Christians to a deeper concern for the poor and disinherited of the world?

PROCEDURE ONE

(For Young Audiences)

1. Distribute copies of the following questions to each student. Ask them to mark one choice in each question. Explain that their answers are just for them to think about. They need not be shared.

- If you needed help with an important problem, would you talk to:

- your mother
- your father
- your best friend
- your teacher
- no one
- other —?

- If you and your friends wanted very much to do something that you knew your parents would not approve, would you

- tell your friends you couldn't do it
- ask your parents if they would reconsider and allow you to do it
- do it if you were sure your parents would not find out about it?

- If you had as much money as you wanted right now, what would you do with it?

- put it in the bank
- buy all the things you have ever wanted
- buy gifts for all your family and friends
- give it to people who are hungry and poor.

2. Introduce the film as the story of a boy who had to make some choices similar to the ones they have just made.

3. SHOW FILM.

4. Discussion Questions

- What do you think Tommy will do with the extra five dollars he was paid by mistake? (Role playing situation)
- If you were Tommy's best friend in the club, what would you tell him if he came to you for help? (Role playing situation)
- Can you think of all the times that Tommy acts a lie in order to get money; e.g., faking hard breathing so as to get a tip, or hiding the extra money he is earning so his father won't know, or borrowing

the "stolen" 30 dollars? How do you think Tommy feels when he does these things?

- Is it a good idea to save your money as Tommy's father said? Do you think Tommy should have been able to spend as much of his earnings as he liked? How much spending money do you think you should have each week?
- Do you think \$150 is too much for the boys to spend on a clubhouse? Can you think of other ways they could have used that money? Are there some valuable things that you can't buy with money? What are some other good ways that the boys could have used their money?
- If Tommy and the other boys are real friends, what do you think would have happened if Tommy had said right from the beginning that he couldn't get the money? What other meeting places could the boys find or make that might not cost so much?

PROCEDURE TWO

(For Parents / Teachers)

1. Distribute copies of the following questions to every person and ask them to reflect privately on their response to them. (Allow about 5 minutes.)

- How often do you take time to have a serious conversation with one of your children/students? Is it only when there is a problem or crisis?
- When was the last time you had a serious talk with one of your children/students? What was the subject? Was it a real exchange? Or was it a one-sided conversation?

- Is money a frequent topic in your conversation? Why? What family recreations do you enjoy that do not depend on money? Are your children/students ever involved in obtaining/spending money for those who are in need?

2. Introduce the film as an experience reflecting the conflicts that can develop around the issues raised in these questions.

3. SHOW FILM.

4. Discussion Questions:

- What kind of person do you see in Tommy's father? What other alternatives might he have chosen when Tommy asked to have all his earnings? (Role playing situation)
- Might things have gone differently for Tommy if his father had followed their initial conversation with later efforts to see how Tommy had handled having to say "no" to his friends, and to ask what had happened to the club's plans to buy the boat? (Role playing situation)
- What do you think will happen on further occasions when real communication is needed between Tommy and his father? (At present, Tommy's only confidant seems to be his lizard.)

- Since Tommy's father does believe that his son should not spend his wages when and as he likes, what could he have done to help Tommy relate more easily to disappointing his friends?
- What do you think about young boys having as much as \$150 spending money to invest in a boat?
- Tommy and his friends seem accustomed to getting what they want and to having the money to buy it. How would you help them to understand that prosperity brings with it a responsibility toward others?