

# Loyalty

Grades 6-8

## Segment Summary:

**Note: The couch kids' discussion precedes the feature in this segment.**

**A devastating house fire helped Michael Kudelka assess the loyalty of his friends.**

When Michael Kudelka's home caught on fire, 13 years' worth of childhood memories were destroyed. But Mike was fortunate enough to have a close group of friends to support him in his time of need. John Burk, a member of Mike's youth group, was one of the first people to contact Mike after the fire. John notified all of Mike's friends and worked to organize a relief effort to assist his family. Although the fire devastated both Mike and his family, he says it revealed to him the importance of true friendship. He realized that the neighbors and classmates who never called or even asked about his family weren't the loyal and dependable friends he thought they were. Mike says that the only friends he now wants in his life are those that will be "there to back you up."

## Discussion Questions:

1. What character traits can you identify in Mike? What about John?
2. Have you ever experienced an event similar to the one that Mike and his family experienced? What happened? How did your friends react? Did you learn something about the people you considered to be your friends? Explain.
3. Can an experience similar to the one that Mike and his family faced draw a family closer together? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever been in a situation where the people you thought were your friends did not react with as much compassion as other people you knew? How did that make you feel? Did you ever talk with your friends about their reactions? If so, what happened? If not, why not?
5. Do you consider yourself to be a loyal friend? Why or why not? What could you do to be more loyal to your friends?
6. Have you ever been in a situation when your loyalty to a friend was tested? What happened? How did you respond? What would you do differently if you were in a similar situation?
7. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to choose one friendship over another? What happened? What did you do? How did the decision make you feel?
8. What are the benefits of having friends who will support you through difficult times?
9. Real friendships are hard work. What are some things you have to do to keep a friendship strong? What type of commitment is involved in a long-term friendship?
10. Do you prefer to have a circle of close friends, or are you more comfortable with one or two close friends? Explain.

## Vocabulary Words and Definitions:

### **Commitment (n.)**

**Definition:** a promise to do something or to behave in a particular way

**Context:** Olivia broke her commitment to babysit Mr. Sololman's son by attending a rock concert instead.

### **Cult (n.)**

**Definition:** an exclusive group of people, especially religious in nature, that adheres to extreme and often false beliefs

**Context:** Marion's all-black wardrobe and multiple piercings led her parents to believe that she had fallen in with the wrong crowd and joined a cult.

### **Dependable (adj.)**

**Definition:** able to be trusted and relied upon to do what is needed

**Context:** Because the job entailed working with large amounts of cash, the bank manager wanted to hire a teller he thought would be trustworthy, reliable and dependable.

### **Devastate (v.)**

**Definition:** to make a person feel extremely shocked or sad

**Context:** Losing the state championship basketball game by one point devastated Desiree and her teammates.

### **Excommunicate (v.)**

**Definition:** to punish a person by excluding him or her from fellowship in a group, community, church, etc.

**Context:** The Amish community excommunicated Daniel because he broke his vow never to start a fight with another person.

### **Logistics (n.)**

**Definition:** the practical arrangements that are needed in order to make a plan or activity successful

**Context:** The political candidate spent months organizing the logistics of his campaign in order to secure the office of governor.

### **Loyalty (n.)**

**Definition:** the quality of remaining faithful to a person's friends, family, country, etc.

**Context:** Camille proved her family loyalty by tutoring her sister rather than attending a school dance.

### **Patriotism (n.)**

**Definition:** the state of having or expressing a great love of a one's country

**Context:** Gregory expressed his patriotism by enlisting in the Marine Corps to defend his country.

### **Shun (v.)**

**Definition:** to avoid someone or something deliberately

**Context:** Hamal's classmates shunned him after his teacher caught him cheating on the exam.

### **Surge (n.)**

**Definition:** a sudden strong feeling

**Context:** When the star football player made two touchdowns in the fourth quarter of the game, fans felt a surge of hope.

**Source:** *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. 2000.

## Activity: Storytellers

### Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Work in small groups to create a story strand using vocabulary words
- Illustrate the meanings of vocabulary words by using the words in a story strand
- Demonstrate listening and speaking skills
- Use vocabulary words correctly in context

### Materials:

- Pens, pencils
- Paper, index cards
- Envelope or plastic bag
- **Loyalty Vocabulary Words and Definitions** handout

### Procedure:

1. Before beginning this activity, you will need to make one copy of the **Loyalty Vocabulary Words and Definitions** handout per group.
2. Divide students into groups of six, and allow each group to choose a student to serve as the recorder. Give each group of students one copy of the **Loyalty Vocabulary Words and Definitions** handout. Instruct one member of the group to cut the sheet into strips so that each strip contains the vocabulary word, definition and context. The recorder will give the other five members of the group two strips each. The recorder does not take any strips.
3. Instruct each group to create a story strand. The story strand develops in the following manner:
  - a. One student in each group reads a vocabulary word from one of his or her strips and begins a story by creating a sentence that includes the word.
  - b. Moving clockwise, the next student adds to the story by incorporating one of his or her vocabulary words into the story. The strand continues until all of the vocabulary words have been woven into the story.
  - c. The recorder will have the responsibility of recording the entire story and then sharing it with the rest of the class.

**Example:** The word is shun. The first student may begin the story with the following sentence: "When Roberta's friends learned that she stole her friend's watch, the group shunned her." The second student has the word excommunicated. He or she may add to the strand: "She was not entirely excommunicated from the group, but she did come to regret her poor choice."

4. Once students complete their stories, the recorders will share the stories with the class.