

Word on the Street Discussion Time: Don't Tell!!

You could use this discussion starter with your family, your friends, or maybe in your class or your Church youth group. Read the story at the top and use the questions to start discussion. Then read the Bible story and talk through the second set of questions. It will probably take about half an hour. You could finish with a prayer based on your discussion.

John and Evie had been best friends for as long as they could remember. They talked about everything together and had managed to get through all the awkwardness of a boy/girl friendship a long time ago.

Now, John was worried about Evie. For almost two years Evie has been complaining about her weight and constantly complaining about how she couldn't get a boyfriend because 'she was fat'. John knew Evie wasn't fat, in fact, he thought she was looking pretty skinny. At first he had thought her concerns were the same thing all girls felt, but now, as he watched her getting thinner and thinner, he was worried that maybe Evie was suffering from an eating disorder.

John knew that someone from school had talked to Evie's mum about her weight last year and that Evie's mum had got angry, saying that Evie had a high metabolism and just wanted to look her best. Now things were considerably worse; he knew Evie wasn't eating and had even seen diet pills in her bag.

When John saw Evie at lunch she refused to eat anything and showed him her diet pills. He tried to talk to her, but Evie insisted that being a boy, he wouldn't understand. She said that if he was really her friend, he had to accept this was one thing he couldn't help her with.

- Do you agree with Evie? Is this something he should leave to her female friends, and stay out of?
- Would John breaking his loyalty to Evie if he told someone about her diet pills? If not, who should John talk to?
- Evie's mum doesn't seem to think there's a problem; do you think adults always know best in this kind of situation? Explain your answer.

Read Psalm 139: 1-16

- What do these verses tell us about how God views us?
- Do you find this passage reassuring, or do you have a different reaction?
- What does the idea that you are 'wonderfully made' do for your self-image? Try to explain your answer.
- How can you help to improve one-another's self image?

An extended version of this discussion appears in *The Ideas Factory: 100 Adaptable Discussion Starters for Teens*, by Martin Saunders, the Editor of *Youthwork* magazine. It is reproduced here with his kind permission.