**EXTRA! Ideas for Adults – Character Counts – Session 1**

**Date: July 27, 2025**

**The Importance of Character**

**The Point: God equips us for Christlike character.**

**Get Into the Study**

*Share the following after discussing the opening question.*

Flooding in the Texas Hill Country that claimed dozens of lives on July 4 also reminded us of some true heroes in our culture. Among them, Coast Guard rescue swimmer Scott Ruskan is credited with saving more than 165 lives alongside his aircrew.

More than a foot of rain fell in less than an hour before dawn in central Texas, sending a wall of water down the Guadalupe River that uprooted trees, destroyed buildings, and overturned vehicles. Ruskan and his team were sent by helicopter to Camp Mystic, an all-girls camp on the banks of the Guadalupe where more than two dozen campers and counselors died in the flooding. When the Coast Guard team arrived, nearly 200 children were standing barefoot in the water in need of a rescue.

They “were in need of air lift. There was no other way to get them out,” Ruskan said. “Bridges were gone, roadways were gone, and the water was coming up too high for boat rescue. The only option was airlift.”

Ruskan stayed behind at Camp Mystic to comfort campers and counselors while his crew saved lives in other locations first. He has been called an “American hero” by the White House and the Department of Homeland Security. Ruskan and other rescuers in the Texas Hill Country flooding modeled character in our culture, where character too often is lacking.

<https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2025/07/08/coast-guard-hero-rescues-165-people-from-texas-hill-country-floodwaters/>

**Get Into the Study (Option from Adult Leader Guide)**

In advance, play a [video clip](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHlQTGLDWIM&ab_channel=glennharm) showing some positive role models. Then ask **Question #1**.

**Study the Bible**

*As you discuss Question #4, share the following.*

Some Americans have increased their effort to grow in character by reading Scripture more, according to this year’s State of the Bible report by the American Bible Society (ABS). For the first time in four years, both Bible use and Scripture engagement have increased.

“People are curious about the Bible and Jesus,” said John Farquhar Plake, ABS’s chief innovation officer. “How will the church respond? Together we must respond with creativity and innovation. Opportunities like this don’t come along every day, so we need to listen carefully and respond to our neighbors with grace, hope, and truth.”

Ten million more Americans than last year are reading the Bible at least three times a year outside of church. In ABS’s terms, that means “Bible users” have increased from 38% of American adults in 2024 to 41% in 2025. Though Millennials and men typically are among the least likely groups to use the Bible, both groups saw marked increases in Bible users from 2024 to 2025. Millennial Bible users grew by 29% and male Bible users by 19%.

Scripture engagement, a measure of Bible interaction and impact in people’s lives, also increased from 2024. This year 20% of American adults are Bible engaged, compared with 18% last year. The two youngest generations, Gen Z and Millennials, saw marked increases over the past year. Of course, Bible reading is just part of the diligence in spiritual growth that makes us useful for God’s kingdom.

<https://www.americanbible.org/news/press-releases/articles/sotb-2025-release/>

*The week’s writer for Extra is David Roach. David is pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Saraland, Alabama. He and his wife Erin have three children.*

**Study the Bible (Option from Daily Discipleship Guide Leader Guide)**

Gather ingredients to make trail mix. For recipe ideas, click [here](https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/meals-menus/g32257082/trail-mix-recipes/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=mgu_ga_pw_md_pmx_hybd_mix_us_18891731492&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=18891732851&gbraid=0AAAAABxutSqfm5US8S_mssYb3cKhG9K_B&gclid=Cj0KCQjwt8zABhDKARIsAHXuD7Y9UIcFw9WQ5Q9oqYO2ZQSuA1fFNaeJGyFI741Sbtfz44EB4dgTH5kaAqxAEALw_wcB).

Use the optional activity to help the group understand how developing all the characteristics mentioned in the 2 Peter 1 passage is important for developing genuine, Christlike character and how all these character traits make us more mature in our faith and more like Christ. It isn’t any one characteristic alone but all of them working together.

**Additional Questions**

**Icebreaker**

* Who was a role model for you growing up?
* Who are some positive role models in our culture today?
* What were your favorite pretend games when you were a child?
* When have you seen someone fake it only to not make it in the end?
* What’s one of the most creative scams you can recall?

**2 Peter 1:1-3**

* How does it encourage you to know that God has given us all we need for life and godliness in Jesus?
* How does it change your perspective to know that you have everything you need to live a godly life through Christ?
* What are some practical ways we can increase our knowledge of the Lord?
* What are some obstacles to developing Christlike character?
* How have you come to know that growth in character is possible?
* How might our lives be different if we truly believed God has given us everything we need for life and godliness?

**2 Peter 1:4-8**

* How do the qualities mentioned in this passage benefit your spiritual growth?
* If God has given us everything we need for life and godliness, why do we have to make an effort to supplement our faith with the attributes listed in verses 5-7?
* Which of character attributes stand out to you as you read this passage? Why?
* How can we attain the attributes described in this passage?
* When it comes to growth in character, how can we balance reliance on God with diligent effort?

**2 Peter 1:9-11**

* How does remembering God’s forgiveness of past sin help believers avoid future sin?
* What does it mean to “confirm” our relationship to Jesus?
* How can we confirm that our faith in Christ is genuine?
* How does remembering God’s forgiveness fuel character change?