



conversations on the fringe

Netflix Series: 13 Reasons Why Discussion Guide

EPIISODE ONE: Tape One, Side A

Invocation

Holy Spirit, it's difficult to talk about tough issues such as death and suicide. It's even more difficult to discuss them when we may have been personally affected by it. Be among us now as we consider how our actions, though seemingly benign, may impact somebody negatively. Help our hearts be open to the truths you may need for us to understand so we may better reflect the love of Jesus, in whose precious name we pray. Amen.

Background

Episode One starts with a camera shot on a decorated locker with Hannah's picture. The camera pans out, and we eventually see Clay at his locker, who is clearly remembering when Hannah was alive. Additionally, we hear Hannah, on what ends up being her opening lines of the very first tape she recorded before taking her own life.

Clay receives the box of tapes, and can't, for the life of him, figure out why he's receiving them. Working through his own grief, he listens. Then, after it becomes difficult, he wants to give up and argues with Tony about the ramifications of not listening.

Hannah is new to town but is good friends with Kat. In order to help Hannah meet new friends, Kat helps throw one last summer bash before her junior year begins. There, she meets Justin. They flirt over the course of the first few days of school. They meet at Eisenhower Park, play on the jungle gym, and Justin takes a few snap shots of Hannah sliding down the slide. At the bottom, Justin meets Hannah, and they share a kiss—Hannah's first.

Justin goes to school the next day, and his jock friends are inquiring how far Justin and Hannah went. The boys hold up their fingers, speculating which "base" Justin got to with Hannah. When Bryce holds up three, Justin nods, then shows the group the picture of Hannah sliding down the slide. She was wearing a skirt, and her legs are open a little, revealing her underwear. Bryce steals Justin's phone and sends the text to a bunch of kids, who then forward it again, and so on and so forth.

Rumors begin. Hannah receives a lot of looks, and Clay is even a bit judgemental toward her. Though her first kiss was "wonderful," what occurred the day after wasn't.

What Did You Notice?

- What jumped out at you in this episode?
- What did you connect with during the episode?
- What were your initial thoughts/feelings about this episode?

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Did You Catch It?

- Courtney feeling guilty
- Tyler peeping out of the guy's bathroom with his camera
- Bryce, telling his mom and dad that everything was fine

Talking Points

- Why do you think Hannah decided to make the tapes in the first place?
- Consider cause and effect. We know from the tapes what Hannah says contributed to her ultimate decision to commit suicide. What do you think was Hannah's motivation behind making the tapes? What effects have you noticed the tapes have had on: Clay, Justin, Courtney, Tyler?
- After first meeting Hannah, would you say she was confident or lacking self esteem in any way? What is your reasoning?
- What factors might make life a little more difficult for Hannah than others in her class?
- What is Clay and Hannah's relationship like in the beginning?
- Why do you think Clay is so secretive about his relationship with Hannah when his parents ask if Clay knew her?
- In what ways are Justin different now from when Hannah was alive?
- What do you think motivates Courtney to approach Clay and "talk"?
- In what ways was gossip perpetuated in the episode?
- During the scene in which many in Hannah's Life Skills class is getting the text of Hannah's picture and giving Hannah side-eye, Mrs. Bradley is teaching about "non-verbal signals." What non-verbal signals was Hannah picking up on?
- What might Justin have done differently after Bryce sent that text out?

Quotable Quotes

Discuss the following. What things are important about these statements?

- Hannah on tape: "There are thirteen sides to every story."
- Hannah's mom: "She doesn't have any stickers on her locker..."
- Clay to Tony: "Everything was better before."
- Hannah on tape: "I've heard so many stories about me, I don't know which is the most popular. But I do know which is the least popular—the truth."
- Hannah on tape: "Justin, you didn't mean to let me down."

Invitation/Response/Orthopraxy (Living in the tension of what we know and what we do)

- Have you ever been in a situation when you've shared a private moment or secret with someone and it's gotten out or made public? How did it make you feel?
- Have you ever been the one to spill the beans on a secret? What was your motivation behind letting the secret out?

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- If you've ever been in a group with others talking about "How far they got," what things might you do to shut the gossip down?
- Why do you think it might be so easy for rumors and gossip to be such a big deal in school?
- When you do come across gossip, what are some things you can do to show care for the person who is being gossiped about?
- Body language is far more important to what is being communicated than even the words themselves (according to some, up to 55% of a message is communicated through body language). What are some examples of non-verbal signals or body language that might make someone feel insecure?

Biblical Intersections

Read the following Bible passages. Put into your own words what they might mean for us today. Discuss.

Proverbs 20:19

Proverbs 6:16-19

Ephesians 4:29

Ephesians 4:15-16

The More You Know (Education/Resources)

- <http://living.thebump.com/gossip-affects-teens-6055.html>
- <http://www.apa.org/research/action/blues.aspx>
- <https://conversationsonthefringe.com/?s=suicide>

Extra Reflection If Time Allows

The last song played on the episode is Vance Joy's *Mess Is Mine*. Listen to it or read the lyrics. How are they relevant to Clay and Hannah? How are they relevant to us?

Benediction

Heavenly Father, grant us strength and courage to be more reflective of your love, especially when we are with our friends and classmates. Help us remember that your mission is our mission. Guide us in our daily lives, especially when we might be faced with challenges. Strengthen us so we can stand up against injustice. Give us wisdom to better see and respond to situations in ways that honor and respect the dignity of all people. In Jesus's name we pray, Amen.

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