



Let's Face It

Jesus Forgives the Sinner

BIG IDEA: Jesus doesn't look down on us for being sinners, so we shouldn't look down on others who sin.

BIBLE BASIS: John 8:1-11

KEY VERSE: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." Matthew 7:1 (NIV)

SCHEDULE

PLAY TIME
ACTIVITIES

10:10-10:30

LARGE GROUP
LESSON

10:30-10:55

SMALL GROUP
ACTIVITIES

10:55 - 11:15

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

Let me begin by saying, “I hate crowds.” Normally, I avoid them like the plague, but on a recent 4th of July, a friend was visiting from out of town, so we elected to venture into the city for the big Independence Day fireworks show.

Did I mention that I hate crowds? Let me check. (Yep—first sentence.) I may have also muttered it a few times while I was pressing my body through a sweaty sea of people, swimming through the thick St. Louis summer air in search of the perfect spot to set down a blanket and enjoy the fireworks. Miraculously, our entire clan was able to jostle their way through miles of barricades and bystanders to find a small patch of earth near the historic World’s Fair Pavilion. Despite the rough start, it was shaping up to be a pretty enjoyable evening—family, friend, and fireworks. What could go wrong?

That guy—that’s what could go wrong! You know that guy. He’s the guy in the sleeveless shirt who just finished the last of his 12-pack (by himself). The guy who took his “outside voice” to a whole new level. The guy who taught my kids words that would make a sailor blush. And, as luck would have it, the guy that was sitting on a blanket within arm’s reach of ours.

Whatever this man lacked in sobriety, though, he made up for in patriotism. For the duration of the 15-minute firework display, he stood and repeatedly shouted “Murica” along with a slew of complimentary expletives that painted our wonderful nation in colors never imagined by our forefathers.

I can’t help but laugh now, but in that moment, I was failing to find the humor. What was supposed to be a family-friendly event was quickly becoming “restricted viewing,” and I was getting increasingly annoyed—not just by his actions, but by him. To be honest, in my mind, I had already decided that he was “that guy”—a lower class of human, a lesser person than I.

This is exactly the attitude that Jesus warns about in Mathew 7:1. The verse reads, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.” (NIV) It’s one thing to judge a person’s actions, but most of us usually take it a big step farther—we put ourselves in the position of God. We cast judgement on the person. We look down on them. We judge their heart and question their character. But we do so without the ability to see what God sees—that people are more than just a collection of their worst moments.

That night, when the firework display was over, we stowed the blankets in our backpacks and began the long journey home. As we started walking, we watched as our soon-to-be-former-inebriated-blanket-neighbor embraced the girl he was with and planted a huge kiss on her. When he pulled away, we saw for the first time what his sleeveless shirt said: “I love my girlfriend.” Maybe there’s more to that guy than I thought.

David Rausch

Go Tell It Founder and Creator



SMALL GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Helping Quiet Kids to Open Up

Cricket. Cricket. Cricket. This is the sound that emanates from a group filled with quiet kids. Fortunately, it's not often that you'll have a group made up entirely of kids who are "vocally challenged." Quiet kids are often deep thinkers with quiet spirits. That's not a bad thing at all! Nevertheless, it's important that you create a safe environment where (with a little bit of encouragement) they'll be willing to share their thoughts and feelings with others. This gives them the opportunity to voice their struggles, challenges, fears, hopes, and dreams. You never want to force a kid to share, so here are a few tips that will help encourage them to share.

Engage them outside of group: Some kids need to know and trust you before they're willing to open up in a group. Take some time during drop-off or pick-up time to talk one-on-one with your quiet kids. As they become more comfortable with you, they'll be more likely to share during group time.

Seat the kids in a circle: When kids are seated in a clump rather than a circle, it's easy for kids with less inclination for sharing to hide or get lost in the back of the cluster.

Call on quiet kids directly: Sometimes quiet kids need to feel invited into a conversation. When you call on a kid directly, it communicates that you want them to be a part of the group and that you're interested in what they have to say.

Be okay with silence. It might take some kids a moment to put words to their thoughts. That's okay! Don't feel the need to "rescue" them too quickly. If they can't or don't want to join the conversation just yet, that's okay too. But don't let that be the last time you call on them.

Affirm them after sharing: For some kids, sharing aloud in a group is a huge emotional and social risk. If you affirm them after sharing, it *greatly* increases the chance they'll share again. A simple, "Wow! I love the way you think!" or, "Great answer—thanks for sharing!" will often do the trick.



January 29

Small Group Lesson |

Elementary



SMALL GROUP CONNECT

“LET’S FACE IT” STORY PREP

Say: Today is the last week of “Let’s Face It.” That means it’s also the last week that we get to make masks for the Big Bible Story, so let’s make the best possible mask!

Directions: Each room will make a mask for Large Group. Today’s “Big Bible Story” masks are: Jesus, Pharisee (sneaky man), Sinner (sad woman), and Person in Crowd (angry man).

K-1 - Pharisee (sneaky man)

G2-3 - Jesus

G4-5 - Sinner (sad woman) and Person in Crowd (angry man)

Place the paper grocery bag in the middle of the group, along with a box of markers. Tell your group that they must work together to draw their character’s face on one side of the bag (preferably the side without a crease). Draw the bottom of the face closest to the opening in the bag so that when someone puts the bag over their head, the face is right-side up. Encourage the kids to be creative, have fun, take turns, and fill the space. Don’t let the other groups see your drawing just yet. As you enter Large Group, give your mask to the Large Group leader. If time remains, ask the following question:

Question: When you get into trouble, do you feel like your punishment is fair? Why or why not?

ADDITIONAL TIME ACTIVITY—THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

Simply ask the kids in your group to share one good thing that happened this week (thumbs up) and one not-so-good thing (thumbs down). This is a great way for your group to share celebrations and struggles with one another.



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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

POP THE QUESTION (Application Activity)

Say: Today we heard a story about how some Pharisees looked down on a woman because she sinned. Jesus reminded everyone that He doesn't look down on people because they sin, so we shouldn't look down on others because of their sin. We're going to play a game to help us think of how we can stop looking down on others because of sin.

Directions: Give each kid a popper. When you say go, kids must place the popper (turned inside out) on top of their heads. If a kid's popper is the first to pop into the air, he gets to answer the question first. After he answers the question, open it up to the rest of the group. To switch things up, decide at the beginning of each round if the winner is the person whose popper pops first or if the winner will be the person whose popper pops last!

Questions:

- How do you act toward someone when you look down on them?
- Why is it so easy to look down on other people because of their sin?
- Has anyone ever looked down on you because of your sin? How did that make you feel?
- How do you think Jesus wants us to treat others who sin?
- How could remembering that Jesus loves us help us not look down on people who sin?
- What is one thing that you will do this week to help you not look down on someone who sins?

SING IT OUT (Memory Verse Activity)

Directions: The following activity is intended to help your group commit the day's Bible verse to memory. Today's verse is:

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.” Matthew 7:1 (NIV)

Ask your group to listen carefully as you read the verse a few times. Then, tell your group they're going to make up a tune to sing the verse. Start your group off with an example of how you might sing the verse, and then ask the kids if they have any different suggestions. Consider clapping along to the beat of the song as your group sings. After singing the verse a few times, ask if anyone else wants to sing it to a different tune, in a different silly voice such as robot or giant bear, or super-fast. Let your group choose how they would like to sing it. Continue the activity until it appears that your group can remember the verse. Afterwards, ask the following questions:

Question for younger kids: Why do you think it's bad to judge or look down on someone because of their sin?

Question for older kids: It's not okay to look down on someone because of their sin, but do you think it's okay to look down on the person's actions? Why or why not?

Another way to play:

Ask your group to listen carefully as you read the verse a few times. Then, tell your group that they're going to make up a tune to sing the verse to. Ask if anyone in your group would like to try it first. After he sings the verse to a tune, have the rest of the group sing the verse back to the same tune.



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Next, choose another volunteer to sing the verse to a different tune. This time, ask them to sing it using one of the following musical genres:

- Rock 'n' Roll
- Rap
- Country
- Opera

Continue the activity until all of the genres have been used or until everyone who wants a turn has had one.

PRAYER STONES (Group Prayer Activity)

Directions: Tell the kids in your group that stones were often used in the Bible as a reminder of how good and faithful God is. Give each of the kids in your group one small stone and a permanent marker. Tell them to be careful not to write on anything but the stone. Ask them to think of something they need prayer for or something they're thankful for (praise). Instruct them to think of one word or picture that describes their prayer and write it down on their stone. For example, if they need help from God to get through a tough situation with a friend, they could write the word "friend" or draw their friend on their stone. Be ready to help kids translate their prayer into a word or picture. When everyone has had a chance to write their one-word or picture prayer, have them place the stones on the floor in front of them. Go around the circle and have each kid show what they wrote on their stone. Let them explain their prayer request or praise. Afterwards, tell the kids to keep the stone in their pocket all week long. Anytime they reach in and feel the stone, they'll be reminded to bring their prayer request or praise to God. End the activity by leading your kids in a prayer.

GO! HOME GUIDE

Directions: Give each child a Go! Home Guide and markers/crayons. This week, they can pick one of the following (or do more than one, if time permits):

Prayer Station prompt: Write a prayer asking Jesus to help you not look down on others when they sin.

Journal Station prompt: Write a letter, song, or poem to Jesus praising Him for His incredible forgiveness.

Bible Station prompt: Read it for yourself: John 8:1-11. Draw a picture of the story or write to God about your favorite part of the story. Tell Him why you liked it.

Art Station prompt: Draw a picture that shows how thankful you are Jesus still loves you when you sin.

