



Branching Out

Connecting Through Christ



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Jan Gilbert Hurst is a lifelong member of the Church of the Brethren who has served in Brethren Volunteer Service and graduated from Manchester College/University. She has had a passion for camp from the age of eight and has volunteered at five Brethren camps in various leadership positions. Currently Jan serves as chair of the Western Plains District's Outdoor Ministry Team. She lives in McPherson, Kansas, with her husband and their two cats. In her business Author's Voice, Jan helps aspiring writers become published authors by providing editing, design, and production services for their books. Jan bought the joy of camping to the Younger and Older Children's sections.

Lara Blackwood Pickrel is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She serves alongside the people of First Christian Church (Smithville, Missouri) as their associate minister, and spends much of her time accompanying tweens and teens as they walk in faith. Writing curriculum has become a major part of her calling, and Lara also writes for Bible Lessons 4 Youth (a quarterly Sunday school curriculum). Lara's husband, Chuck, also serves in Disciples youth ministry, and they enjoy counseling/directing camps and retreats together. When they aren't at church or camp, Lara and Chuck enjoy time at home with their squirrely dogs, as well as time with their tribe of young(ish) pastor friends. Lara's spirit shines through the whole Group Worship materials and Litanies.

Sandy Safford has served as a Christian educator for 25 years and currently serves as a lay pastor for a rural church on the plains of Colorado. For 17 summers Sandy has served as a volunteer leading camps at Highlands Presbyterian Camp near Estes Park, Colorado. Her favorite camps are Grandparent/Grandchild Camp and 5th/6th Grade Respite Camp, where she gets to lead using hands-on experiences that shape the outdoor ministry to be a lasting and transforming experience for all ages. Sandy developed meaningful activities for our Day Camp and Intergenerational sections.

Troy Taylor has worked in United Methodist camping for more than 20 years and is currently assistant director at Camp Magruder on the Oregon Coast. He's been crafting lessons, worships, skits, and stories since he started and is also a published poet. He and his wife, Allyson, live within a short walk from a mountain, an old growth Sitka Spruce, and the Pacific Ocean, and they do their best to get out every time the sun shines. Troy helped design exciting Extra Resources.

Lee Yates is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). His writing can be found in BLY (Bible Lessons for Youth), Faith Practices, and Vibrant Faith at Home. Lee also produces his own vacation Bible school material under the name Yoda Yoda Yoda Publishing. When he is not writing, Lee consults with local congregations on multigenerational faith formation, and directs youth and hands-on mission events. Lee's love of camp began with long walks in the woods with Snort the bear. Snort was imaginary, but that didn't make creation any less amazing. Lee made the Younger and Older Youth Sections lots of fun.

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■ Welcome to InsideOut ■

When you are a leader at church camp, you are an educator, guidance counselor, maintenance person, crisis manager and song leader. You are also a pastor, a friend and you have the highest honor and responsibility of being the embodiment of Christ Jesus to many people who are longing to know God's tender love. It is a hard job, but a worthy one. Probably the best news is that Christ dwells in you, and you can listen to that still-small voice and all the communion of the saints who support you, bless you and cheer you on.

All the same, you need to have the skills of a teacher, the comfort of a parent and the wisdom of an elder to do the work of camp ministry. This curriculum is here to support you in that work. You will find in the pages ahead Biblical theology done by scholars (who are also camp leaders) activities designed to help you share the Bible stories, games and projects that reinforce ideas and skills, and a whole lot of camping fun!

How to use InsideOut *Branching Out: Connecting Through Christ*

On your disc are several files, including a PDF and a MS Word document both called "All-in-One Branching Out." Open either the PDF or the Microsoft Word document. In this document you will find a **Biblical and Theological Overview** for each of seven days; **Daily Guides** for seven days of materials for younger children, older children, younger youth, older youth, and seven days for intergenerational or family camp; and **extra resources**, including arts, games, science and nature, multi-day projects, Large Group Worship and Table Talk. Following the extra resources are plans for **eight weeks of Day Camp**. You can use the PDF that comes on your disc, or for a more customizable version, open the Microsoft Word document and edit it to your specifications. For your convenience, the disc also has a separate file for each age level, a separate file for each day of the week, and a file of just day camp. Your disc also contains **Artwork and Graphics** suitable for t-shirts, marketing, and other use within the camp. Governing bodies owning more than one

camp are expected to purchase a copy of the resource for each site.

You will see Hashtags (**#ThisIsAHashtag**) listed beside each activity. They are there to help you categorize the types of activities you do with your campers, to ensure that you engage in many forms of Christian community. Really, they are just notating contemporary words for ancient Christian practices or spiritual disciplines. You could call them, "things Christians do in community." For each day's activities, you will see things that fall under five categories or disciplines: **#learn, #play, #create, #pray and #serve**. For those of you who have used InsideOut curricula before, these categories function like the multiple intelligences notes have in the past. They help you to provide a balanced day, appealing to differing needs of the campers and needs of the community.

As you shape each day, try to include at least one activity from each of the five #disciplines. There are many things that Christian communities do together (it might be fun for you and your staff to make your own list) but these are some essential things that will help your community at camp "gel." It may help you to think the phrase "Christians #learn together," or "Together, we #serve."

We also worship together. Worship at camp offers the unique chance to experiment – to try things that your campers might never have experienced in a traditional congregation. Each day you are offered two idea starters for worship experiences. You will see them listed as #celebrate and #centering. Your camp may be the kind that loves to use morning worship to get the juices flowing and the energy going and end the day with a gentle vesper service. Therefore you might want to use #celebrate for your morning time together and #centering in the evening. Or your camp may be more designed to have a quiet morning watch and end the day with a campfire celebration. You can see how you might flip the activities to reflect those moods. This is your camp, and you know what's best for it. InsideOut is here to provide you with ideas and resources for you to choose from.

Daily Guide

Each Daily Guide begins with a *Title*. The reference *Scripture* is given. The *Scripture Focus* is one or two verses from a key moment in the story. It may be used as a memory verse. If not indicated otherwise, the Scripture and Scripture Focus are taken from the New Revised Standard Version. Next, a *Theological Summary* is provided in a sentence that demonstrates how the scripture is related to the theme of Christian community. *Campers Will* offers several bullet points that will be the aim of the activity. Next the Daily Activities are listed with one or more #hashtags. Finally, *Leader Notes* call attention to special details that counselors and other staff may want to notice.

Daily Guide

Day 1: theme and scripture for the day

Scripture Focus: Quoted from the NRSV. If another translation or paraphrase is recommended for your age group, it will be listed here.

Theological Summary: This is a sentence that relates the scripture to the theme of the day.

Campers Will:

- These will list some goals for your campers today.
- You may have one or two to whom you want to give special attention.
- You will also find one acknowledging a legitimate fear.

Daily Activities: This is a list of the activities that will be featured this day. Instructions and information will be found on following pages

#HASHTAGS Beside each activity is one or two #hashtags. These correspond to 5 categories that the activities fall into. As you plan your day, you will want to have at least one activity from each category. The categories are *things Christian communities do together*. They are:

- #play** includes games, sensory experiments, physical challenges
- #pray** includes prayer or reflection
- #create** includes creative writing, arts, music, crafts, design, drama
- #serve** includes outreach projects, consideration of others
- #learn** includes Bible reflection, life application, understanding theme

Leader Notes: This section lists theological road bumps to be aware of, special notes of main theme, or important reminders about the nature of camp.

Worship Practices

The tools to design your daily worship can be found on the Worship Practices pages. These can be used for devotional **Cabin Time**, small-group worship, or large-group worship. You will find suggested **Song Ideas** either to sing or to play for your campers. A **Prayer** that relates to the day's theme is suggested and can be used in a variety of settings. Because camps daily routines vary, you may need energetic worship experiences as well as more contemplative ones. Most **Worship Ideas** pages offers you two suggestions. One, **#celebrate**, will work for eye-openers, campfire or other enthusiastic, high-energy settings. The other, **#centering**, offers a more calming and contemplative suggestion. Additional worship resources will be found in the Extras section at the back of the book.

Worship Practices

Cabin Time: This is a guide for cabin counselors to incorporate into their morning or evening routine. These are ways that you can connect with your campers and help them know they are in a safe and secure environment.

Song Ideas: Some suggested songs to either sing or listen to that support the theme

Prayer: You can use this prayer during worship time, as a meal blessing, etc.

Worship Ideas: #centering, #celebrate

Here you will find two different activities to make worship meaningful. Because different camps have different types of worship (Eye-Openers or Morning Watch, Vespers or Campfire) you will find one worship type that has an enthusiastic and energetic mood **#celebrate**. The other worship idea, **#centering**, will be more contemplative or inward focused.

Story Help

Following the Worship Practices pages you will find a page to help you relate your story to your age group. In some places, this will be in the form of a **Story Summary**- a tool for some of the longer stories in the curriculum. You may find a **Story Synopsis**, a present-tense telling of the story that catches you up on the action just before the story. Especially with the younger age groups, you may see **Story Resources**; either a list of storybooks that are faithful to the Biblical text, or sometimes a script for a play. You will want to check this page before camp to see if there are books you want to borrow from your library or purchase.

Daily Activities

The bulk of the pages in each Daily Guide are the **Daily Activities**. These are the step-by-step instructions for the activities. Each practice will be **Titled** and **#tagged** so that you can quickly find the one you're looking for. The descriptions of the activities include 4 sections: **Why, Supplies, How, and BTW**.

Why gives your leaders a rationale for the activity. This will explain how the activity will function in your group. Sometimes the purpose of an activity isn't clear, but this section will tell your leaders how it relates to the *Campers Will...* goals for the day. It also lets them know if the activity helps to burn off steam, calm and center, or reinforce learning the Bible story.

Supplies obviously lists the items or resources you will need to complete the activity. How many of each item you will need will vary depending upon your group size.

How gives step-by-step instructions to the activity, whether those are game rules, recipes, discussion questions or other pointers.

BTW. By The Way—camp is not just a series of programmed activities. This section calls attention to all the teachable moments that happen between programmed events. It helps your leaders find times and places to reinforce the Biblical message, opportunities for pastoral response, and sometimes just other supplies or resources you could consider. It will offer you modifications that you can make on-the-fly. Since *InsideOut* is so customizable to your camp's needs, you will have your unique ways of doing things. This section helps you to "change it up" to fit your camp.

The Five Disciplines

Camp is a unique setting for community-building to take place. The go-go-go atmosphere at camp wakes campers from their typical school or work schedule of sit, sit, sit. Scientists keep finding more ways in which physical activity is good for us. We know that learning takes place better when bodies are moving. Brains in motion create stronger memories. It is also true that the more human senses that are engaged in an event,

the more opportunities brains have to practice empathy, compassion, justice and relationships. Camp engages the senses. Even if your facility isn't the typical outdoor summer camp, you have the opportunity to engage body, mind and spirit – to engage the whole person.

In order to provide resources for a wide variety of experiences for your campers, each Daily Activity in *Branching Out* falls into one or more of five disciplines. These categories will help you to determine what sort of activity it is. As you plan you will want to be sure to include at least one of each of the five disciplines every day. The disciplines are:

- #play** includes games, sensory experiments, physical challenges
- #pray** includes prayer or reflection
- #create** includes creative writing, arts, music, crafts, design, drama
- #serve** includes outreach projects, consideration of others
- #learn** includes Bible reflection, life application, understanding the theme

Customize Your Program

Your camp is special. One of the greatest things about *InsideOut* is how customizable it is to your setting. Some of the variables that may change the experience are:

- Number of days/length of camp
- Theme of camp (Music, Arts, Drama, Sports, Adventure, etc.)
- Denominational or doctrinal content
- Special resources you have (garden, animals, waterfront)
- Time of year/weather

You may want to print out the first and second page of the Daily Guides to distribute to your staff. Plan ahead which activities you will do as a large group. You may want to give your leaders choices in what individual activities to do with their campers. Create a daily schedule that lists titles of Daily Activities and a page number of the Daily Guide where they can find a detailed description of the activity.

Time	Activity	Title	Page	Location	#discipline	Leaders
8:00	Breakfast			Dining Hall		Lee, Jan
9:00	Morning Worship	Circle in the Sand	p. 40	Lakeside Chapel	#celebrate	Sandy
10:00	Small Group	Who's Shoes?	p. 47	Villas 1, 2 & 5	#learn #play	Troy, Jon

Suggestions for Shorter Camps

1 Day – For a retreat study or an “open house” event, *Day 7 – I Abide with You*

2 Days – For an overnight camp or a lock-in, *Day Two – I am the Vine*, and *Day Six – Abide with Me* are both about Jesus’ love revealed in the breaking of bread.

3 Days – Days 2, 6 and 7 present you with opportunity to share the theme well.

4 Days or longer – you may want to consider using more than one scripture on a couple of days. In that case, consider combining Days 2 & 6 (meal stories) or Days 1 & 5 (Old Testament stories)

While the material is laid-out for seven days, there is more than you could ever fit into one week. To extend the materials for a longer camp, split a few days in half.

Shape Your Day

A typical schedule at camp includes three meals, worship, keynote or plenary sessions, small group sessions, large-group activities, free-time, recreation, cabin and hygiene time. There is a lot to get into a day. This makes for a long day for your campers and for your leaders. When planning your day, be sure that it includes enough time for rest at night and that you provide a little “down-time” during the day. It is important to find opportunities to give campers choices. They may take the form of picking which craft project they want to work on, or where they want to go for a snack.

As you plan your days at camp, take note of the arc of the week. Each day’s theme and scripture is building on the last. Your individual days at camp have an arc, too. In the early part of the day, your campers will be presented with the Bible story. Throughout the day, Daily Activities will

give your campers opportunities to come into deeper understanding of the scripture, of their community and of God. By evening, your campers are relating the knowledge gained from the day to their world.

About Your Campers

Learning and Development

In addition to being familiar and comfortable with the content of the resource and the scripture, counselors need to understand the campers with whom they will be working. You don’t need to be a certified teacher or neuroscientist to understand and respond to the needs of your campers.

In the past decade, significant discoveries about human learning and development have been made. While it is important to understand some general physical and social milestones your campers display, it is equally important to learn to assess and meet the needs of your individual campers. Children and adults within specific age ranges have multiple factors that determine the kind of input they require to learn and grow. As you get to know your campers, learn some of the facts about how brains work and how to maximize their potential.

Safety First: *In order for a human to learn, the environment he or she is in must feel safe.*

Because the human brain developed as a tool to ensure safety, it functions best when it is safe. Safety is physical, emotional and rational and as a leader you need to consider how safe you are making your campers feel. Affirmation of behaviors that are safe will inspire confidence and your campers will be more willing to take risks, a necessary element in learning.

Learning Is Physical: *Healthy, moving bodies make for active brains.*

Even emotional and spiritual development depend upon physical health. Be sure to provide your campers with lots of physical activity, healthy foods and plenty of rest. Camp can be a demanding physical endeavor, but science is showing that this is part of what makes it so transformative. Also, healthy habits formed at camp can make it home with your campers.

Every Body Is Different: *Each individual's needs are unique to him or her.*

Life experience, gender, physical development and chemistry shape not only desires but also needs. Remember that not all of your campers will benefit from all activities. It is important to get to know your campers' physical limitations and interpersonal abilities. Learn about each of your campers' special needs and be sure to communicate your findings with other leaders.

General Developmental Characteristics

Some developmental characteristics identified through years of research provide insight into the needs and capabilities of campers. This knowledge can serve the goals of Christian camping, enabling resource designers, camp leaders, and counselors to create experiences with campers that challenge them to grow individually as persons of faith and to discover the value of group interaction and Christian community.

As staff members prepare to lead children and youth, they need to know what is appropriate for each age group. In training, your goals are for staff to:

- Become familiar with the various age-level characteristics, especially for the group(s) they will be with the most;
- Identify ways in which those developmental characteristics affect day-to-day interactions with campers;
- Understand camp policies and procedures in light of age-appropriateness.

Here is a suggested plan for reaching your training goals; modify it as needed:

Divide into small groups, giving the Developmental Characteristics to each person to

put in his or her staff manual or simply to keep. Depending upon your camp set-up, the number of staff, and the time allotted for training, you may choose to assign persons to their small group by a particular age focus or go broadly across age-levels.

Groups are to:

1. Read through the information, stopping to clarify descriptors that any staff have questions about.
2. Choose a descriptor and discuss it, using prompts such as, "What would that look like?" "How would that show up?" "How should we handle that?" "What might we need to avoid?" Consider roleplaying some situations.
3. Make connections, where appropriate, to sample learning activities and to specific camp policies and procedures. For example, seeing that younger children (7–9 years old) have minimal upper body strength, a group assigned to this age group could note how that relates to the camp policy about not having young campers paddle a canoe by themselves or the expectation that counselors will be the ones to pour the campers' drinks from the large pitchers.
4. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 as time allows.

Having the small groups report highlights from their discussion may also be helpful.

Daily Overview for *Branching Out*

Daily Guide	Scripture	Title	Theological Summary	Campers Will
Day 1	Joshua 4:1–9 John 15 (<i>Branching Out</i> Theme)	The Place where we camp	What do these stones mean? We mark special places as sacred and give ourselves reminders of our relationship to place. It can be anywhere we notice and are aware of God's presence with us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with the place, and explore the value of sacred space. • Understand that we follow in the footsteps of believers who came before us. • Discover the importance of asking questions as they learn about God. • Learn how the story of God is passed from one generation to the next.
Day 2	1 Corinthians 11:23b–26	I am the vine	Words of institution at the Last Supper. We make sacred bonds with one another and God by covenanting. Covenant is a way to express our connection beyond space and time. Jesus entered into covenant with us, and we with him, in Holy Communion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience their connectedness to Christ through covenant • Reflect on the power of shared meals in community • Discover the roots of Christian worship in scripture
Day 3	John 8:2–11	Love One Another	Cast the first stone. We have to look around to see that we are all valuable to God. People and their relationships to us are a treasure for us to protect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know that their actions toward others can be transformative • See Christ's example of compassion and grace with patience and courage • Be called to follow Christ's example to connect to others without judgement, prejudice or injustice • Distinguish between judgement and justice.
Day 4	Luke 15:11–32	I Chose You	Prodigal Son We make decisions that affect the ways we are connected. Sometimes we need to choose to disconnect to learn where God is.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the impact of choice in their connection with God and others. • Hear of God's forgiveness and grace • Know that they can admit to their brokenness, and that they can change • Identify trustworthy individuals in their lives that will show them God's grace and forgiveness
Day 5	1Kings 19:11–13	I Have Spoken to You	We don't always hear God through loud or obvious communication. We have to listen for the still small voice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience many ways to connect to God through the mystery of prayer. • Practice listening for God's voice • Become aware of how God provides for them in many different ways. • Explore ways of connecting to God on their own
Day 6	Luke 24:13–35	Abide With Me	We have tools we can use to reconnect to God, and we find them as we walk the road with Jesus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover how they might deepen their connection with God • Learn to sustain this relationship after they leave the camp community • Become more familiar with their Bibles • Serve one another by being Christ-like to each other
Day 7	Romans 8:35,37–39	I Abide in You	Nothing can separate us from the love of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the magnitude of interconnectedness influences their encounters in the world. • Declare that they are connected to God's love in Christ no matter what. • Identify things that try to disconnect them from God • Become equipped to share the Good News with others • Reflect on what things from camp will help them keep their connection to God.

Images for Each Day

These images represent the themes of each day of Branching Out. They are simple to reproduce and they can be found in the Art file of your DVD – ROM.

Day 1



Day 7



Day 2



Day 6



Day 3



Introduction: John 15

Day 1: **The Place Where We Camp** Joshua 4:1–9

Day 2: **I Am the Vine** 1 Corinthians 11:23b–26

Day 3: **Love One Another** John 8:2–11

Day 4: **I Chose You** Luke 15:11–32

Day 5: **I Have Spoken to You** 1 Kings 19:8–16

Day 6: **Abide with Me** Luke 24:13–35

Day 7: **I Abide in You** Romans 8:35, 37–39

Day 5



Day 4



Additional Resources for Leaders

Connecting with the Camping Community

There's more to InsideOut than what you have in front of you.

For example, have you "liked" **InsideOut's Facebook page**?

<https://www.facebook.com/InsideOutChurchCampResources>



InsideOut's Facebook page links you to the larger InsideOut community, with regular posts about the benefits of camp, news and inspiration from other camps, and a quick way to share your creativity with other camp directors.

Connect with camp leaders from across the country, sharing ideas, frustrations, and solutions.

Some of the topics are:

- Are church camps and conference retreat centers going away?
- Is your camp really prepared for tick season?
- What are your campers' morning rituals?
- What 5 things should all parents know about today's camps?

See how other camps are using InsideOut materials and **show off your own camp's T-shirt design**.

InsideOut's Twitter feed, <https://twitter.com/InsideOutCamps>, provides another way to keep up with InsideOut.

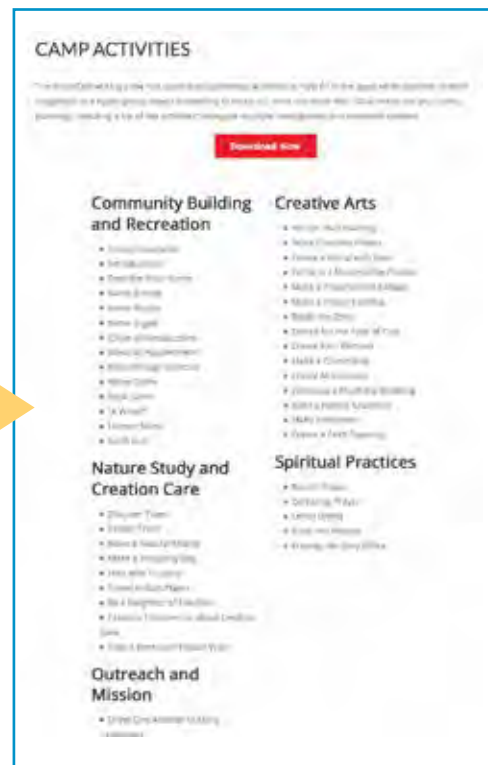


What's on the InsideOut Website?



ChristianCampResources.com provides you with videos, additional camp activities, planning and training resources, and a variety of flyers and logos that you can customize for your camp's needs. This is where you can get an early look at next year's resource about Church, Community, and Mission.

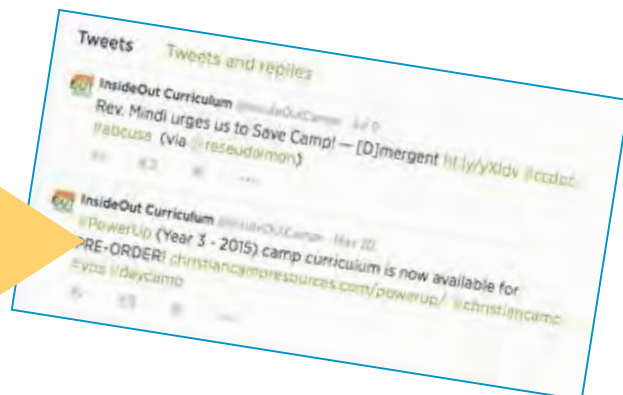
If you want **activities beyond what's available in Branching Out** or would like activities that fit in with your campers' special interests—such as Nature Study and Creation Care or Spiritual Practices—download the free PDF of camp activities.



Other free PDFs offer training activities for counselors, tips on setting up your camp and planning your week of fun. Downloadable logos for each year's theme can help you promote your camp.



InsideOut's Twitter feed, <https://twitter.com/InsideOutCamps>, provides another way to keep up with InsideOut.



Biblical and Theological Overview

Paul passed on to the Corinthians what was handed to him: the early Christian tradition. Paul received this word from the Lord in the sense that it was Jesus himself who originated the tradition of sharing the bread and cup as a sign of his impending death and the new covenant between God and humanity. There is an organic connection between sharing the meal and remembering that Jesus offered his life for us all to initiate a new covenant.

Memory is linked to hope. The church is twice instructed to “do this in remembrance of me” in 1 Corinthians 11: 23b–26. These symbolic actions remind the church of Jesus’ death for the benefit of the community of faith. There is a link between the Lord’s supper and Passover—Exodus 12:14 says that Passover is to be “a day of remembrance for you,” a day in which Israel recalls God’s deliverance of the people from bondage. In the same way, the Lord’s supper is an opportunity for the people of God to remember God’s action of deliverance through Jesus’ death. The meal acknowledges the absence of the Lord—it mingles memory and hope, recalling his death and awaiting his coming again. We remember Christ; the Greek word for this is anamnesis = “not amnesia.” Looking forward with hope to his coming again infuses our celebration of the Lord’s supper.

In Holy communion, we are vowing to uphold our end of the covenant. We promise to live as Christ’s disciples in the world.

Leader Reflections

We use many names for the celebration of holy communion. List those names and meanings.

Look at descriptions of the Last Supper in the Gospels: Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–20; and especially John 13–17 in which Jesus gives a specific command—to love one another—and acts this out as he washes the disciples’ feet.

Jesus taught us to love without distinction. Read the two great commandments and the

parable of the good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25–37). Challenge yourself to memorize the two great commandments.

Look at meals that included many, such as feeding the five thousand, John 6:1–11. At some meals exclusion was obvious, such as Jesus’ parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in Luke 16:19–31. James 2:1–9 warns against showing partiality. Isaiah 55:1 is a great call to worship. Matthew 25:31–46 and Isaiah 58:6–7 call us to show compassion and care for those who are vulnerable.

The movie *Antwone Fisher* is a powerful story about being included in a community and at their table. Because what is ultimately involved is Antwone’s healing from his past, this conveys a deep truth that people may experience healing and resolution when they are welcomed into the community of faith and experience true generosity.

Day 3: Love One Another —John 8:2–11

Experience the Story

It was the breaking of dawn when Jesus began his walk into the city—that moment when, by Jewish definition, there was a line between the darkness and the light. Within hours the controversy between the scribes and Pharisees about Jesus’ identity would erupt again and Jesus would declare he was “the Light of the world.” The choice about whether to choose Jesus and live in the light, or reject Jesus and choose darkness would be played out in the lives of countless listeners.

The city itself was waking up after a week of festivities: the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus entered the outer courts and sat down, with people gathering around him. Suddenly a woman was thrust before him, shoved roughly to the ground. It was another test by the scribes and Pharisees. “The Law of Moses,” they said, “requires us to stone such women.” But this was misquoting Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22, both of which required the stoning of both the man and woman caught in adultery.

It was a double-bind for Jesus; would he convict or acquit the woman? However, Jesus did not speak a word; instead, he knelt and wrote in the dirt with his finger. They kept pressing him, until he straightened up and spoke, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” And he knelt and wrote again. What he wrote we’ll never know, but his action was symbolic, for in the Hebrew Scriptures when God inscribed the first tablets of the Law, they were written with “God’s finger.” Here, as Jesus is interpreting the Law and shedding light on this controversy, he writes with his finger.

The trap that had been set for Jesus instead trapped those who set it, for, one by one, they slipped away. Had their hearts convicted them of sin, or had their eyes been opened so they saw with new sympathy? Jesus rose once more, addressing the woman, offering forgiveness and the chance to begin anew.

Our World

Writing in the dust can be a fun pastime for little children. The dust becomes a tablet for creativity as a little one draws roads, shapes hills, and drives an imaginary pebble car. Writing in the dust on the back end of a vehicle with the message, “Wash Me,” leaves a message visible to all. Writing in the dust can be helpful when two people are outside talking about a project and need someplace to draw out their ideas. Writing in the dust can be a useful way to leave clues along a dusty hiking trail. Jesus wrote in the dust the day the scribes and Pharisees put him to the test in Jerusalem, and it was transformative for accused and accusers alike.

The Word

Context, Geography, and History of the Story

This story in John 8:2–11 is not found in the early versions of the gospel of John; yet, most authorities believe it has the ring of truth to it.

The setting is in Jerusalem at the end of the Festival of Booths (or Tabernacles), one of three pilgrim festivals ordered by God (Lev. 23:33–43; Deut. 16:13–17). God established these so each generation can act out their history and connect with their ancestors, helping them to experience by faith the mighty acts of God in the past and

to anticipate God’s work on their behalf in the present and future.

The Festival of Booths (or Tabernacles), also known as Sukkoth, is in the seventh month. The Israelites are to make booths out of leafy tree branches and camp out in them for the seven days of the festival. Imagine a community campout in September or October. Even today during this festival, people build temporary dwellings, eat their meals in them, and sleep in them—except in case of rain.

All Jewish men were required to come to Jerusalem for the Festival of Booths. Jesus’ brothers at this point in his life are not believers in him as the Messiah, but they bait him in chapter. 7: “Don’t you think we’d better be going to Jerusalem for the festival?” even though they know the Jewish authorities are looking for Jesus to try and trap him. Jesus says no to his brothers, and he supposedly stays in Galilee while they go on. But then he goes, sort of undercover, and is in Jerusalem for a few days, watching. Midway through the festival, Jesus appears near the temple, teaching people. Before long, the Pharisees and scribes catch wind of his presence and come to watch and question him. Then, the authorities send the temple police to arrest Jesus, but they get caught up in listening to him and return without making an arrest.

On the last day of the festival, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “Let any one who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink” (Jn. 7:37b–38a). Jesus draws on the festival imagery of water to proclaim himself as the one who satisfies human thirst. When the festival was over, ending at sunset of the seventh day, everyone went home, while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. The story about the woman taken in adultery and the controversy between the leaders and Jesus takes place the next morning, after he returned to the temple.

Scribes and Pharisees: Scribes were learned men whose business was to study the Law, transcribe it, and write commentaries on it. They went beyond interpretation of Scripture, adding many human-made traditions, becoming skillful at spelling out the letter of the Law while ignoring the spirit behind it. They faulted Jesus for assuming authority over the Law, as well as for his particular

interpretations. Pharisees are those Jews who seek to live strictly by the Law and its oral additions. In some specific cases, they were friendly to Jesus, but because he claimed authority over the Law, the group opposed him. In this section, even though the religious leaders are trying to test and trap Jesus, there is a slight difference in tone; they dialogue with him, suggesting a nuance of guarded respect.

It can be challenging to explain “caught in adultery” to children. Probably the best contemporary language is “cheating on her husband.” Some children will also note that the man is also cheating on his wife. It takes two to commit this sin. The Godly Play curriculum uses the phrase “don’t break your marriage.” The nature of the woman’s sin is actually not necessary for the meaning in this story. In fact, Jesus challenges everyone present to consider whether or not they always kept the letter of the law. Rather than simply keeping the letter of the law, Jesus wants people to show compassion, especially to those who are broken and hurting.

The scribes and Pharisees quote the Hebrew law about “stoning such women” and ask for Jesus’ response. One problem was that they provide a very incomplete interpretation of the Law of Moses, focusing only on the woman. Read Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22–24. In the time of this story, a girl was considered the property of her father; when she married she became the property of her husband. Adultery was considered a form of abusing a husband’s property. See Leviticus 18:8, 16; 20:20–21.

The Pharisees brought this question to Jesus to test him; they wanted to discover some way to bring charges against him. He knelt and wrote with his finger on the ground. Finally he stood and said, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (Jn. 7b).

On one hand, the Law was given to guide Israel into being a holy nation. The trouble was, the Law was applied unevenly, inaccurately, and when convenient. Jesus did not want to endorse this interpretation of the Law, nor side with these religious leaders who seemed more intent on trapping him than getting a clean legal opinion. On the other hand, if Jesus were to completely

bypass the Law, he would be morally lax and suspect. Would he convict or acquit?

What did Jesus write in the dirt? There has been much speculation. Roman judges wrote sentences before announcing them. Some scholars say that ancient authorities claim Jesus wrote the sins of each of them. By pausing to write, Jesus created space for them to think, to awaken their consciences.

Slowly, one by one, the accusers begin to depart. Jesus was left alone with the woman. Then according to the scripture, “Jesus straightened up and said to her. ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, sir.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on, do not sin again.’”

The officials tried to trap Jesus, but he escaped with a gracious, compassionate, and wise spoken word.

The Word in Our World

We learn in Christ to love one another. God issued laws as part of the covenant God made with the people of Israel. By this covenant God set this people apart from all other peoples, sanctifying them to be a priestly kingdom and holy nation. Though Christians are not bound by the ritual laws in the Old Testament, the command to love God with all our being and to love our neighbors as ourselves is the standard for the Christian life.

We are forgiven and reconciled people. God invites us to relate to one another in ways that liberate us all to be what God has created us to be, and to connect with others without judgment, prejudice, or injustice.

We are forgiven even before we repent. When God forgives us, it isn’t that God is excusing our behavior. Rather, God says sin doesn’t have to define us.

Salvation means repentance and transformation. Jesus’ saving word is not an offer of cheap grace. Mercy is extended to this woman. He counsels her to, “Go...and from now on do not sin again.” He is concerned for the future shape of her life.

Leader Reflections

We seek to understand how our actions toward others make a difference. Christ sets an example for us of connecting to others without judgment, prejudice, or injustice. People generally live up to what we expect of them. If we are judgmental, they will disappoint us. If we are gracious, they often rise to meet our expectations.

Through this lesson we seek to have our eyes opened to one another, to practice understanding and compassion, to accept God's grace for ourselves, and to extend this grace to others. Can you recall times you have forgiven someone? How did forgiveness change you, the other person, and the relationship?

Christians do well to cultivate a new way of seeing people. In Ephesians 1:18 Paul prays the "eyes" of the Ephesians' hearts may be "enlightened" so they will see the great and wonderful things of God, which not everyone can see. Seeing with "eyes of [the] heart" enables us to see people with compassion and understanding and move from condemnation to forgiveness.

When someone has wronged someone else, the one who is hurt often suddenly sees the person in a new way. Whereas before they may have been friends and playmates, now the hurt person may now see the other as an enemy. But if we cultivate "eyes of love," we will see the other person in ways that lead to forgiveness and reconciliation. We will be sensitive to the other's repentance, eager to know if he or she has excuses; we will care more about our relationship with the offender, and be keenly aware of our own failings.

Day 4: I Chose You —Luke 15:11–32

Experience the Story

They'd been walking half the morning, south along the hard-trodden path near the river's edge. Sea gulls and pelicans had given way to red-winged blackbirds and blue herons. Jesus spoke to the crowds about the costs involved in discipleship, but still they came, hungry for the words of truth and hope that he delivered daily like platters heaping with fish. The scribes and Pharisees could not be satisfied with this fare; their joy was thin like broth with no meat, and

they picked at his words like children who disdained vegetables.

Yet they followed, poking at Jesus with their critiques like some might tease a cat with a stick. With the sun starting to get hotter, Jesus held up his hand and gestured for the crowds to be seated—the rabbi had something to say. Skins of water were passed around until all were satisfied. Deftly, like a gourmet cook, Jesus began to offer a three-course story.

"Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls to his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost'" (Luke 15:4–6). The crowd was eating this up. Oh, yes, they knew this fear of loss and this joy of finding. It was a good story, and they lapped it up.

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?" (v. 8). Some women in the crowd looked panicky at this question. "When she has found it, she calls to her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that was lost!' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents!" (vv. 9–10). The crowd was with him at this point; even the secure identified with the sense of loss, and so they rejoiced when Jesus announced joy in heaven. It was like a second helping of comfort food to a hungry crowd. However, the next serving caught them off-guard.

"There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to

Staff Devotions

Day 3: Love One Another

To help teach the concept of forgiveness, it helps for you yourself to be willing to forgive. The angry crowd found it easy to cast fault and punishment on a woman they judged to be in the wrong, but Jesus saw someone hurt and in need of forgiveness, not punishment.

Take some time to talk about the difference between retribution and God's justice. Most people learn better when they feel free to grow rather than feel ashamed. How do you respond to punishment and shame?

- It is not always easy to forgive hurts. Without naming persons, name some of the feelings you have about those you need to forgive. When you are wronged, how does it feel? Pray: *God, you have blessed us with the ability to feel. Though not all of these feelings are positive, all of them are a gift from you. We thank you that you make our hearts tender.*
- Pain in the body and pain in the spirit are often indicators that there is healing to be done. Notice pain in your body and spirit. What kind of healing do you need? Pray: *God, we will pay attention to the ways we know we need to be healed. Your love is ointment to our wounded hearts.*
- We don't just forgive as individuals; we must also forgive as a community. What do you need to forgive together? If you need to apologize for a wrong to the community, you are welcome to do so. Pray: *God, our intention is to live as your people together. Grant us the courage to forgive each other, so that we might better reflect your love.*
- Forgiveness is liberating. Name some of the freedoms you enjoy from sins forgiven. How could you share these testimonies with your campers? Pray: *God, we are freer people because you encourage us to forgive. Thank you for allowing us to participate in your liberating love. Amen.*

We are bound to cause hurts when we live together in community. We are all broken people in need of healing. We are imperfect people. But when we live together as brothers and sisters in Christ, we commit to live in love and to bless each other.

Invite someone to read from Psalm 30.

Pray together: *Loving God, help us to cling tightly to the people and things that bring us and others joy. Help us to let go of the things that cause us pain, and turn our wounds into opportunities for healing. Amen.*

Turn to one another and offer a blessing. Say: *You are forgiven!*

Day 3: Branching Out



Love One Another

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Story: John 8:2–11

Scripture Focus: John 8:7

“When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Theological Summary: Cast the first stone. We have to look around to see that we are all valuable to God. People and their relationships to us are a treasure for us to protect. When the legalistic Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about the law, Jesus’ compassion created a “third way” with his answer, neither condemning the woman for her sin nor denying the law.

Campers will:

- know that their actions toward others can be transformative
- see Christ’s example of addressing injustice with patience and courage
- be called to Christ’s example to connect without judgment, prejudice, or injustice
- distinguish between judgment and justice

Daily Activities

- **Caring Conversation:** #learn Practice listening with open minds
- **No Judgment Here:** #learn #PRAY A lesson about Jesus’ teaching style
- **Lines in the Sand:** #PLAY #learn Notice things that divide us
- **Uphill Battle:** #PLAY Model how we can cheer each other on
- **Catch the Sound:** #PLAY Keep campers on their toes
- **Pray While People-watching:** #PRAY Turn a boring wait into a sacred moment
- **Doodles in Sand:** #CREATE #learn Reinforce Bible story with ancient art
- **Create Pick-up Sticks:** #CREATE #SERVE Notice how our actions affect others
- **Play Pick-up Sticks:** #PLAY A challenging game of skill and luck
- **What Does Service Mean?:** #SERVE Discuss moments campers can show they care

Leader Notes: You’ve probably noticed that today’s content contains a mature concept in that the woman in the story is accused of adultery. There are lots of ways to talk around this, but it may be best to defer to the idea that she broke her promises to her husband. Godly Play curriculum uses the phrase “breaking your marriage,” which may be helpful. Today’s story is about Jesus’ grace even when promises get broken.

Worship Activities

Cabin Time

Help campers process the day by asking what things they especially enjoyed today. Also ask what some of moments were that they didn't like very much. Ask how they can make tomorrow better.

Then enjoy reading *The Forgiveness Garden* by Lauren Thompson to the campers. There are some questions at the end you can use to start a conversation if you like, or save them for another time.

Song Ideas

- "All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir" by Bill Staines
- "Come, Now Is the Time to Worship" by Brian Doerksen
- "Lord I Lift Your Name on High" (Paul Baloche), performed by The African Children's Choir at www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8qPKR9hgL0
- "Doxology" (Traditional hymn: "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow")
- "All Creatures of Our God and King" (Traditional hymn)
- "Love, Love, Love, Love" (Traditional—try singing this song as a round)
- "Love Isn't Love 'Til You Give It Away" (as sung by Reba McEntire)

Prayer

Our God, who loves us more than we can imagine, we give thanks for your love and care. Help us to draw larger circles of love to include people whom we may not particularly like but who are your children, too. Amen.

Animal Praise #CELEBRATE

Why: Connection to creation will happen when campers identify with an animal and sing praise to God.

Supplies: none

How: Invite campers each to choose an animal he or she likes. First have the campers stand like

their animals, then move, then stretch like their animals.

Ask campers questions such as, "Do you suppose that after God created the animals they were thankful? How would an animal praise God?"

As the campers pretend they are the animals, ask them to praise God with their animals' voices. Ask all the animals of one kind (e.g., tigers) to praise God; then others, such as horses, etc. When all the different animal groups have had a chance to sing praises, let all the animals together to praise God!

Pick-up Love Worship #centering

Supplies: signs (with wooden stakes attached) with group names on them, yarn

How: On the route to the worship site, post signs indicating Group One, Group Two, etc., or whatever the names of your groups are, a little distance apart. Instruct campers to meet at their with their group. Have the first group (the one standing farthest from the worship site) begin singing the song "Love, Love, Love, Love," and walk toward the next group. The second group joins in singing and walking with the first. They continue singing on their way to pick up the next group, etc. At the worship site, invite everyone to take his or her seat and conclude the singing.

Then read the poem "Outwitted" by Edwin Markham.

Invite campers to suggest ways they can show Jesus' love to other people.

Have campers form a ring around the main focal point of your worship space: the Lord's table, a cross, or the campfire. Pass yarn around the circle and tie the ends together. Have campers set the ring of yarn on the ground in front of them. Ask them to take a moment to notice how it feels to be on the outside of the circle. Then have a leader step into the circle and extend his or her hand to a camper, saying, "With the love of Jesus, you are welcome," And have the leader gently pull the camper into the circle. Have that camper turn to the next person and repeat the phrase and action until everyone is inside the circle.

Story Resources

Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down, by Andrea Davis Pinkney (Little, Brown, 2010)

Luba: The Angel of Bergen-Belsen, by Michelle Roehm McCann (Tricycle, 2003)

The Forgiveness Garden by Lauren Thompson (Macmillan, 2012)

Daily Activities

CARING CONVERSATION #LEARN

Why: Instead of focusing on the sin or the law in this scripture passage, we can lift up Jesus' response to the situation and see an example of compassion. This activity helps campers learn that their caring action can be transformative, too.

Supplies: campers' Bibles

How: When campers have their Bibles open to today's scripture passage, ask for volunteers to read each verse, one at a time. Then start the conversation by explaining that Jesus was not fooled by the Pharisees' question. He knew they were trying to trap him into disobeying the law. Ask campers what Jesus' response was and wait for their answers. Ask, "Did Jesus judge anyone? How did he show that he cared about the woman?" Explain that showing that you care is having compassion.

Then, encourage campers to answer these questions, giving them time to think about each one:

1. "Do you consider yourself a caring person? In what ways?"
2. "What usually happens to a person who receives caring and kindness?"
3. "What do you think the world would look like if nobody cared about anybody else?"
4. "And what would the world look like if everybody did care?"

Then, ask campers which world they would prefer and why. Encourage them to think about what they can do to make the "world" of camp full of

caring and kindness. Pair up campers and instruct each to tell his or her partner at least one thing he or she will do this week to show caring and kindness to someone else at camp, and something he or she will do at home. Finally, invite campers to share these intentions with the group.

BTW: Another way to do this would be to pair campers up first to discuss the questions and tell what they will do at camp and at home. Then bring them back together at the end to report. When you see campers carrying out their compassionate acts this week, give them a wink and a nod. And, remember, the most powerful method of teaching is modeling the behavior you want campers to learn.

NO JUDGMENT HERE #LEARN #PRAY

Why: Jesus models compassion without judgment—an excellent attitude to keep us connected to others and to create peace.

Supplies: Bible

How: First, read aloud to campers John 8:2–11. Explain that the Pharisees, as religious authorities in Jesus' day, were very interested in seeing that everyone followed the Jewish law. Sometimes women were punished for breaking a law and men weren't. And sometimes the consequences for breaking the law were harsh—for example, being stoned to death, as almost happened in this case. Then explain that Jesus knew the woman in the story had sinned and he knew that the Pharisees had, too, yet Jesus didn't pronounce judgment on anyone. Ask campers to describe Jesus' response to the Pharisees. Accept all answers. More importantly, ask campers to describe Jesus' response to the woman. Help everyone in your group have a chance to answer. Invite campers each to think of a time when he or she judged someone. Choose a volunteer to mime how that camper might have looked (*nose in the air? pointing?*). Choose a volunteer to mime how he or she feels when someone judges him or her (*guilty? sad and droopy? angry with hands on hips?*). Suggest that this is probably how the people in the Bible story looked, too.

Thank your volunteers. Close with prayer, thanking God for Jesus' example of not judging other people, and ask for help for all to follow Jesus' example.

BTW: If you have time, encourage campers to imagine how Jesus would respond to their sins. Ask what he would say to them. You might get some surprising answers.

LINES IN THE SAND #PLAY #LEARN

Why: This activity gets campers to think about what divides us from each other and what can reconnect us to each other and, consequently, to Jesus.

Supplies: sand on a volleyball court or beach

How: Divide campers into two equal lines, standing shoulder to shoulder, each line facing the other. Name one line “Orange” and the other “Blue.” Have each camper partner up with the camper facing him or her in the other line and shake hands with that partner to make sure everyone has one. Then have each pair move themselves a few feet away from other pairs. Explain that each of the campers on the Orange team will use his or her toes to draw a line in the sand between him or her and the partner. (Demonstrate how to do this, with the line somewhat curved in an arc.) Ask Orange team members to name something that divides people, such as telling a lie or taking someone else’s toy.

Then have the Blue team members think of and present a solution to the problem that would allow the people involved to stay friends. Then they each use his or her toes to draw an arc or arch that intersects the partner’s line. (The resulting image should look like a fish.) Then have the partners trade roles, with the Blue team suggesting the divisive actions and the Orange team creating solutions.

After both teams have had a chance to play both roles, ask questions such as: “Was it difficult to think of problems or solutions? What problems did you think of? What solutions did you come up with? Ask what would have been the result if one person started a fight or ran away?”

Explain: “Often, we act too quickly in conflict situations, either fighting or fleeing. Both of these reactions separate people. It takes time and creativity to think of a third solution to problems, so that we stay friends and keep connected to Jesus, but these connections are worth the effort.” And remember to tell them, before you go, that

the fish they have drawn in the sand—*Ichthys* in Greek—are symbols for Jesus!

BTW: If you don’t have sand or dirt, you can do this activity using sidewalk chalk, masking tape, or imagination.

UPHILL BATTLE #PLAY

Why: This simple Minute-to-Win-It game is challenging and fun for any age level, but requires only a few common items.

Supplies: Table, books or blocks, wooden spoon(s), two or three marbles, clock or watch

How: Raise one end (or side) of the table with books or small blocks. Instruct one camper to start the marbles rolling down the slant while another camper uses the back of the spoon to tap (not hit!) them back up and keep the marbles on the table. A third camper can watch the clock to time them for two or three minutes. Then they can rotate positions.

BTW: You can increase the challenge of the game by raising the end of the table higher or using more marbles. You could also try small balls instead of marbles. Try a wider table and more campers, too! For a safer version, use rolled-up aluminum foil balls.

CATCH THE SOUND #PLAY

Why: Participation in this improvisation game requires a little creativity, but its rewards are affirmation and fun. Remind campers that Jesus was quick-witted in a high-stakes situation.

Supplies: none

How: Invite campers to stand in a circle, facing in. You start by making a sound—any sound—while also making a throwing gesture toward a camper across the circle. That camper then “receives” the sound with a physical motion like catching a ball and repeats the sound sent to him or her. (That’s important to give affirmation to the thrower.) Then, without hesitation, that camper “throws” a new sound to another camper.

Keep the sound moving quickly and make sure everyone gets a chance to play. Try to get the body involved and not just the voice. Also require campers to actively receive the sound sent to them

before they send one on. The more exaggerated the motions, the better!

BTW: Variation on this game might be to throw out words that require a match in answer, like *peanut* and *butter*, *bumble* and *bee*, *tooth* and *brush*, etc.

PRAY WHILE PEOPLE-WATCHING

PRAY

Why: This activity lets campers use their imaginations (or open themselves to the Holy Spirit) and teaches them to turn a boring wait into a sacred moment.

Supplies: (optional): van

How: Gather your campers and ask if they have ever sat in a boring public place—such as in a doctor’s office, hospital, or the car—and watched people go by. Let them tell about times they have done so.

Explain: “To give yourself something to do, you can look carefully at people to see if they look worried, tired, sad, or sick; or are limping; or are dressed poorly. Even better, ask God to tell you what they need. Maybe someone is worried about paying her bills, tired because he was up all night with a crying baby, sad because a pet died, or sick and need to be healed. Maybe he is limping because of an aching knee, or is dressed poorly because she can’t afford any new clothes.” Ask campers what they might pray for these people. Point out that even people who look happy or look well-dressed have problems. What could campers pray for *them*? Remind campers that they don’t have to guess or know what a person’s problems are, but just need to be aware that they may have them.

If transportation is not a problem, take your small group of campers to a public place to practice this prayer. A small van would work better than a large bus so that you could talk together about the people before you pray for them. You don’t even have to get out of the van. Invite campers to pray silently or aloud, as they prefer. Emphasize a reverent attitude. A sentence for each person is all that is needed. Before you head back to camp, offer a prayer aloud, thanking God for your campers’ compassion for people they don’t even know, and asking a blessing on all of them.

BTW: If you aren’t able to travel to a public place, you could have campers pray for people at camp, such as staff who are working in various buildings. When you enter those buildings, tell the people that your campers are going to pray silently for them. Their response may be a pleasant surprise!

DOODLES IN SAND #CREATE #LEARN

Why: In the Navajo culture, sand paintings are made as part of a healing ritual, and are not meant to be works of art. They are beautiful, nonetheless. Jesus’ writing in the sand in John 8:2–11 probably wasn’t meant to be art either, but whatever it was, it evidently had a powerful effect on the Pharisees! In this activity, campers get to practice fine motor skills and create their own doodle art with colored sand.

Supplies: Clean, dry, fine sand; powdered tempera paint in six colors; black, letter-size cardstock; scissors; tablespoon; teaspoon; 6 small shallow containers (with lids, like butter tubs); for each camper: 1 small bottle of white glue, paper plate, pencil

How: Ahead of time, cut cardstock in half to 5 ½ x 8 ½ inches, so there is enough for each camper to have a piece. Measure two tablespoons of sand into each container. Then mix in one teaspoon of paint powder—a different color in each container. Line up the containers down the length of your table. For each camper, set out one bottle of glue, a pencil, a paper plate, and a piece of cardstock.

When campers arrive, ask them to write their names on the back of their cardstock. Refer to Jesus’ act of writing in the sand and wonder with campers what Jesus might have written in the sand. Explain that it’s okay that they don’t know; no one knows but Jesus.

Demonstrate for the campers the process they will use to make their art. Begin by squirting glue on the cardstock in one thin, continuous line to make an abstract “doodle.” Then, before it dries, begin carefully sprinkling (with your fingers) colored sand on the glue, one color at a time. Shake off the excess sand onto a paper plate. Have the campers follow suite.

BTW: Alternatively, you can use pre-colored sand instead of coloring your own. If you have more time, you could have campers sketch out a shape, like a butterfly, and use the glue and sand to fill

in different sections of the shape. Any leftover sand can be moistened to make textured paint for another craft.

CREATE PICK-UP STICKS #CREATE

#SERVE

Why: Campers will make for the camp a set of “pick-up sticks” that they can use to play a game later in the day or in the week. They will use the leftover paint to create a picture related to today’s scripture.

Supplies: Thirty 3/16” round wooden dowels, 12 to 15 inches long; acrylic paint in red, blue, yellow, and green, plus a small amount of black; four one-pint mason jars; clothesline; at least 30 clothes pins (spring-type); newspapers; one roll of paper towels; 9x12” pad of heavy paper suitable for painting; a paintbrush for each camper; 16 small plastic cups; at least one adult assistant

How: Ahead of time, hang the clothesline and prepare paint if you’re using tubes of acrylic. Thin each color of paint—except black—in a pint mason jar with a little water to make 12 ounces, about three inches deep. Set these out six or eight feet apart on the floor on a couple sheets of newspaper. Divide dowels like this at each “paint station”: 7 red, 7 blue, 7 yellow, and 8 green. Put 8 half-sheets of paper towel at each station, too. Prepare the black “helper stick” ahead of time, painting the ends black, three inches on each end.

When campers arrive, demonstrate how, at each station, they are going to dip one end of each dowel into the jar until it touches the bottom, then pull it out and let it drip a minute over the jar. Then, holding a paper towel under it to catch drips, show them how to bring it to the clothesline, where your assistant will hang the dowel to dry. Then they will come back to the same jar and dip another dowel. Tell them to dip one dowel at a time, and that it doesn’t matter how many dowels they get to dip. Divide campers into four groups and assign one group to each paint station.

While dowels are drying, explain that each camper will use the same paint to make a picture related to today’s scripture, focusing on the theme of: “How I Can Show Compassion.” Pour the leftover paint into small plastic cups, a set of all four colors for each of the four camper

groups. Give each camper a sheet of paper and a brush. Show campers where to lay their pictures when they are done. You may want to label the paintings with campers’ names.

BTW: If you are planning to do this outside, make sure the jars have something flat and stable to sit on. Cover the painting table with newspaper.

PLAY PICK-UP STICKS: #PLAY

How: Gather campers in a circle, facing inward. Hold all the sticks (except the “black stick”) vertically above the center of the circle and let them drop to the ground in one pile. Each camper takes a turn picking up a stick *without touching* any of the others. The black stick can be used as a helper to flip a stick off a pile. You can keep score according to colors of sticks collected, or win just by collecting the most sticks.

BTW: Make it a group effort and see how many sticks they can get in five minutes.

Or try playing it in teams of two, alternating turns at removing a stick.

WHAT DOES SERVICE MEAN? #SERVE

Why: Some campers have never had the opportunity to serve others and may need a conversation about what that looks like. Campers who have done service for others can share their experiences with the group. The conversation can lead to campers choosing to do something nice for people at camp.

Supplies: whatever is needed to do the activities campers come up with

How: Gather campers and start the conversation about service, mentioning one service opportunity you have had. Invite campers to share their experiences. After everyone has had a chance to share, offer the group an opportunity to do service at camp. Ask for their suggestions, especially services that are actions that require no supplies, such as: making a bed, hanging up a swimsuit and towel, or saving a seat for someone whom they don’t know. Remember that service is not just talking about it; encourage and help campers to carry out their service ideas.

BTW: If you want to push the activity up a notch, try baking cookies for someone outside your camp.

Day 3: Branching Out



Love One Another

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Story: John 8:2–11

Scripture Focus: John 8:7

“When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’”

Theological Summary: We have to look around to see that we are all valuable to God. People and their relationships to us are a treasure for us to protect. When the legalistic Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about the law, Jesus’ compassion created a “third way” with his answer, neither condemning the woman for her sin nor denying the law.

Campers will:

- know that their actions toward others can be transformative
- see Christ’s example of addressing injustice with patience and courage
- be called to Christ’s example to connect without judgment, prejudice, or injustice
- distinguish between judgment and justice

Daily Activities

- **Caring Conversation, Not Debate:** #PLAY #learn Share new conversation techniques
- **Cats and Cows:** #PLAY Learn that it’s okay to change your alliance
- **Thumbs Up:** #PLAY Develop empathy and notice how our actions matter to others
- **Compassion in the Wild:** #learn Demonstration of love crossing barriers
- **No Judgment Here!:** #learn #PRAY Learn Jesus’ model of compassion
- **Pray for Courage, Patience, Justice:** #PRAY Hands-on prayer for our world
- **Painted Plate Weaving: Connecting Neighbors:** #CREATE Practice an art and learn about neighbors
- **“Love in the Sand” Casting:** #CREATE Reinforce the Bible story with a craft
- **Wheat Sand Cookies:** #SERVE #CREATE A multisensory cooking project
- **Build a Bin Project:** #SERVE #CREATE Reach out and help nature and each other

Leader Notes: Some of your campers may pick up on the language of adultery in this passage. Some won’t. You don’t need to go into it if it doesn’t come up organically. Today’s story is a progression from the Day 2 theme of being a covenant community. The accusers are focused on the broken marriage covenant, but Jesus shows how the rules are there to protect people and their relationships.

Worship Activities

Cabin Time

When campers are ready for bed, help them process the day by sharing “highs and lows.” Then continue the book about friends: *Best Friends* by Mary Bard. Ask campers if they are trying to make new friends at camp. Encourage them to learn the names of new friends.

Pray: Thank you, God, for giving us other children to be our friends. Help us to remember how to be good friends to them.

Song Ideas

- “Compassion Hymn” (Keith Getty, Kristyn Lennox Getty, and Stuart Townsend)
- “Weave” (Rosemary Crow)
- “Lean on Me” (Bill Withers)
- “All God’s Critters Got a Place in the Choir” (Bill Staines)
- “Come, Now Is the Time to Worship” (Brian Doerksen)
- “Lord I Lift Your Name on High” (Paul Baloche)
- “Doxology” (Traditional Hymn, AKA “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”)
- “All Creatures of Our God and King” (Traditional Hymn)

Prayer

Animal Praise #CELEBRATE

Why: Connection to creation will happen when campers identify with an animal and sing praise to God.

Supplies: none

How: Invite campers each to choose an animal he or she likes. First have the campers stand like their animals, then move, then stretch like their animals.

Ask campers questions such as, “Do you suppose that after God created the animals they were thankful? How would an animal praise God?”

As the campers pretend they are the animals, ask them to praise God with their animals’ voices. Ask all the animals of one kind (e.g., tigers) to praise God; then others, such as horses, etc. When all the different animal groups have had a chance to sing praises, let all the animals together to praise God!

Pray: Creator God, we give you praise in the voices of your creation. Thank you for making all the different creatures on earth. We all praise your name.

Compassion of Jesus #centering

Why: This quiet worship will help campers understand the meaning of compassion and how they might show their kindness to others.

Supplies: Bible, campers’ prayer cords (made yesterday in “I’m Knot-Praying”)

How: Tell campers the story of the woman brought to Jesus in today’s Bible passage, John 8:2–11. Choose volunteers to answer questions such as, “Did Jesus scold or yell at the woman? Did Jesus approve of her sin? What is compassion? Did Jesus show her compassion? How? How can we show compassion to others?”

Ask campers to use their prayer cords in a different way today. One knot will stand for *another* camper who they can be compassionate toward at camp, one for someone at school, one for someone at church, and one for someone at home.

Pray: Compassionate God, we pray for the first person on our prayer cords, asking you for what that camper needs. [Pause] For the second person at school, we ask you to bless his or her life. [Pause] For the third person at church, please give that person your personal care and comfort. [Pause] For the family member at home, we ask you to give your blessing, too. And, God, I ask you to remind these campers how they can be kind to all these people. Amen.

Story Resources

Hermie: God Forgives Me and I Forgive You, by Max Lucado (Thomas Nelson, 2010)

Weedflower, by Cynthia Kadohata (Atheneum, 2006)

Counting on Grace, by Elizabeth Winthrop (Wendy Lamb Books, 2006)

Best Friends, by Mary Bard (Amazon Children's Publishing, 2015)

Daily Activities

CARING CONVERSATION, NOT DEBATE #PLAY #LEARN

Why: Instead of focusing on the sin or the law in this scripture passage, we can lift up Jesus' response to the situation and see an example of compassion. This activity helps campers learn that their caring action can be transforming, too.

Supplies: a Bible, paper, and pencil for each camper; hard surface such as a table or floor

How: When campers have their Bibles open to today's scripture passage, ask for volunteers to read each verse, one at a time. Then start the conversation by explaining that Jesus was not fooled by the Pharisees' question. He knew they were trying to trap him into disobeying the law. Ask campers what Jesus' response was and wait for their answers. Ask, "Did Jesus judge anyone? How did he show that he cared about the woman?" Explain that showing that you care is having compassion.

Then distribute the paper and pencils and invite campers to think about and write answers to these questions, giving them time to write between each one:

1. "Even if you don't start out as a caring person, you can become caring by doing caring things—True or False? What are some examples you could give?"
2. "You consider yourself a caring person—True or False? In what ways?"

3. "You can change another person just by being kind—True or False? Give an example."
4. "If everyone was always compassionate, the world would grow weak—True or False? Give an example."
5. "Jesus was using kindness toward the woman just to teach a lesson—True or False? Why do you think that?"

Then ask campers to lay down their pencils. Ask, "Does anyone know what a debate is, and why it's done?" They may have seen candidates debate on TV. Talk about how debate is (usually) a civilized form of figuring out who is right and who is wrong. The "classic" debate format is used to allow people to have a conversation in which all the facts are presented, and then a judgment can be made. In the Bible story, Jesus refused to enter into a debate about who was right and wrong, and instead chose to show forgiveness and compassion. Jesus did this when asked questions about right and wrong a lot, and it is often called "the third way."

Tell the campers: "We *could* have a debate about the questions I just asked and try to figure out who is right and who is wrong. Or, we could choose a third way to try to understand where other people are coming from." Ask the campers what sort of ground rules there should be to have that kind of discussion. You can suggest ideas such as: *only one person speaks at a time; nobody gets to tell anyone else that their feelings are "wrong"; we pray for compassion before we start talking;* etc. Once you've established some ground rules, begin to go through the questions one by one and encourage the campers to talk and listen with compassion. Close the discussion with prayer.

BTW: Throughout the week, be aware of times of disagreement, and before a debate or argument breaks out, remind campers that Jesus can help them find a third way to solve their problems. And, remember, the most powerful method of teaching is modeling the behavior you want campers to learn.

CATS AND COWS #PLAY

Why: This game requires careful listening, allows campers to see that switching sides is not really a problem, and lets everyone win in the end.

Supplies: two long ropes

How: Have campers help you stretch out the ropes parallel to each other, about 40 yards apart. These are the boundary lines that each team will run toward.

Divide campers into two teams, naming one “cats” and the other “cows,” and instruct each team to line up facing the other in the center of the field (halfway between, and parallel to, the ropes), with about two arms’ lengths between the teams.

Explain that when you shout “cats,” that team will chase and try to tag people on the other team before they reach their boundary rope (behind them). Those who reach their rope are safe, but those who get tagged will become part of the team who chased them. Then everyone returns to the center of the field to line up and wait for your shout again. They must listen carefully to hear whether you shout “cats” or “cows.” You can try to fake them out by shouting some other word that begins with “c,” such as *camel*, *crane*, *crow*, *cup*, or *candle*. It doesn’t matter if campers get mixed up about which team they are on; in fact, that’s the point of the game! When there are only two campers left on one team, they can be the center of a group hug that ends the game.

BTW: Adjust the distance between the ropes according to the ability of campers. You could also use four cones instead of ropes to mark the boundary lines.

THUMBS UP #PLAY

Why: Participation in this challenging game requires cooperation, concentration, and coordination.

Supplies: none

How: Invite the group to form a close circle, facing inward and kneeling on the ground. Tell campers to place their hands in front of them, with their palms flat on the ground. Have each camper raise his or her right hand and place it past the left hand of the person to his or her right, in front of that camper. Thus, every camper will have two other hands placed between his or her own. Check that hands are arranged properly. Ask them all to make a thumbs-up sign, rotating

their hands, while still keeping their hands on the ground, and then returning their hands to flat palms, just to practice the movements.

Then explain that the goal is to raise thumbs in order around the circle. For example, if Emily began by raising her left thumb, it would be followed by Daniel’s right, Kaitlyn’s left, and then Emily’s right. When a thumb is raised, it stays that way until the whole circle of campers has thumbs raised. Then, again in order around the circle, thumbs go down to a flat palm.

If any camper mistakenly raises a thumb (or flattens palm) out of order, that hand is “out” and must be put behind the camper’s back. Play continues until all but two campers have been eliminated.

You can play a few rounds, and then introduce a new element to the game. Explain that anyone may *reverse the order* of the thumbs up by immediately putting his or her thumb back down.

BTW: After players have been eliminated, invite them to help officiate. You can vary this game by playing it on a table and tapping hands instead of raising thumbs. Double taps would reverse the order of play. Increase the challenge by having everyone blindfolded! Tapping would make the game possible for sight-challenged campers, and thumbs-up would work for hearing-impaired campers.

COMPASSION IN THE WILD #LEARN

Why: This short activity teaches campers about finding compassion where you wouldn’t expect it—among animals. There are many true stories online about various animals showing compassion or kindness toward each other—even between two different species. Humans could take a lesson from these!

Supplies: video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJjWwr-AjiQ> about a blind horse and a goat who leads him to pasture, computer, computer projector, screen

How: Ahead of time, set up the computer, projector, and screen to show the video to campers. Do this activity after the “Caring Conversation” so that campers understand what an act of compassion might involve (doing

something kind for someone, even if they have no way of paying you back) and have Jesus' example as a foundation.

Play the video. Afterward, start a discussion by inviting campers to comment on the story. Ask if they have ever seen animals be kind to each other. Maybe they have a dog and cat that get along well. Ask campers if the goat in the video was happy. Why or why not?

Ask campers what they think this quote from the Dalai Lama means: "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

BTW: Another story you could present is from Aesop's Fables: "The Lion and the Mouse," found at <http://read.gov/aesop/007.html> For your own enlightenment, check this out: <http://www.lookandlearn.com/blog/9988/compassion-in-the-animal-kingdom/>

NO JUDGMENT HERE #LEARN #PRAY

Why: For campers, Jesus models compassion without judgment—an excellent attitude to keep us connected to others and to create peace.

Supplies: Bible

How: First, read aloud to campers John 8:2–11. Explain that the Pharisees, as religious authorities in Jesus' day, were very interested in seeing that everyone followed the Jewish law. Sometimes women were punished for breaking a law and men weren't. And sometimes the consequences for breaking the law were horrible—for example, being stoned to death—as almost happened in this case. Then explain that Jesus knew the woman in the story had sinned and he knew that the Pharisees had, too, yet Jesus didn't pronounce judgment on anyone. Ask campers to describe Jesus' response to the Pharisees. Accept all answers. More importantly, ask campers to describe Jesus' response to the woman. Help everyone in your group have a chance to answer. Invite campers each to think of a time when he or she judged someone. Choose a volunteer to mime how that camper might have looked (*nose in the air? pointing?*) Choose a volunteer to mime how he or she feels when someone judges him or her (*guilty? sad and droopy? angry with hands on hips?*).

Ask three people to act out the Bible story as Jesus, the woman, and a Pharisee. Ask the other campers to think of possible relationships they may have to one of the characters, but not to share what they are. Suggestions might be the brother of the Pharisee, the woman's daughter, Jesus' disciple. When your actors act out the scene, instruct your audience to watch it as though they were the people they were thinking of. Afterward, ask the audience to tell who they imagined they were, and ask them to explain how that made them feel about what happened. Thank your volunteers. Close with prayer, thanking God for Jesus' example of not judging other people, and ask for help for all to follow Jesus' example.

BTW: If you have time, encourage campers to imagine how Jesus would respond to their sins. Ask what he would say to them. You might get some surprising answers.

PRAY FOR COURAGE, PATIENCE, JUSTICE #PRAY

Why: Jesus' actions in the story of the woman caught in adultery conveyed his courage to stand up to social/religious authorities, his patience in letting the scenario unfold, and his sense of justice for the woman—God's justice. Campers will understand these concepts in this prayer for the oppressed in our world.

Supplies: Bible; magazine pictures of people in developing countries who are experiencing poverty, hunger, or war (these may be obtained from *National Geographic*, *Time*, and other news magazines); (optional): scissors, glue, and poster board

How: If campers haven't already heard the scripture for today, read aloud the story of Jesus, the Pharisees, and the woman in John 8:2–11. Ask campers about Jesus' response to the Pharisees' question. What did he do? How might his words have sounded? Point out that Jesus didn't hurry to respond; he likely surprised everyone by stooping to write in the sand. It probably took courage to challenge the authorities. Talk about the injustice (from God's point of view) of the Pharisees using the woman's situation to try to trap Jesus; they didn't care about her life. In contrast, point out Jesus' compassion for her.

Pass around the pictures among the campers in your group while talking about injustice in the world today. Ask them questions about what they see in the pictures, such as: “What is happening? How are the people feeling? How are the people’s lives different from ours?” Encourage all campers to participate in the discussion. Explain that poverty, hunger, and war are the result of injustice and of people who are more concerned about the rules, power, and wealth than they are about the lives of others.

Invite campers to pray with you for the people in the pictures and those like them, and say that you will end with a few minutes of silence and an amen. Then lead campers in a detailed prayer for the picture people. Also pray for campers to have courage, patience, and a sense of justice like Jesus.

BTW: You could make this more interactive by giving the campers the magazines and having them cut out the pictures themselves to make a good old-fashioned photo collage.

PAINTED PLATE WEAVING: CONNECTING NEIGHBORS #CREATE

Why: This two-session activity gives campers experience in both painting and weaving, with the bonus of interpreting the weaving as a connection with neighbors. You can embellish the “story” of going to a neighbor’s house.

Supplies: per each camper: one Chinet or thick *paper* dinner plate (not Styrofoam), one large watercolor brush, one pencil, one pair of scissors, five yards of dark-colored yarn, and many bright-colored scraps of yarn of about two feet each; table; plastic tablecloth; washable tempera paint in red, yellow, and blue; four or five paper plates; jars of water; color-mixing plates; a “loom” template that you cut prior to class time from a Chinet plate with exactly 19 notches evenly spaced around the rim (see page xxx).

How: Ahead of time, measure out dark yarn into five-yard bundles. Put plastic protection on the table and set out jars of clean water. Set out a brush for each camper. Prepare the paint palettes, squeezing out a small quantity of each color on one paper plate for every three or four campers.

1. Instruct campers to paint concentric circles in bright colors on their paper plates, like

those of Russian abstract painter, Wassily Kandinsky, covering the whole inside of the plate (not the rim). You can show them his painting titled “Squares with Concentric Circles” available on the Internet. Let the plates dry overnight.

Next session (later in the day, or the next day if necessary) —

2. Show campers how to trace notches from the loom template (see “Supplies” above) onto the rim of their plates and count to check that they have exactly 19 marks.
3. Ask them to cut these notches with scissors on the rim (only the rim) of their plates.
4. Sit down in the shade with the campers (and their plates) around you. First explain how people in a neighborhood are connected and how their interactions make a difference in relationships. Give each camper a five-yard bundle of dark yarn. Then say, “Watch what I do to start the weaving, but don’t start until I say ‘go.’”
5. Slip the end of the yarn through any notch, holding on to it behind your plate while you take the long end of yarn to the “house across the street”—a notch almost directly across the plate front—so that you have 8 notches open on the left side and 9 notches open on the right. Say “go” and help campers do this step.
6. Then take the long end to the “neighbor’s house to the right” behind the rim and forward through the neighboring notch. Take the yarn “across the street” again to the notch to the left of where you started. The yarn should look like a tall skinny X. Let campers do this step before you continue.
7. Rotate the plate and repeat Step 6 until your yarn has no “house” to go to.
8. The yarn will look like spokes that you’ll use as the “warp” for weaving. The remaining end of yarn goes to the middle and starts the “weft”: weaving around the center, over and under the warp strings. Pull it snug. Let campers finish their spokes and begin weaving.
9. When the yarn has only three inches left, tie it to one of the yarn scraps and weave that around, over-under, too. You don’t want to

cover the whole plate with weaving—only four inches in diameter.

10. End with a double knot tied to one of the spokes. Then tie a loop of yarn to the top for hanging.

BTW: If campers catch on quickly, you could allow them to add pony beads to their weavings, spacing them out, 5 or 6 to a project. They may have a hard time, though. If so, they may be pulling too tight, and they'll have to go through the project and loosen their weft string to find their place.

“LOVE IN THE SAND” CASTING #CREATE

Why: Have you ever wondered what Jesus wrote in the sand in John 8:2–11? Whatever it was, it evidently had a powerful effect on the Pharisees! This sand-casting craft gives campers a chance to preserve a message of love. They'll need two days to complete this activity so the plaster can harden before they paint it.

Supplies: Bible; your camp's sand volleyball court; 10 lbs. of plaster of Paris (for about a dozen campers); water source; one or two large, recycled, plastic containers for mixing plaster; two clean paint-stirring sticks; four shallow plastic sandwich boxes; tempera paints in red, yellow, and blue; a thick paper plate and water jar for each pair or trio of campers; a watercolor brush, paper clip, and pencil for each camper; table or other flat surface; plastic tablecloth or trash bags to protect the table; masking tape; old toothbrushes; tarp

How: First remove from your area of sand any leaves, sticks, large pebbles, etc. Wet the sand enough to make it stick together. When campers arrive, remind them of the story of Jesus writing in the sand and that his act was one of compassion and love. (Read the story aloud if they haven't heard it yet today.) Explain that the campers will get to cast their own message in sand.

Invite campers to prepare their holes by pressing a plastic sandwich box an inch deep into the sand. This hole will define the boundary for plaster. Have them remove the box and pass it to someone else who needs it. Then have them carefully draw a heart or write the word LOVE (backwards, of course!) with their fingers in the

bottom of their holes. Remove any stray particles of sand that make the impression indistinct.

While campers are doing this, mix a small batch of plaster with water in a plastic container to the consistency of cake batter, adding more plaster or more water to get it right. Stir plaster very slowly to release any air bubbles, until mixture is smooth. Plaster will set up in 20 minutes, so you'll want to have this prepared only when campers are ready to use it.

Gently pour plaster into the campers' holes to about one inch deep, enough to cover the heart or word depressions plus half an inch. Press paper clips into the tops for hanging the finished piece. The plaster is cured when it is hard and completely cool. Allow the campers to write their names with a pencil (it may or may not leave a graphite mark) when everyone has finished. Let the castings sit undisturbed overnight, covering the area with a tarp.

The next day, put plastic protection on the table and set out jars of clean water. Set out a brush for each camper. Prepare the paint palettes, squeezing out a small quantity of each color (more red than blue and yellow) onto the paper plates. While you're doing this, ask a helper to instruct the campers to remove the castings and use the toothbrushes to brush off sand from the front of them, and escort campers to the table. Invite campers to paint their castings in whatever colors they like. Encourage them to rinse and squeeze their brushes in the water jar before dipping into a new color of paint. This keeps the paint from becoming too “muddy.”

BTW: If you have no sand volleyball court, you can still do this craft with sand donated by a builder and a disposable, plastic sandwich box or *deep* disposable pie plate for every camper. Pour about an inch of sand into each sandwich box and moisten it so it will stick together. Campers will use this to draw the heart or write the word LOVE. The box itself will define the edge of the plaster. Campers can take the castings home in these boxes or remove them for painting.

WHEAT SAND COOKIES #SERVE #CREATE

Why: This is a welcome treat that campers can make for others, whether it be the camp staff, a

family down the road, or residents in a nursing home.

Supplies: butter, sugar, eggs, vanilla, an orange, whole wheat flour, white flour, salt, large mixing bowl, small mixing bowl, 2 mixing spoons, beater, refrigerator, oven, rolling pin, cookie cutters, greased cookie sheets, brush

How: Gather and measure ingredients—

- ¾ cup butter
- 1 ¼ cups white sugar
- 1 egg plus 1 egg yolk (reserve white)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon orange zest (grated orange rind)
- 2 cups whole wheat flour, sifted
- 1 cup white flour, sifted
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Blend the butter and sugar together until creamy. Beat in the eggs and vanilla. In a small bowl, mix the orange zest and flours together, then gradually stir this into the butter mixture. The last of the flour may have to be kneaded in by hand. Chill the dough several hours.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Roll the dough very thin and cut into rounds or hearts and place on greased cookie sheets. Brush the tops of the cookies with beaten, reserved egg white and sprinkle with sugar.

Bake cookies about eight minutes.

BTW: Because the dough needs to be chilled before rolling out, you may want to have campers make the dough one day and roll out the cookies the next day, *or* have the camp cooks make the dough for campers. Always remember to ask about allergies or intolerances.

BUILD A BIN PROJECT #SERVE #CREATE

Why: As a service to the camp, campers can build an inexpensive, sturdy bin to surround a trashcan that animals will not be able to invade, yet humans will find a convenient place to stash their trash.

Supplies: camp facilities manager, camp nurse, trash can; five or six wooden shipping pallets; claw hammers; measuring tape (or two); pencils; hardware (nails, screws, hinges, clasp); power saw

and drill; for a design, visit www.mycarpentry.com/wood-waste-basket.html

How: Ahead of time, arrange with the camp facilities manager to choose the trashcan, adapt the design to fit it, set up the location for the project, supervise the project, and to operate the power saw. Alert the camp nurse of your plans on the day of the activity.

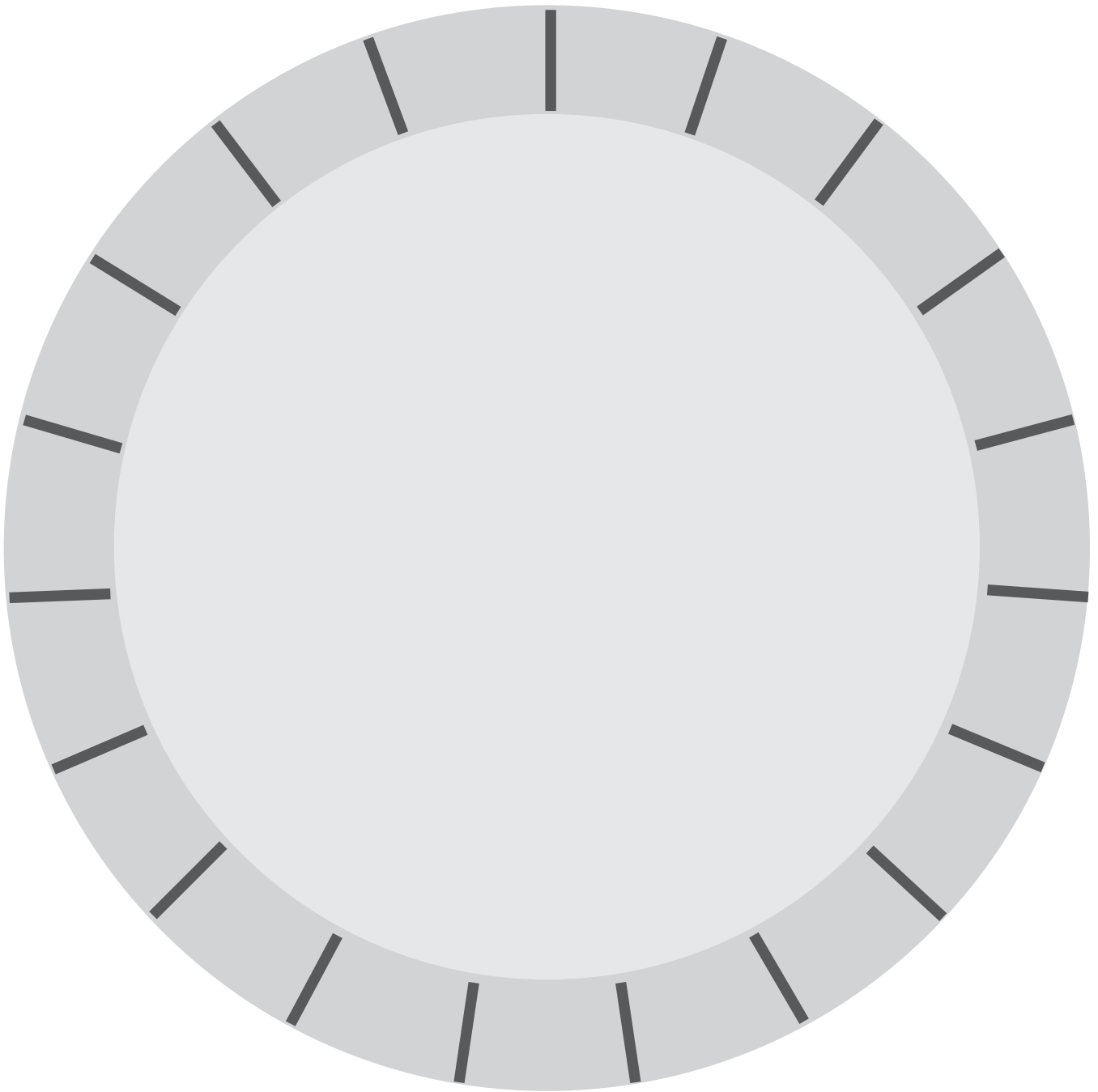
Gather campers, explain the project and safety precautions, and assign campers to their roles under the direction of the facilities manager:

1. Taking pallets apart
2. Removing old nails
3. Measuring and marking boards
4. Nailing boards together
5. Fastening on the hinges and clasp for securing the lid

When the project is finished, schedule an unveiling and ask a special person to put in the first trash bag liner and demonstrate its use.

BTW: You may want to have several counselors present to assist campers. Painting the project is optional. Another option, instead, is to build a small shed for firewood. Designs for that can be found online also, at <http://myoutdoorplans.com/shed/woodshed-plans/>

PAPER PLATE LOOM TEMPLATE



Older Children

Day 3: Branching Out



Love One Another

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Story: John 8:2–11

Scripture Focus: John 8:7

“When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Theological Summary: We have to look around to see that we are all valuable to God. People and their relationships to us are a treasure for us to protect. When the legalistic Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about the law, Jesus’ compassion created a “third way” with his answer, neither condemning the woman for her sin nor denying the law.

Campers will:

- know that their actions toward others can be transformative
- see Christ’s example of compassion and grace with patience and courage
- be called to follow Christ’s example to connect to others without judgment, prejudice, or injustice
- distinguish between judgment and justice

Daily Activities:

- **Sharks and Sardines:** #PLAY Twist on old classics
- **Fast Stacks:** #PLAY #Learn The virtue of patience
- **Slow Judge:** #Learn Confronting assumptions
- **Rest of the Story:** #Learn #CREATE: John 8’s missing facts
- **Condoning and Condemning:** #PRAY #SERVE: Keeping a difficult balance
- **Ripple Affect:** #PLAY #PRAY Timeline of compassion

Leader Notes: The lives of younger youth pass fast. They move from one topic to the next rapidly. Their bodies are rapidly changing. Their social world is constantly evolving. They want change to be immediate and justice to be swift because, in part, they do not have a long-range perspective. Helping them see the firm but patient stance taken by Jesus is a great lesson, but may be a challenge for some campers to wrap their brains around.

Worship Activities

Cabin Time:

Gather campers with shoes in hand. Ask them to think about the dust on their shoes and what stories that dust might tell—from where they went to what they said. Ask them to think about what things they might have done differently if they had the chance, then, as they are ready, have each go to the door and smack his or her shoes together. As each camper shakes off the dust, offer the blessing, “God awaits you in a new day.” You can add some silliness by ending with a Taylor Swift dance party with “Shake It Off.”

Song Ideas:

- “We Shall Overcome” (Traditional)
- “Waiting on the World to Change” (John Mayer, 2006)
- “Stand by Me” (Ben E. King, 1962)
- “You Gotta Be” (Des’ree, 1994)
- “Shake It Off” (Taylor Swift, 2014)

Prayer:

Loving God, help us accept the love you offer and stand with those who feel they are unworthy. Help us stand up for each other. Help us rewrite the world’s expectations for what love looks like and what a Christian acts like. Amen.

Got Your Back!: #CELEBRATE

Supplies: optional: copy of “Stand by Me” and a means of playing it

Have a few campers stand up in various places around the worship space and say, “I’ve been judged for _(campers come up with “offense” _____. Who would ever help (or accept) me?” For each speaker, have other campers jump up from the crowd and shout, “I’ve got your back!” These campers then go stand by the first speaker, placing hands on the speaker’s shoulders. You can repeat this with the ones who came forward in support, having them say something they have been judged for, and having others come take the same position behind them. Have a set number of people do this and end there, or invite everyone

to keep sharing until lines of campers with hands on each other’s shoulders start to connect and everyone is in a large circle. Consider ending with “Stand by Me.”

Words Stick: #Centering

Supplies: pencils, slips of paper, water, flour, large bowl, balloon, music source

Give each camper a slip of paper and ask the campers to write judgmental things people say about youth, and then bring the papers forward. Add background music to keep the mood. (Tori Amos’s rendition of “Smells Like Teen Spirit” would be a great fit.) Then have someone read them, dip them in previously prepared paper mache mix (1 part flour to 2 parts water) in a bowl, and use them to cover a blown up balloon. Offer a prayer for youth who have been hurt by unfair words of judgment. On extra slips of paper, ask the youth to write things people can do for youth who feel judged. Have them bring these forward and place them around the table where the balloon is drying. Sing a song, or play some music as they complete this task. (“You Gotta Be” by Des’ree would be a good fit.) Keep everything if you plan to use it in tomorrow’s centering activity. (You will need to start planning right after worship to get alterations to the sphere done in time—see directions under Day 4 Worship Activities.)

Story Resources

You Are Special, Max Lucado, Good News Publishing, 1997: This story has become a classic and does a great job of exploring the impact of judgment on individuals and a community. It also celebrates the power of those who stand in solidarity with victims of judgment.

Daily Activities

SHARKS AND SARDINES: #PLAY

Supplies: orange safety cone or other place marker

Why: Have some fun, burn some energy, and do a little reflecting on the types of people in our lives.

How: Secretly place a safety cone or other space marker in a fairly hidden spot. Privately designate one camper to be the shark and tell that person where the cone is. Publically select a volunteer to be the first sardine. Explain that all but one camper will be trying to find the first sardine and hide with them in the exact same spot the sardine is hiding. If someone is under a bush, everyone tries to hide under the bush. Explain that one camper is not actually a sardine, but a shark. The shark's job is to lure sardines into its lair and eat them. Explain that a cone has been hidden, much like the first sardine will be. If a camper comes close enough to see the cone, the shark may tag them and they are "eaten." Sardines who fall prey to the shark must stay in the shark's lair by the cone, making the space more obvious as more fish bodies pile up. Sardines who join the first hidden one are safe from the shark and must stay put. If the shark discovers where the sardines are hiding, the shark must not join them or give away the location, but can divert others from the location. The game continues until all campers have either piled in with the first sardine or been eaten by the shark. Once the rules are clear, send out the first sardine with a head start so he or she can pick a location, then let the rest of the campers loose to play. After the game, spend a few minutes talking about how the shark lured people and how it felt to not know who to trust.

BTW: While this game works for small groups, it can be played as a full camp. Larger numbers also allow for multiple sharks to be at play.

FAST STACKS: #PLAY #LEARN

Supplies: cards, dominoes, or some other items that can be stacked

Why: Explore the importance of patience when facing a difficult task.

How: Challenge the group to build the highest tower possible out of cards, dominoes, blocks, or some other available stackable items. Divide campers into teams of two or three and give them 30 seconds to see which group can build the highest tower. Repeat the activity with a 2 minute deadline. Afterward, spend some time discussing the importance of patience. Ask the campers how they know when something should be hurried and when they have to take their time.

BTW: You could make this activity a challenge between different groups, but give each a different material to build with. Allow each group to try all the building materials. Ask campers which materials required more patience.

SLOW JUDGE: #LEARN

Supplies: none

Why: Illustrate how knowing a person changes how we judge them.

How: Explain to the campers that the following statements below are to be understood as facts. They are not rumor or assumption, but true statements about a person. After each statement, ask the group to vote on the subject's goodness. The options are "good" or "bad." There is no middle ground. The statements are in sets of three. After each set, stop to debrief and reflect on whether the opinion of the group changed, and, if so, how.

- Jill is a thief.
- Jill steals because she has no job.
- Jill is single and steals to feed her four children, including one with a severe handicap.
- Bob is a police officer.
- Bob pays special attention to some older store owners in town.

- Bob charges these store owners for extra protection after paying gangs to threaten them.
- Amanda ran away from home.
- Amanda feared the judgment of her highly religious parents.
- Amanda has never told her parents that she is HIV positive and never plans to.

BTW: With a little further reflection, campers could come up with some real world examples in which society’s view of a person changed over time as that person became better understood, or more about them was revealed.

REST OF THE STORY: #LEARN #CREATE

Supplies: Bibles, paper, pencils

Why: Help campers engage the story with critical eyes, showing that patient reading of scripture often offers up even more understanding.

How: Read John 8:2–11. Explain to the campers that there is an unsolved mystery in the text and together they will try to figure out what happened. Read the story again, then ask the campers if they have any questions about what happened. Make a list of questions that are not answered by the scripture. (Two big ones are, “What did Jesus write?” and, “If she was caught in the act, where the man?”)

Assign roles for the campers in a series of crime scene role-plays.

1. Jesus and a detective who is investigating reports of an altercation between Jesus and community leaders.
2. Detective interviewing scribe or Pharisee who caught the woman committing adultery.
3. Detective interviewing scribe or Pharisee who watched Jesus write on the ground.

You can do these same scenes with different youth for different outcomes. Encourage the campers to stay true to the parts of the story that are in the Bible and make up details that are missing. Afterward, spend a few minutes debriefing what the group thinks really happened and how it might have impacted the way the story was told.

BTW: These could become worship skits or be used in a talent show. Groups could come up

with their own versions of the missing facts and present them to the camp. A *noire*-style narrator could make the presentation even more entertaining. Consider adding sound effects or signs to cue audience gasps or boos.

CONDONING AND CONDEMNING:

#PRAY #SERVE

Supplies: sheets of paper, pencils, envelopes, large sheet of paper, marker

Why: It is often hard to find a balance between condemnation and condoning. Spend some time exploring the two words *condemn* and *condone*, and how they impact our understanding of people.

How: Ask the campers to define the words *condemn* and *condone*, writing their answers on a large piece of paper. Ask youth the following questions based on combinations of these words.

1. Can you condemn someone if you condone of their actions?
2. Can you condone someone’s actions if you have condemned them?
3. Can you not condone someone’s actions and still not condemn them?

Invite the campers each to share a time he or she was in trouble for a mistake that camper made, but still felt love or encouragement from those who punished him or her. Ask the campers to think about how Jesus might call us to treat people in our world who have been found guilty of crimes, and how we can share God’s love with them without condoning their choices. Give each camper a sheet of paper and a pencil and invite them each to write an anonymous letter (no personal information) to someone in jail, assuring that person that God’s love is for everyone. Say a prayer of blessing for the letters, asking God to bless them and carry the love and grace experienced at camp with them to those who might eventually read them. Collect the letters, double check to make sure there is no identifying information from youth included, and send them to a prison ministry to be distributed.

BTW: If you have time and your group has the maturity, consider asking them how the church should handle people who have been in prison

and want to be part of their church family. Discuss safe boundaries and the challenge of supporting people who have made bad choices while trying to assure the safety of everyone involved.

RIPPLE AFFECT: #PLAY #PRAY

Supplies: copies of the list below, pens

Why: Sometimes people can't see the positive effect of a kind gesture. This activity encourages campers to think about how acts of kindness and grace can last, even over centuries.

How: Invite campers to put the following events in the order they think the events may have occurred. They may just use the six provided, or they can make up a couple of their own to include. If you have larger groups, consider dividing them into smaller teams and having them report back together later with their work. After the events are put in order, invite the campers to reflect on how people's care and support impact others. Invite each camper to share the name of someone whose kindness inspired him or her to be a better person. Close the activity with a prayer of thanks for those people, asking God to help each camper be an inspiration to others.

1. Parents who often fight in front of their kids renew vows and promise to stop being so angry.
2. A volunteer suddenly finds the resources needed to make a new ministry happen.
3. Someone sees an old friend they ignored for too long and goes out of his or her way to apologize.
4. Family that was scared and isolated feels more connected to the community and is hopeful.
5. Uplifted by an unexpected conversation, a person makes a large gift to a charity.
6. Jesus supports a woman accused of adultery and sends her away with a challenge.
7. Add your own: _____
8. Add your own: _____

BTW: Campers may disagree about the order the list goes in. This is a great opportunity to encourage campers to think beyond *right* and

wrong. You could also have campers create a list projecting into the future the positive effects that their kind act today could yield. What is the most life-changing positive effect that their act of grace could have?

Day 3: Branching Out



Love One Another

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Story: John 8:2–11

Scripture Focus: John 8:7

“When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Theological Summary: We have to look around to see that we are all valuable to God. People and their relationships to us are a treasure for us to protect. When the legalistic Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about the law, Jesus’ compassion created a “third way” with his answer, neither condemning the woman for her sin nor denying the law.

Campers will:

- know that their actions toward others can be transformative
- see Christ’s example of compassion and grace with patience and courage
- be called to follow Christ’s example to connect to others without judgment, prejudice, or injustice
- distinguish between judgment and justice

Daily Activities:

- **Center of Balance:** #PLAY: How we stay centered
- **Name That Sin:** #PLAY: The many ways we judge
- **Assuming a Role:** #PLAY #Learn: Role play with a twist
- **Dirty Grace:** #SERVE #Learn: Giving grace
- **Dirty Words:** #CREATE #PRAY: Responding to negatives
- **Rapid Response:** #PRAY: Right and wrong time to act

Leader Notes: Jesus’ response is a gift of grace to the woman and a challenge to the leaders. Jesus is calling them to be careful how they judge, and reminding them of their own sins. Some ancient manuscripts include a few extra words at the end of verse 8, so it reads, “...[he] wrote on the ground *the sins of each of them.*” Imagine the scene of each person reading their offenses written in the dirt before them and their peers. Maybe the accusers leave because Jesus has called them not to judge, or maybe they leave before Jesus can write their personal infractions.

Worship Activities

Cabin Time:

Give each camper a rock and ask each to think of a time he or she judged someone. Explain that the day's scripture story involves Jesus causing a crowd to put down the rocks they intended to stone someone with and leave. Invite the campers to place their rocks by the entrance to the cabin as a commitment to having a judgment-free day. Tell them that their rocks will be waiting on them later if anyone needs to pick his or her rock up and set it back down as a reminder not to judge. This could be a practice for the week as the campers practice not judging, and asking forgiveness for judging.

Song Ideas:

- "Brave" (Sarah Bareilles, 2003)
- "Who Is My Neighbor?" (Hymn – CROP Walk Resources)
- "If Everyone Cared" (Nickelback, 2005)
- "Seasons of Love" (From *Rent*, 2001)
- "Judge Not" (Bob Marley, 1978)
- "Help Us Accept Each Other" (Hymn)

Prayer:

God, give us courage to love and be loved in return. Give us the courage to protest all that would separate us from love. Give us the strength to face the injustices of this world with love and grace. Give us the patience to create change, even when it seems so far away. Amen.

Time Rewind: #CELEBRATE

Supplies: none

Have campers act out the scene from John 8, but with Jesus telling the scribes and Pharisees to do what they want since they know the Law so well. Act out the stoning (without real stones of course), and then have one of the crowd members call out another for being a cheater. The rest of the crowd then "stones" the cheater. Continue this pattern with camps accusing others of various different sins, causing people to be stoned till

there is only one left with Jesus, to whom Jesus says, "Would you rather I gave you a different answer?" Pretend to "rewind" the scene with everyone moving in reverse back to the point at which the scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus about the woman's punishment; then act out the real story.

Written Confessions: #Centering

Supplies: shallow box or tray, sand, small sticks; (optional): music source

Invite campers to take turns coming forward to write sins in a small sandbox with a stick, offer a short silent prayer of confession, then smooth the sand with his or her hand and allow another a turn. Consider some background music while people come forward. "Brave" by Sarah Bareilles or Bob Marley's "Judge Not" would work well.

Story Resources

Elephant Man, the story of John Merrick, is sad and inspirational. There is a movie as well as written stories of his life. Deformity gave him a physical challenge, but the judgment of others is what made life so difficult. Acceptance and solidarity of others is what changed his life for the good.

Daily Activities

NAME THAT SIN: #PLAY

Why: This is a silly way to help illustrate how many ways we have to judge.

Supplies: none

How: Sit in a circle and invite campers to take turns naming sins. Answers are to be one word—there is no need for the campers to explain situations that they *think* was sin. This simple process moves around the circle till someone can't think of a sin. That person moves to the middle of the circle and sits in the "ring of judgment" while the rest of the group continues naming sins until everyone has been eliminated and moved to the center. After the game ends, spend a few minutes reflecting on how much our culture judges others and how many words we have for judging. Restart the game with the same flow, but this time ask the campers to name synonyms for grace. Instead of moving those who can't think of a word to the middle, simply tell them it is okay and encourage them to try again when their turns comes around again.

BTW: Stretch this game out over a full day if you want by playing head to head. Campers then have partner they play against and anytime two partners are together, they can add another word. Give points for each unique word. Neither can repeat something that has already been said. At the end of the day, see who has more points, then use the same debrief as above.

ASSUMING A ROLE: #PLAY #LEARN

Why: Explore how assumptions impact the way we treat people.

Supplies: cardstock, string, hole punch, markers

How: Write some of the word pairs listed below on half sheets of cardstock—one pair per sheet, with one word on one side of the sheet, and its partner on the back. Then punch holes and attach strings so each paper can be worn as a name-tag. Give each camper a nametag, but do not let them see what is on the opposite sides. Explain that they will role-play using the descriptions they are wearing and their own genders. The scenario is that a new colony on another planet holds the best hope for the future of humanity and they are selecting four people who will go. After they make a decision as a group, invite them to flip their nametags and reflect on the outcome and the process.

*President / hiding cancer

*Child / bully

*Doctor / drug addict

*Minister / carpenter

*Construction worker / depressed

*Rocket scientist / anger issues

*Senior citizen / farmer

*Professor / Christian

*Pop-star / hunter

*Famous Athlete / gay

*Lawyer / Muslim

*College Student / prostitute

*Astronomer / atheist

*Convict / "Whistle blower"

*Spy / has PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)

BTW: These roles could be given early in the day and role-played all day, allowing campers to interact at meals and free time in their different roles. If you do this, do not write the second words on their tags. Wait until later in the day, then flip their tags over and write the additional words. You might consider giving them more time to live out the characters with this added reality.

DIRTY GRACE: #SERVE #LEARN

Why: Service is not always an obvious or measurable event. Listening, affirming, or even forgiving can be an act of service. Practice sharing grace as a way of serving each other.

Supplies: area of dirt or sand, sticks (optional: something with which to write with water such as a brush or a sponge)

How: Read John 8: 2–11 as a group and ask the campers what jumps out at them. Explain to the campers that some versions of this scripture add that Jesus wrote down the sins of the scribes and Pharisees who were accusing the woman. Ask the campers how this additional information impacts their understanding of what happened.

Provide an area of dirt or sand and some sticks to write with. Invite each person to draw a letter in the sand to represent a sin he or she believes Jesus might have written if that camper had been among the accusers. No one has to say what his or her sin is. Invite one camper to pick a peer and tell that camper that the first camper will not judge the second, and that God forgives the second camper. The person speaking then uses his or her foot to scatter the sand or dirt, erasing the letter. The person who has just had his or her letter erased then shares the same words with someone else. This continues until everyone has been affirmed in grace. Spend some time discussing the experience at the end.

BTW: Another adaptation could be to use water, drawing on concrete with brushes, sponges or rags. Campers can still affirm each other, but allow evaporation to erase what they have written, reminding them that God forgives and offers grace.

DIRTY WORDS: #CREATE #PRAY

Why: make the act of forgiveness “concrete” with this craft project (pun intended).

Supplies: area of dirt or sand, stick, bowl, Plaster of Paris mix, paint

How: Draw sins in the dirt—pray. Write words of hope and justice in dirt—fill them in with mix. Paint after they dry.

BTW: Leave these around camp for others to find in the future, or paint and take home. The campers can each take a different letter home to help them remember they are all part of a body that stands up to injustice together.

RAPID RESPONSE: #PRAY

Why: Give campers a chance to think through their snap judgments and to consider alternate aspects of a situation.

Supplies: none

How: Ask campers to decide which of the following scenarios requires a rapid response and which require some planning before responding.

- Friend says he or she is being abused by parent
- Watching a bully push someone around
- Discovering a friend is an alcoholic
- Learning a younger sibling has a learning disorder
- Learning women get paid less than men
- Hearing racist language at family reunion

BTW: This is a great opportunity to invite examples from the campers. You might do this with anonymous submissions, having them write situations on note cards and placing them in a box. That way, no one knows whose real world situation the group is discussing.

CENTER OF BALANCE: #PLAY

Why: This game is a playful way to get into the topic of things that might knock campers off balance. It also reinforces the Bible story with its use of the words *accuser* and *advocate*. Use this opportunity to explain what these words mean.

Supplies: none

How: Divide campers into groups of three. Have two campers step away from the third and assign one the role of “advocate” and the other the job of “accuser.” To begin the activity, have one camper stand on one leg and the other two stand on opposite sides of the central camper. Explain that one of the two campers will try to knock the balancing camper over, forcing him or her to put his or her other foot down. The other camper is there to help support the camper and keep him or her from falling. The camper in the middle is to do his or her best to stay on one foot. Instruct the accuser not to be too rough. The advocate and accuser may say whatever they want to the camper in the middle, even lie about their roles.

Time each round at 30 seconds and see how many campers can keep their balance. Rotate roles so that everyone gets a chance. Afterward, spend some time debriefing what things in life “knock us off balance,” or cause us to act beyond our best intentions. Invite campers to think about what things help them keep their faith and respond with their best efforts when tempted or challenged.

BTW: This can be done in groups of three all at once, or one group at a time in the middle of the group space so everyone can watch each round. This could be done on a 2x4 board over a swimming pool or on a log over a pond for added excitement.

Day 3: Branching Out



Love One Another

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Story: John 8:2–11

Scripture Focus: John 8:7

“When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Theological Summary: We have to look around to see that we are all valuable to God. People and their relationships to us are a treasure for us to protect. When the legalistic Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about the law, Jesus’ compassion created a “third way” with his answer, neither condemning the woman for her sin nor denying the law.

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Daily Activities:

- **Cross Over:** #PLAY: Game of choices
- **Writing in the Sand:** #PRAY #PLAY: Praying in the sand
- **Sin Swallowing Box:** #learn #PRAY: Activity of forgiveness
- **Waters of Grace:** #learn #PLAY: Science project
- **Five in a Row:** #PLAY #learn: Game about forgiveness and forgetting
- **Reflections of Christ:** #learn #SHARE: Activity on reflecting Christ

Leader Notes: This may be a hard story for your campers. Explain that the women made a mistake and the people think they are the ones who should punish her. The courts in Jesus’ day would punish by throwing stones at people. The point of this story is that everyone receives God’s grace and forgiveness. The women, just like everyone holding a stone, deserved God’s forgiveness for mistakes made.

Worship Activities

Cabin Time:

Prepare the large puzzle again. Ahead of time, remove the Day 2 piece, and draw a heart in the sand (or dirt) on another piece for Day 3.

Show the campers the large puzzle with the pieces for Days 1 and 2 missing. Ask if they remember what symbol was on the previous day's piece. Today you will use another piece of the puzzle—the piece with the symbol of the heart in the sand to remind the campers of today's story. Invite campers to reflect on the question: "What does the heart mean?" and draw or write on the flip side of the puzzle piece words that they share as answers (*forgiveness, God's love, love for others*).

Song Ideas:

- "Better Is One Day" (Matt Redman)
- "Amazing Grace" (John Newton, Hymn)
- "Change My Heart, O God" (Eddie Espinosa, *New Song*)
- "Create in Me a Clean Heart" (*New Song*)
- "I Could Sing of Your Love Forever" (Martin Smith, *New Song*)

Prayer:

Pray with the campers, saying, "Thanks for your forgiveness, God," following each of the petitions listed below. Add other petitions that fit your campers.

- For those mistakes I have made. (*Response: "Thanks for your forgiveness, God."*)
- For those times when I judge another person. (*Response*)
- For the people who have not been nice to me. (*Response*)
- For the people that want to hurt others. (*Response*)

Stones of Forgiveness #CELEBRATE

Supplies: scrap paper (several pieces per camper), pencils or pens, large cross

On the scrap paper, have campers write down ways that others have "thrown stones" at them (said or did something mean, judged them, called them names). Have them flip over their papers and on the other sides write how they have "thrown stones" at others. Remind them that we all make mistakes and sometimes we do or say mean things. Talk about how, no matter what we have done or others have done to us, God wants us to forgive. God wants us to forgive the other person and to forgive ourselves for our mistakes. Have the campers wad up the papers as they say: "God, please forgive us." Then, on the count of 3, have campers *shout*, "God, please forgive us!" as they throw the paper wads at the cross. Remind them that their mistakes and the mistakes of others belong to God and, at the foot of the cross, all is forgiven! Maybe the papers can be used to help light an evening campfire.

Washed Away #Centering

Supplies: bowl of water, 3–4 inch squares of rice paper, brown and black washable markers, music source

Gather around the bowl of water and invite campers to write/draw on pieces of rice paper with washable marker the mistakes that they have made, so they can give them to God, asking for forgiveness. With music playing in the background, have campers place their papers in the bowl as they silently ask God to take away their mistakes with forgiveness. Once all the papers have been added, slowly stir the papers in the water, then ask the campers: "What has happened?" If they need prompting, point out that the water has turned dirty and the papers don't have words/pictures on them anymore. By asking God's forgiveness, we are washed clean and we get a new start—a clean beginning. Close in prayer as a group giving thanks for God's grace and forgiveness.

Story Resources

Mission Story to share: "Take Your Shoes Off"
(from storiesforpreaching.com, original source unknown)

One Sunday morning, a children's program leader noticed a little girl standing outside the room, looking in with great eagerness at the fun the other children were having. The leader went outside and invited the little girl inside. "They'll all laugh at me." "Why do you think that honey?" "Because I don't have any shoes." Heartbroken at this little girl's poverty, and knowing that she really wanted to join in, the leader tried to convince the little girl that the other kids would not laugh at her. But despite her assurances, the leader could not persuade the little girl to join in with the other kids. Another leader came over, one who seemed to have a great ability to minister to children in situations like these. He took the little girl aside and spoke with her. This second leader then left the little girl and rejoined the group to lead the next activity. Before he started, he said, "OK, everyone, before we go any further I want you all to take your shoes and socks off and place them by the wall. For the rest of today we're going to operate with bare feet." The little girl who had no shoes beamed, ran over, and joined in with the rest of the group.

Children's Storybooks

- *The Forgiveness Garden*, Lauren Thompson
- *The Junkyard Wonders*, Patricia Polacco
- *God's Dream*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams

Daily Activities

CROSS OVER #PLAY

Supplies: rope or tape line, simple prizes (candy, stickers)

Why: This is a game about what is common and what divides.

How: Campers line up on both sides of the line and each needs to have a partner directly across. You will stand facing straight down the line. When you say, "Go," the partners on the side of the line to your right need to convince their partners to cross to their side of the line. There are prizes if they are successful. Share the various ways campers were convinced to cross over; have those who did not cross over share why they didn't. Invite the campers to step back to their original positions. Talk about things that divide us. Ask: "What issues or differences become the line separating us from those on the other side? What things do we have in common—where are we on the same side? Do you think we have more in common or more that divides us?" You can also describe daily situations and let the campers decide whether to cross the line and agree or stay on their opposite sides to disagree.

BTW: Younger campers may need a partner to pair up with.

WRITING IN THE SAND #PRAY #PLAY

Supplies: cookie sheets or pans, sand (a set for each family group)

Why: This reminds campers about Jesus writing in the sand, while also offering a chance for sensory play with sand.

How: Talk about Jesus in the Bible story writing in the sand. We don't know what he wrote, but he did it twice and it seemed to "slow down" the situation. Writing in the sand gave Jesus time to think and gave the people gathered time to think about what they were doing—like pressing a pause button. Invite the campers to write a word or draw a picture in the sand to represent a mistake, a misspoken word, something done wrong. Then, tell them, "Silently ask God to forgive you and make a cross with your finger in the sand. Next, wipe away everything by smoothing out the sand, and let someone else in your group write in the sand. Jesus' and God's love gives us a brand new start, a clean slate when we ask forgiveness for the mistakes we have made. It is a new beginning, a new start." After everyone has had a turn, pray together, giving thanks that, through forgiveness, you get a brand new start when your mistakes are wiped away.

BTW: Can be used as a prayer practice in worship as well.

SIN SWALLOWING BOX #LEARN #PRAY

Supplies: cross cutout (6inch x 3 inch), shoebox with lid, scissors, glue stick, fabric piece cut 1 inch larger than shoebox lid, hot glue gun, paper hearts in equal amounts of gray and white (1 of each color per camper),

Why: To portray the miracle of the cross filled with love, peace and amazing grace of God.

How: Ahead of time, create the “Sin Swallowing Box.” Take the shoe box lid and with scissors cut a cross-shaped slit about 1/8» wide in the center of the box lid. Try not to make it any wider, because if it's too wide, the secret compartment might be obvious. On the inside of the lid, apply a line of hot glue along the 90 degree interior angle of the top and sides of lid and attach the outer edge of the fabric, creating a secret bottom to the lid that will catch the dirty hearts. Put the white hearts in the bottom of the box and put the lid on. The secret compartment will catch the dirty hearts so that when you carefully take off the lid and set it down (without turning it over, or allowing campers to glimpse the underside),the campers find the clean, forgiven white hearts.

Begin the actual activity by reminding the campers of today's story, in which one person's sin or wrongdoing was no better or worse than another's. We all make mistakes, we all sin, but God's grace gives us forgiveness no matter what, just like Jesus forgave the woman. Hand out a “dirty” gray heart to each camper (one per camper). Have campers write/draw their sins, their mistakes, the wrongs that they have done on the dirty gray hearts. Then have them place them in the “Sin Swallowing Box,” slipping the hearts through the “cross” on the top. As the campers are doing this, intone, “We confess our mistakes and offer up our hurting hearts to God, asking God to forgive us and renew us. As we let the papers go, we ask God to help us truly let these sins go, to erase the hurt and the guilt and the distance from God in our hearts and our heads, to help us embrace God's forgiveness and grace.” Once campers have all let go of their dirty hearts, take the lid off the box and show them the

miracle of God's forgiveness. A box of clean, white hearts. God doesn't just forgive our sins, but they are forgotten too. Give thanks for God's amazing gift of forgiveness.

BTW: This is not meant to be a trick on campers, but instead a demonstration. So, if older campers question you, may want to disclose that there is a secret compartment. However, remind them that God does forgive our sins no matter what, *just like magic.*

WATERS OF GRACE #LEARN #PLAY

Supplies: table, quart jar, water, red and blue food coloring, stirring spoon, bleach, eye dropper

Why: Prayers of forgiveness receive God's grace in an exciting way.

How: Show the campers this science demonstration. Have them take up positions sitting around the table from which they can all see well. Have campers help if possible. Fill the quart jar halfway full of water and add 2 drops of red food coloring and stir. Show the jar of red water, which will be used to represent humans in the world. Now add drops of bleach until the color starts to disappear, representing God's grace. Share that when we are forgiven God, wants us to try and do better and not repeat the sins. Ask if they remember what Jesus says to the women at the very end of the story. Now, add a couple drops of blue food coloring and watch what happens. The bleach that is already in the water will also bleach the blue dye as it mixes in. Explain: “The blue is the Holy Spirit helping us, swirling around and through us to aid us in making better decisions in the future. As the water turns clear, we are reminded that no matter what, God forgives us.”

BTW: Be careful with the bleach—before, after, and during.

FIVE IN A ROW #PLAY #LEARN

Supplies: none

Why: This game will give you a context to talk about how forgiveness is alike to and different from forgetting.

How: Choose five campers to stand before the rest of the campers. Then have them leave the room,

mix up their order, and return in a different order. Let the other campers try to remember what order they were in before they left the room. When the other campers figure out the correct order, choose five other campers to repeat the game. Emphasize that people have to think hard in order to remember. After the second round, ask the campers these questions:

- “How did you remember what order your friends were in when we played our game? Was the second time easier or harder?”
- “What are a couple things you wish other people would remember about you? What are a couple things you wish they wouldn’t remember?”
- “What happens when you forgive somebody?”
- “What happens when Jesus forgives us?”

Finish by saying: “Sometimes, when people remember us, they remember all the wrong things—only the things we wish they’d forget. But Jesus, when he forgives us, allows us to move beyond the wrong things and live as though the act is forgotten.”

BTW: You may need to play a couple rounds so that children campers all get a chance to be in the line-up. You can break up into two groups to play if that helps give them all get a chance.

REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST #LEARN

#SHARE

Supplies: small mirrors of various sizes like those used under candles (have at least half as many as you have campers)

Why: Our actions are reflections of Christ.

How: On the ground, lay out the mirrors and circle campers around them so that they can all look down into at least one mirror. Invite them to look down and notice the reflections in the mirrors. Have them rotate around the mirrors a couple steps and look down again at the reflections. Have them rotate one more time, or have them bend down and take a different, closer view. Ask: “What did you see reflected in the mirrors? Did you see reflections of others or just yourself? How did the reflections change? If God held up a mirror in front of us, what would be reflected? We believe that we are created in

the image of God and that we reflect the love of Christ in our actions. Does your reflection show a child of God trying to share the love of Christ?” Have adults and older youth pick up mirrors and find younger campers and show them their reflections in the mirrors. As they look at their reflections, have the older campers share something good they see in them. Then, have the older campers choose other young campers until all the non-adult campers have looked at their reflections and been affirmed.

BTW: Older campers may want to stick with younger campers they know well during the last part involving affirming ways they see Christ’s love in the younger campers.

Extras

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:23b–25

Message: Invite a leader (someone who is ordained if that is necessary in your tradition) to talk briefly about sacred community meals and the meaning of the Lord's supper. Have this leader end his or her message by moving into the words of institution, as found in today's scripture.

RESPONDING

Camper Response: Invite campers to come forward to receive holy communion (or to participate in a "sacred meal" if you cannot celebrate communion). If possible, serve communion using the intinction method (dipping a piece of bread into the cup) so that campers all receive bread from a shared loaf.

Song: (*Sung while campers are receiving communion*) "One Bread, One Body," or another communion song from either the song ideas list or from your camp's canon of songs.

Closing: Closing prayer ritual

LITANY: "COVENANT"

A litany for five readers and the gathered community;

This litany can be use prior to Holy Communion

Reader One: God made a covenant with Noah not to destroy the world with floodwaters again.

Everyone: God's promises are good and true.

Reader Two: God made a covenant with Abram, to bless the nations through all his generations.

Everyone: God's promises are good and true.

Reader Three: God made a covenant with Moses, to help the people learn how to live in right relationship.

Everyone: God's promises are good and true.

Reader Four: God made a covenant with David, to bring a messiah out of his house.

Everyone: God's promises are good and true.

Reader Five: And God gave us a new covenant in Jesus, to forgive us of our sin and show us a new way of connecting with God. We celebrate this new covenant at the Lord's table.

Everyone: God's promises are good and true.

Day 3: Love One Another

Connecting Through People

PREPARATION

Scripture/Message: The skit for today ("Cast the First Stone") is designed to go with the litany that bears the same name. You will need two readers and at least five silent actors for this scripture/skit combo. Instructions are found in the skit section. Be sure to give your readers and actors plenty of time to practice the back and forth of reading and silent acting that will bring this scripture and message to life.

Camper Response: Campers will be invited to contemplate their differences and sameness by examining their thumbprints. You will need a poster board with a large heart outline, inkpads, and wet wipes for this activity.

Have a leader explain that among the billions of people on earth, each person's fingerprints are completely unique—and yet similar, because we all have them. People from every nation, every viewpoint, every income level, every belief—all have this mark of shared humanity and individual uniqueness. Encourage campers to think about fingerprints as a reminder that God loves us in our differences and in our sameness.

Invite campers to come forward and, using an inkpad, place a fingerprint inside the large heart found on a poster board at the front of your worship space. Have an adult stationed with wet wipes to clean the ink off of campers' fingers before they return to their seats.

Extras

GATHERING

Call to Worship

Leader: No matter how different we may be, God made us all.

All: We will love our neighbor.

Leader: No matter what we've done, God loves us all.

All: We will love our neighbor.

Leader: Instead of judgment, we are called to love.

All: We will love our neighbor.

Song: "Love the Lord Your God" or another song from either the song ideas list or from your camp's canon of songs.

Opening Prayer: God, you call us to love one another—and to do so without judgment or prejudice. Some days that is simple, and other days it is very hard. In worship, give us the strength and compassion to love all of your children without exception. Amen.

PROCLAIMING

Scripture/Message: John 8:2–11. Use the skit and litany for day 5 (both are named "Cast the First Stone.")

RESPONDING

Camper Response: Campers are invited to first consider their differences and sameness by examining their fingerprints, and to then come forward and place a fingerprint on the poster board heart at the front of the worship space. (See preparation notes for more details).

Song: "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love," or another song from either the song ideas list or from your camp's canon of songs.

Closing: Closing prayer ritual

LITANY: "CAST THE FIRST STONE"

A litany for two readers, plus silent actors, based on John 8:2–11 (CEB).

You will need readers for the litany and actors to silently act out the scripture as it is read. The actors should fill the parts of Jesus, the accused woman, and at least three Pharisees/bystanders.

Practice putting the reading and the actions together. After each part is read, there should be a long pause, during which the actors will act out what has just been read. Because the actors are doing their parts without words, their actions will need to be very "big." Consider using some large stones as props for your actors. The thud of stones dropping to the ground can be very powerful. (Be sure to have actors be careful—a rock dropped on a foot can be painful!).

Reader One: Early in the morning Jesus returned to the temple. All the people gathered around him, and he sat down and taught them.

[pause for silent actors]

Reader Two: The legal experts and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. Placing her in the center of the group, they said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone women like this. What do you say?"

[pause for silent actors]

Reader One: They said this to test him, because they wanted a reason to bring an accusation against him. Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger.

[pause for silent actors]

Reader Two: They continued to question him, so he stood up and replied, "Whoever hasn't sinned should throw the first stone." Bending down again, he wrote on the ground.

[pause for silent actors]

Reader One: Those who heard him went away, one by one, beginning with the elders. Finally,

Extras

Once the structure is completed, have group members remove their blindfold and see it finished. Reveal which parts belong to which person. It should be clear then how each person's parts were used.

Topics/Discussion Points: Each group member will no doubt have a different experience. There will be varying degrees of involvement, and it will not be unusual for some to take an active lead and others to passively wait. Discuss how the group worked, how the group decided what would happen, what the group's goals seemed to be. Ask if participants come away with any thoughts based on how they see the colors or pieces distributed and what this could say about what happened during the construction.

BTW: When we see a finished product or production, we often miss how much went into its completion. We are not always aware of all the hands involved, the challenges faced, the ways people may have felt accepted or unaccepted. This example could open up discussions on how we are often connected in ways we don't realize, to people we don't realize, and to places we don't recognize, because we don't see all the things under the surface.

Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil

Best for day 3

Why: Understand the vitality of a variety of abilities being used to accomplish a single task. This initiative could pair well with Day 3 (connection through people) because it illustrates connections to people on a literal and metaphorical level. By the end of this activity participants will either realize the feeling of connection through people or the feeling from a lack of that sort of connection. Either will have valuable discussion points.

Supplies: A Bucket, some objects that can be put in the bucket, blindfolds, chairs

How: Have teams of people designated as the seer, the speaker, and the doer work together to accomplish an otherwise simple task. Split participants into groups of three. Assign the role of Seer, Speaker, or Doer to each member of the group. Seer is allowed to see, but not speak or move. Speaker is allowed to speak, but can only face the Seer, and must keep his/her back to the Doer (sitting in the chair may make this easier). The Doer can move, doing the physical part of the task, and can speak, but will be blindfolded.

Set a bucket up somewhere in your space. It is important to be sure your space is not too large. You may set up more than one bucket to accommodate multiple groups. Have the Seer at an edge of your space, facing the Doer. Have the Speaker, sitting in the seat, facing the Seer. The goal will be for the Doer to get as many objects in the bucket as possible. To add more challenge to the activity, only share the details of the task with the Seer.

When you begin, the Speaker should begin telling the Doer what should be done. The Speaker must get his/her information from the Seer who will only be able to use nonverbal communication to pass the message to the Speaker. Place a few leaders in the space to guide the Doers away from boundaries or dangerous situations. The task ends when the Doers have placed the objects in the bucket.

Topics/Discussion Points: To be successful at this initiative, groups will have to develop trust with each other and a new comfortable way of communication. Each member will use a different set of skills and not be able to rely on a set of skills that normally comes naturally. It will be interesting to hear each member share her/his unique experience, since each one will only have a piece of the story.

It will be easy to compare this exercise to the ways society works, how each member contributes something slightly different, and many of those contributions are crucial to how society functions. Ask how they might have accomplished their task if any member was removed? Ask how

Extras

participants' feelings for each other changed over the course of the activity. It will probably range between frustration and appreciation. This could open up discussion about the ways different connections in our lives work. Bring up different aspects of our life such as food, transportation, Internet, nature, and school and ask who are people very different from us who play an important role in these processes that we may not think about. What is our role in those processes?

BTW: Have buckets of varying colors and objects that match each bucket. Add the challenge that the object must be put in the bucket of the same color. Also consider smaller buckets or cups of water that should be poured in the bucket with as little spilling as possible. Consider different size containers, and see who can come closest to filling up their bucket.

Arts, Crafts and Multi-day Projects

Welcome Home Mat (Multi-day project, 2–3 days)

Best to start on day 4

Why: To take home a Welcome Home mat as a permanent reminder of the prodigal son story that can be shared with family and friends at home.

Supplies: One Hula-Hoop per camper, illustration on page xx, 10 to 12 clean, old T-shirts per camper, scissors, masking tape (optional)

How: (All instructions are per-camper) Begin by laying one T-shirt flat on a surface. Cut the hem off with a horizontal cut. Make 8 horizontal cuts across T-shirt, 1 inch wide. You should have 8 loops of T-shirt fabric. Stretch the loops across the Hula-Hoop in pairs. This is now your warp (stationary part of loom).

With the remaining T-shirts, cut into horizontal loops as the first T-shirt, but cut each loop so that it becomes one strip of fabric. You can connect the strands together by knotting the ends or by making a small loop in each end and pulling the other strand through. You don't have to connect it, though; you can just leave the ends and tuck them under on the back side of the rug as you go. You can also cut the T-shirt in a spiral, making one continuous strand of yarn. Making T-shirt yarn is a good one-day activity. Have campers roll T-shirt yarn into balls.

Begin weaving the strips through the warp, treating each set of loops as one spoke (8 spokes). Because you have an even number of warp strands, you need to weave through only half of one set of strands with each cycle. If you picture the warp like a clock, split one hour each cycle round. First, have your extra spoke be at 12 o'clock; the next cycle, have your extra spoke be the one o'clock spoke, and so on. When you get

Extras

Table Talk

Use these questions to prompt theme-related and fun discussion during meal times, down times, or as time fillers. Use the questions in whatever way best serves the needs of the group.

If the discussion goes down a different path, be open to that and allow the campers to be creative and explore ideas together. Be sensitive to campers who do not want to share even while encouraging them to go outside their comfort zone (a tricky balance).

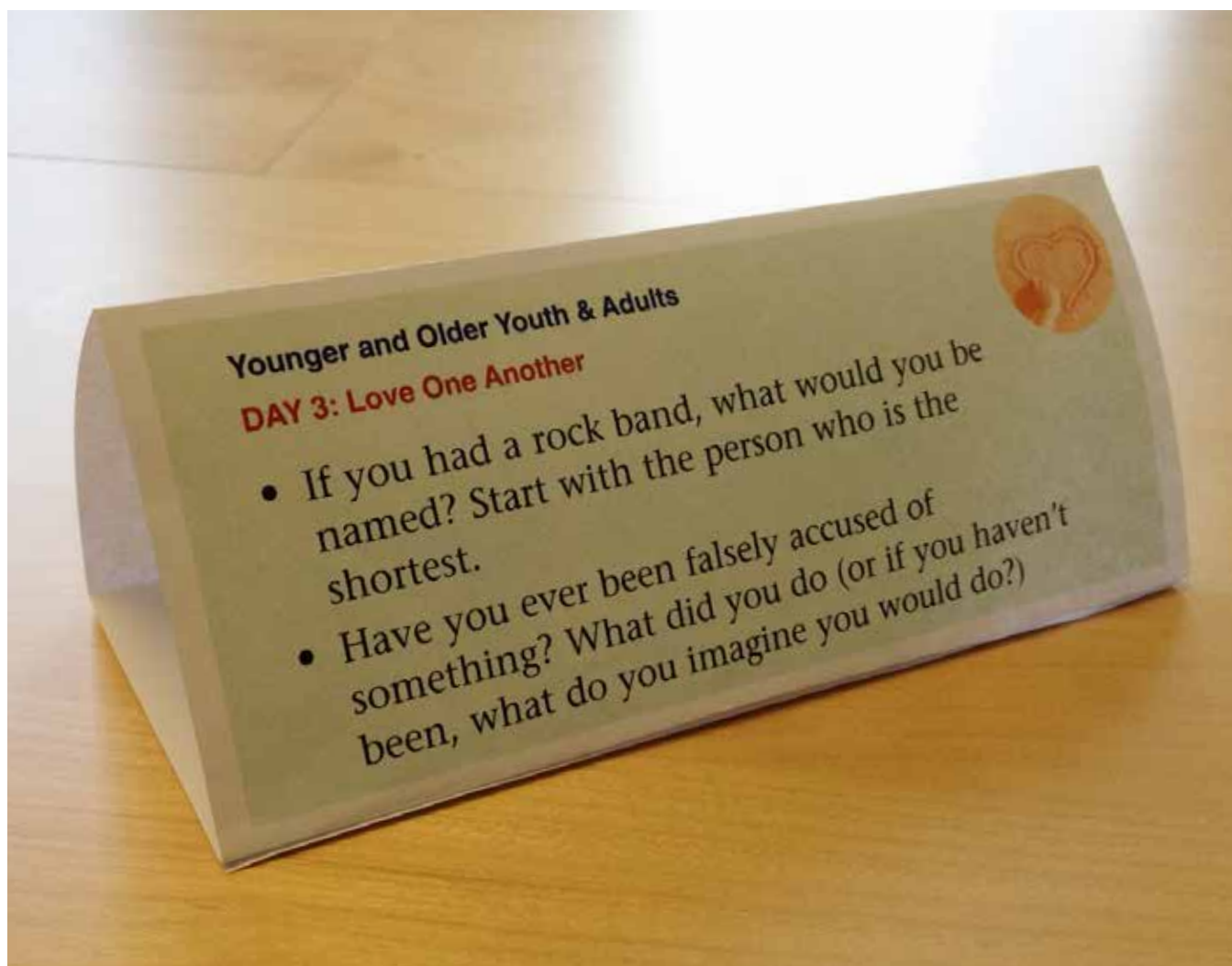


Table tent

DAY CAMP

Welcome to the resources for day camp. Many camps are expanding their program to include weeklong day camp alongside of their traditional camping model. Churches, too, are reaching out to families by providing day camp to their communities. This ministry provides a much-needed service to parents and families. But providing many weeks of Vacation Bible School-type activities can be taxing and expensive. Therefore, we have adapted our daily camp resources into a format that can be used in a longer term environment.

In these materials, you will find each scripture is broken down to provide days of materials. The guide will help you develop your days to include welcoming games, Bible story time, quiet time, a morning and afternoon activity and a weeklong project. As with all of our resources you can adapt these materials to the exact specifications of your ministry.



WEEK 3: Branching Out



Love One Another

Scripture Story: John 8:2–11

Scripture Focus: John 8:7

“When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Theological Summary: We have to look around to see that we are all valuable to God. People and their relationships to us are a treasure for us to protect. When the legalistic Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about the law, Jesus’ compassion created a “third way” with his answer, neither condemning the woman for her sin nor denying the law.

Campers will:

- know that their actions toward others can be transformative
- see Christ’s example of compassion and grace with patience and courage
- be called to follow Christ’s example to connect to others without judgment, prejudice, or injustice
- distinguish between judgment and justice

LEADER NOTES

This may be a hard story for your campers. Explain that the woman made a mistake and the people thought they were the ones to punish her. The courts in Jesus’ day would punish by throwing stones. The point of this story is that everyone receives God’s grace and forgiveness. The woman, like everyone holding a stone, deserved God’s forgiveness for the mistakes she had made.

Plan Your Week

Use the grid below as an example to help you create a visual plan for your week. (**You will want to list your own schedule and write in your choices.**) Select activities from the various listings below; feel free to add others of your own creation, as well.

EVENT	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Welcome (p.29)					
Bible Story (p.30)					
Early Activity (p.32)					
Quiet Time (p.34)					
Late Activity (p.35)					
Closing Devotions (p.37)					
Weeklong Project (p.38)					
Daily Song (p.39)					

WELCOME

CROSS OVER

#PLAY

Supplies: rope or tape line, simple prizes (candy, stickers)

Why: This is a game about what is common and what divides.

How: Campers line up on both sides of the line and each needs to have a partner directly across. You will stand facing straight down the line. When you say, “Go,” the partners on the side of the line to your right need to convince their partners to cross to their side of the line. There are prizes if they are successful. Share the various ways campers were convinced to cross over; have those who did not cross over share why they didn’t. Invite the campers to step back to their original positions. Talk about things that divide us. Ask: “What issues or differences become the line separating us from those on the other side? What things do we have in common—where are we on the same side? Do you think we have more in common or more that divides us?” You can also describe daily situations and let the campers decide whether to cross the line and agree or stay on their opposite sides to disagree.

BTW: Younger campers may need a partner to pair up with.

PUZZLE PIECES

Supplies: per each team of campers—½ sheet of poster board, scissors, markers, masking tape, fine sand, glue

Why: Review the story symbol and retell the story

How: Have campers divide into teams. Instruct them: “On one side of the poster board, outline this week’s symbol of the heart, using masking tape. Around the masking tape, spread glue at least an inch on the inside and the outside of the tape heart. Next, sprinkle sand on the glue and press down. Shake off any extra sand and remove the masking tape to reveal the heart in the midst of the sand. Next, around the heart add words or drawings that represent the story. Then, cut the poster board into puzzle pieces. Practice putting the puzzle together, then trade puzzles with other teams and put other puzzles together, reviewing

their words/drawings for the story, and asking questions as needed.”

BTW: Instead of the heart symbol, campers might, as a team, draw cartoon panels (at least six) for the different scenes in the story, then cut those scenes into puzzle pieces so that as the puzzle is put together the story is told. Campers could then trade with other teams and put their story puzzles together.

STONE TO SAND

#PLAY

Supplies: kinetic sand, trays or cookie sheets

Why: Experience the texture of the sand as campers gain understanding of the story.

How: Have the sand poured out on a tray so campers, taking turns in small groups, can play with it. Invite campers, one at a time, to make a ball with the sand in his or her hand by making a fist. Comment: “Do you remember in the story when the elders all held rocks in their hands before Jesus asked them about their own sins? How easy is it to make a fist and form a ball or a stone with the sand? What happened to the stones in the elder’s hands in the story? How easy is it to drop your “sand” stone and watch it fall to pieces? When we consider our own actions first, we have nothing left in our hands to challenge another.”

BTW: To help campers learn names, have them, one at a time, each write his or her name in the sand so the others can see and say it. Then, he or she wipes it away and lets the next camper write his or her name in the sand, plus the name of the previous camper.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

#PLAY

Supplies: none

Why: Playing together to reinforce the message to “love one another”

How: Have campers sit in a circle and ask, “What do you think the main point of the story might be?” (*don’t judge others, love one another*). Continue, “God doesn’t want us to judge others; instead, God wants us to love one another, even when we are different than one another. Listen closely as we say ‘love one another, repeating the phrase exactly as I say it.’” Use a variety of ways to say,

“Love one another,” such as: whisper, shout, singing, low voices, high voices, slowly, really fast, repeatedly, etc. After the game, remind campers that God loves everyone, and God wants them to love everyone too.

BTW: Create two circles of campers—one on the outside of the other. Have the campers in the inner circle turn so they are facing the campers in the outer circle. This way, as they say, “Love one another,” they are looking at each other. Let campers have a turn to choose a way to lead saying: “Love one another.”

PEOPLE CONNECTED #CREATE

Supplies: legal size copy paper cut in half lengthwise (half per camper), scissors, colored pencils, scotch tape

Why: Cutting paper people while learning names and connections with other campers

How: Assist the campers in following these directions: “Lay the paper half longwise like a hotdog bun, and fold over 2-3 inches on a short end. Fold it another time back and forth like an accordion fold until it is all one small rectangle. With scissors, cut out “people,” starting with an arm on each side that includes the fold on both sides. (Where a hand would be is the fold, so don’t cut). Cut below the arms down to the bottom on both sides to make person’s torso, and a circle for the head on the top. Cut a triangle on the bottom to give your person two legs. Now unfold and you should have a line of people connected at their hands. Use tape to fix any miscuts. Write your name on the first person and draw or write your favorite thing to do at day camp. Pass your connected people to another camper and have him or her do the same on another person. Continue passing around until each paper person has a camper name and favorite thing drawn or written on it. Return the people chains to the original campers.”

Ask: “Look at your people chain, and what do you see? Are there some common things along your chain? Remember that even when what we have in common is not easily seen, we are still connected by God’s love.”

BTW: Make more sets of people chains so that each camper has enough figures for each camper

to write/draw on in addition to their names. Once they are returned to the first camper have them fold the chain back up and reveal a camper at a time to discover what they all have in common and what is unique to that camper. Remind them that no matter what they have in common or not they are all connected by God’s love.

BIBLE STUDY

PUPPET STORY SCENE #LEARN #CREATE

Supplies: Template of story figures printed on paper (search online for Jesus & friends templates or cut up old Sunday School materials), tongue depressor or popsicle sticks (one per story figure), markers or colored pencils, glue, piece of white cardstock paper, scissors, art knife (for adult use)

How: Color and cut out the figures; Jesus, woman, several people for crowd. Glue each figure onto a large popsicle stick or tongue depressor. On the white cardstock draw the background for the scene including a pile of stones. Help campers cut a slit across the lower part of the background without being open to the sides. Insert the figures into the slit and have them “walk” along the background as they retell the story to one another.

BTW: Have campers discuss the story after they have played with their puppet scenes and retold the story several times. Ask, “What is most important about this story? Can any of your puppets be left out of the story? If you changed the story what part would you change?”

WHAT’S MISSING? STORYBOX #LEARN

Supplies: Bible, empty Kleenex box (or shoe box with hole cut in the lid for a hand to reach into), objects collected that help tell the story (lipstick, fake white beard, stones, picture of a woman’s dress or a doll’s dress, picture of Jesus or cross, anger emoticon, heart cutout, etc.)

Why: Campers retell the story in their words and discover if anything can be left out.

How: Fill the Kleenex box with items that help tell the story. If you haven’t yet read the scripture today, share the story. Begin by having a camper reach in and pull something out of the box and let him or her guess what part of the story that

EARLY ACTIVITY

WRITING IN THE SAND #PRAY #PLAY

Supplies: cookie sheets or trays, sand (a set for five or six campers)

Why: Sensory play with sand related to Jesus writing in the sand

How: No one knows what Jesus wrote in the sand when he bent down in the Bible story, but he did it twice and it seemed to slow down the situation. Writing in the sand gave Jesus and the people gathered time to think about what they were doing—like pressing a pause button. Invite each camper: “Write a word or draw a picture in the sand to represent a mistake, a misspoken word, or something done wrong. Then, silently ask for God’s forgiveness and make a cross with your finger in the sand on top of the original word/drawing. Next, wipe away everything by smoothing out the sand, and let someone else in your group write in the sand.” Continue: “Jesus’ and God’s love gives us a brand new start—a clean slate when we ask forgiveness for the mistakes we have made.” Pray together, giving thanks that through forgiveness everyone gets a brand new start when mistakes are wiped away.

BTW: Make this a prayer practice by inviting campers to draw their mistakes in the sand in a reflective, quiet manner. Perhaps add soft music in the background. After drawing, they say a prayer asking for God’s forgiveness, each draw a cross, and then wipe away the designs in the sand.

WATERS OF GRACE #LEARN #PLAY

Supplies: table, quart jar, water, red and blue food coloring, stirring spoon, bleach, eye dropper

Why: Prayers of forgiveness receive God’s grace in an exciting way.

How: Show the campers this science demonstration. Have them take up positions sitting around the table from which they can all see well. Have campers help if possible. Fill the quart jar halfway full of water and add two drops of red food coloring and stir. Show the jar of red water, which will be used to represent humans in the world. Now add drops of bleach until the color starts to disappear, representing God’s grace.

Share that when we are forgiven God, wants us to try and do better and not repeat the sins. Ask if they remember what Jesus says to the women at the very end of the story. Now, add a couple drops of blue food coloring and watch what happens. The bleach that is already in the water will also bleach the blue dye as it mixes in. Explain: “The blue is the Holy Spirit helping us, swirling around and through us to aid us in making better decisions in the future. As the water turns clear, we are reminded that no matter what, God forgives us.” Be careful with the bleach—before, after, and during.

BTW: Divide into small groups of five or six campers, with each group led by an adult or youth and let each group do the experiment as you walk through the steps together. Let groups compare their results.

SIN SWALLOWING BOX #LEARN #PRAY

Supplies: cross cutout (6 inch x 3 inch), shoebox with lid, scissors, glue stick, fabric piece cut 1 inch larger than shoebox lid, hot glue gun, paper hearts in equal amounts of gray and white (one of each color per camper),

Why: To portray the miracle of the cross filled with love, peace and amazing grace of God.

How: Ahead of time, create the “Sin Swallowing Box.” Take the shoe box lid and with scissors cut a cross-shaped slit about 1/8” wide in the center of the box lid. Try not to make it any wider, because if it’s too wide, the secret compartment might be obvious. On the inside of the lid, apply a line of hot glue along the 90 degree interior angle of the top and sides of lid and attach the outer edge of the fabric, creating a secret bottom to the lid that will catch the dirty hearts. Put the white hearts in the bottom of the box and put the lid on. The secret compartment will catch the dirty hearts so that when you carefully take off the lid and set it down (without turning it over, or allowing campers to glimpse the underside), the campers find the clean, forgiven white hearts.

Begin the actual activity by reminding the campers of today’s story, in which one person’s sin or wrongdoing was no better or worse than another’s. We all make mistakes, we all sin, but God’s grace gives us forgiveness no matter what,

QUIET TIME

STONE CONFESSION JOURNAL #PRAY

#CREATE

Supplies: per each camper—8 1/2" x 11" sheet of gray cardboard (or construction paper), five sheets copy paper, scissors, hole punch and string/yarn, pencil, colored markers, black marker

How: Provide the following instructions: "Fold the gray cardboard sheet in half. Cut out as large an oval as you can from the folded over sheet. This will create two oval 'stones' from the cardboard. Use a stone as a template to cut 10 'stones' from the copy paper in the same way (folding the sheets in half first. Punch two holes in the same locations on each of your 'stones.' Stack the papers between the grey stones, aligning the holes. Last, thread the string/yarn through the holes and tie it off, leaving a little extra string so the journal will open."

Within their journals, have campers write/draw those mistakes they have made in black marker. Share a prayer silently or together out loud and then have campers draw crosses with colored markers on top of their "sins."

RICE CRISPY STONE SNACK

Supplies: store-bought rice crispy bars (or homemade rice crispy treats), paper plates, wet wipes

How: Each camper receives a plate with a bar or small mound of treats. Have each camper shape either into a couple of round "stones." Explain: "These are not stones for *throwing*; they are stones for nourishing and renewing us."

SAND CUPS

Supplies: Graham cracker crumbs, chocolate or butterscotch pudding, crushed Oreo cookies, three bowls, clear plastic cups, spoons

How: Have campers create their own "Sand" Cups by putting a layer of graham cracker crumbs in the bottom of their cups, adding a layer of pudding, then topping with crushed Oreos. Share grace and have each camper use his or her spoon

to make a cross in the top layer before digging in to the snack.

POPCORN ROCKS

Supplies: Oven range, medium saucepan, 2 cups sugar, 1 1/3 cups water, 1/2 cup corn syrup, 1 teaspoon vinegar, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, measuring cups and spoons, microwave oven, 18 cups popped corn (two or three bags of microwave popcorn popped), some kind of large container (s), grease, waxed paper

How: Make the popcorn balls as written below. This should take approximately twenty minutes, and can be done as a group or ahead of time.

In a medium saucepan, combine sugar, water, syrup, vinegar, and salt. Cook over high heat until the mixture bubbles, then stir in vanilla. Pour over the popped corn, tossing gently until the mixture is even. When the mixture is cool enough to handle, let campers shape the popcorn into balls with lightly greased hands to make several stones. Cool completely on waxed paper, then enjoy.

HEART COOKIES

Supplies: Heart-shaped plain sugar cookies, frosting (in a bowl), sprinkles (in a bowl), plastic knives and spoons (or, for a healthier option, could use dieters' rice cakes cut into hearts, flavored cream cheese, and fruit decorations)

How: Give each camper a heart-shaped cookie to frost and decorate. Have them trade the cookie they decorated with another camper, and then together eat the traded cookies. Remind them as they enjoy the snack: "God wants us to model the same love that God shares with us."

BAG OF ROCKS

Supplies: quart-size plastic bags (one per camper), assorted round cereals (Kix, Pebbles, Peanut Butter Captain Crunch, or others), raisins, cranberries, bowls to hold these, spoons for each bowl

How: Campers walk around the table with their bags and spoon in the "rocks" that they want in their snack mix. They can even make a second bag to share with someone else once they leave camp.

LATE ACTIVITY

REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST

#LEARN

Supplies: small mirrors of various sizes like those used under candles (have at least half as many as you have campers)

Why: Our actions are reflections of Christ.

How: On the ground, lay out the mirrors and circle campers around them so that they can all look down into at least one mirror. Invite them to look down and notice the reflections in the mirrors. Have them rotate around the mirrors a couple steps and look down again at the reflections. Have them rotate one more time, or have them bend down and take a different, closer view. Ask: “What did you see reflected in the mirrors? Did you see reflections of others or just yourself? How did the reflections change? If God held up a mirror in front of us, what would be reflected? We believe that we are created in the image of God and that we reflect the love of Christ in our actions. Does your reflection show a child of God trying to share the love of Christ?” Have adults and older youth pick up mirrors and find younger campers and show them their reflections in the mirrors. As they look at their reflections, have the older campers share something good they see in them. Then, have the older campers choose other young campers until all the non-adult campers have looked at their reflections and been affirmed.

BTW: Older campers may want to stick with younger campers they know well during the last part involving affirming ways they see Christ’s love in the younger campers.

CROSS OF FORGIVENESS

#CREATE

Supplies: colored construction paper cut into one-inch strips (about 20 strips per camper), dice (one per three or four campers)

Why: Campers build a cross for themselves and discover that Jesus died on the cross for them

How: Have campers form groups of three or four. Give each group one die and 20 strips of paper per camper. A camper in each group rolls the die and lays the same number of paper strips on the floor, starting to create a cross that is the same

size as the tallest person in the group. The tallest camper can lay down and spread his or her arms to show how large the cross will have to be. The game continues as each camper rolls the die and builds the group cross with the paper strips. When the cross is finally big enough, or when everyone in the group runs out of strips, have the campers stand and look at the cross they have built together. Remind them: “Because Jesus died on the cross, our sins have all been forgiven.” Then, have campers rip up the strips that made up their crosses. As you explain: “Jesus died on the cross so that we are forgiven, thus destroying the cross.”

BTW: Have campers write sins/mistakes on some of their strips before they begin throwing the dice and building their crosses. When they then tear up the strips, they are asking for forgiveness for those mistakes/sins.

PAPER PLATE MOSAIC

#CREATE

Supplies: bowls of colored sand, pebbles, small stones (various textures & color); spoon for bowl of sand; per each camper—plastic plate, bottle of sticky glue or a cool glue gun

Why: Creating with a variety of textures while remembering the sand and stones in the story

How: Give each camper a plastic plate and instruct them: “Create a mosaic by arranging the various stones, pebbles, and sand on your plate, and then gluing them onto the plate. Cover the entire plate with the various textures, remembering the role of sand and stone in today’s story.”

BTW: In the centers of the plates, the campers could each design a symbol from the story with the stones or pebbles (cross, heart), then fill in and around the symbol with sand and stones, covering the entire plate.

FIVE IN A ROW #PLAY

#LEARN

Why: Discover that, when God forgives us, God *forgets* our sins too.

Supplies: none

How: Choose five campers to stand before the rest of the campers. Then have them leave the room, mix up their order, and return in a different order. Let the other campers try to remember what order they were in before they left the room. When

going to operate with bare feet.” The little girl who had no shoes beamed, ran over, and joined in with the rest of the group.

FORGIVENESS PRAYER

Supplies: none

Why: Experience a repetitive prayer of response

How: Pray with the campers, saying, “Thanks for your forgiveness, God,” following each petition. Add other petitions that fit your campers.

- “For those mistakes I have made,...” **RESPONSE:** “Thanks for your forgiveness, God.”
- “For those times when I judge another person,...” **R:** “Thanks for...”
- “For the people who have not been nice to me,...” **R:** “Thanks for...”
- “For the people who want to hurt others,...” **R:** “Thanks for...”

BTW: Have the campers create more petitions and write them on a sheet of paper, then use them in their prayer together, followed by the response.

WASHED AWAY #CENTERING

Supplies: bowl of water, 3–4-inch squares of rice paper, brown and black washable markers, music source

Gather around the bowl of water and invite campers to write/draw on pieces of rice paper with washable marker the mistakes that they have made, so they can give them to God, asking for forgiveness. With music playing in the background, have campers place their papers in the bowl as they silently ask God to take away their mistakes with forgiveness. Once all the papers have been added, slowly stir the papers in the water, then ask the campers: “What has happened?” If they need prompting, point out that the water has turned dirty and the papers don’t have words/pictures on them anymore. By asking God’s forgiveness, we are washed clean and we get a new start—a clean beginning. Close in prayer as a group giving thanks for God’s grace and forgiveness.

BTW: Around the bowl, invite campers to share what they have written or drawn, then encourage them to each whisper a prayer as they place their

prayer into the bowl. Remove the papers one by one and, after draining water off, give each camper a piece of paper as a reminder that those mistakes/sins are no longer there; they have been forgiven by God and are no more.

WEEKLONG PROJECT

MILK JUG STORY VIEWER – create the jug and “slides” one day and use them the next. Found in “Bible Study” page 30.

PLASTER STEPPING STONE #CREATE

Supplies: Dry plaster or cement mix (enough for every camper to make a stepping stone), water, cooking spray or vegetable oil (one bottle or can should suffice unless you have a very large group of campers), marbles or stones, paper towels, heart-shaped glass “gems”; per each camper—container for mixing plaster/cement, plastic mold (round plant pot drip trays work well), paint stir stick, craft stick

Why: Project to remind campers of their time at camp

How: With help, have campers mix the plaster or cement in their container with water until it is the consistency of oatmeal. Then, help them follow these directions: “Rub a small amount of vegetable oil the plastic mold, or spray with cooking spray. Pour the mix into the mold and smooth it out on top, adding more if needed. Using a craft stick, write “Love One Another” in the plaster and press heart-shaped glass, marbles, and stones into the top of the stepping stone, creating a unique design.”

Let the mixture set for 24 hours. When it is completely dry and hard, they can turn over the molds and pop out their stepping stones.

BTW: Another option is, once the plaster is poured into the mold, use small pebbles to shape a heart on the stepping stone. Around the outside of the heart, use the craft stick to write “Love One Another.” The space within the heart could be filled with gems and marbles to add dimension and color.

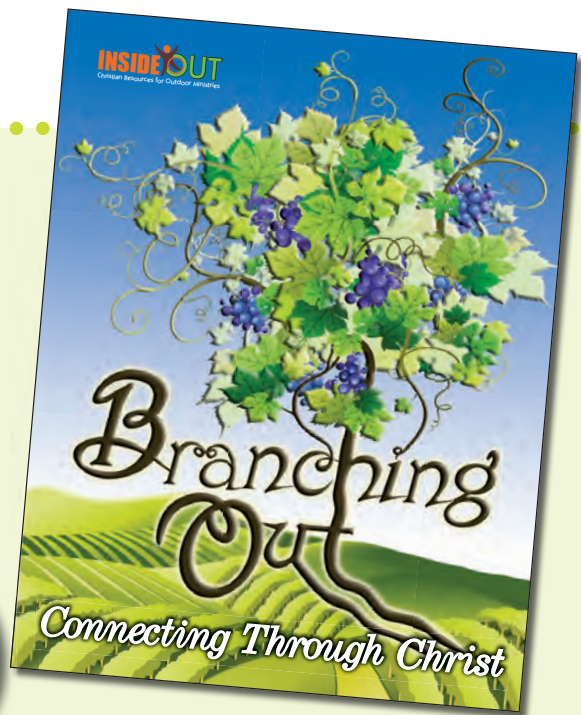
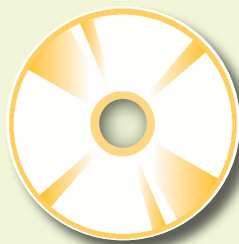
DAILY SONG


- “The Great Commandments” (*LifeSongs*, Volume 1)
- “We Love Because God First Loved Us” (Mary Duckert)
- “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You” (Henry Van Dyke)
- “God, Forgive Me Now” (Betty Jane Bailey, *Sing to God*)
- “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” (Ghana Melody)

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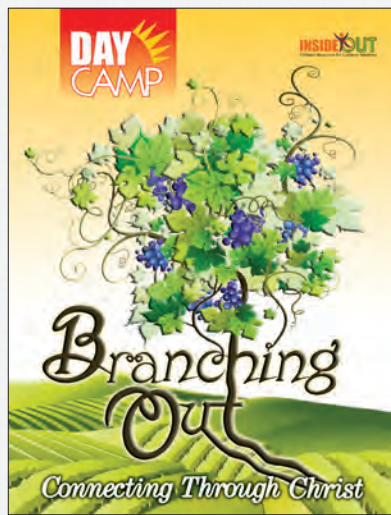
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