

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.

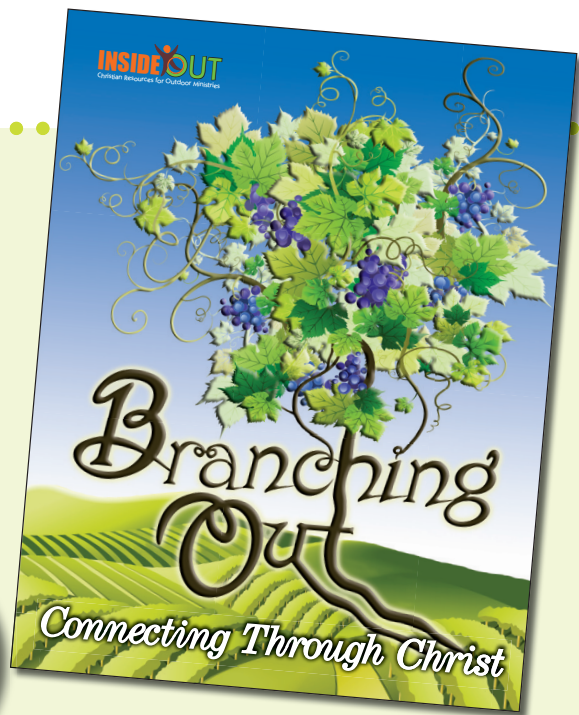
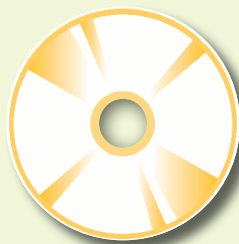
DAILY SONG

- “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)

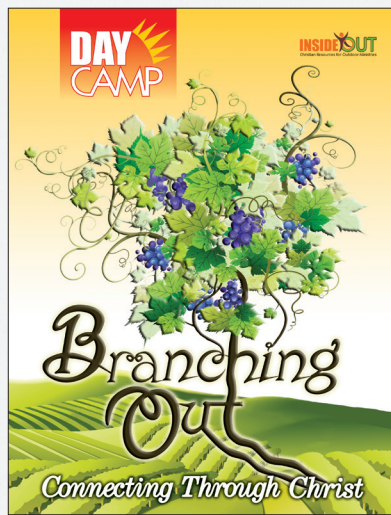
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