

# Rooted in the Stories of Christ

## Lesson 2: Finger Pointing

### Objectives:

Students will:

- Identify a forgiving spirit as a spiritual quality exemplified in the life of Jesus
- Consider the potential risks and rewards of offering forgiveness to the people around us
- Determine ways to become more like Jesus - forgiving those around us

### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Scrap paper
- ☐ Copy of New York Times article  
([http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/31/us/31amish.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=melody+simm ons+january+31%2C+2007&st=nyt&oref=slogin#](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/31/us/31amish.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=melody+simm ons+january+31%2C+2007&st=nyt&oref=slogin#)) (one per group)
- ☐ Lesson 2 handout (“Finger Pointing or Forgiveness”) (one per group)
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Markers or coloured pencils
- ☐ Large whiteboard or chart paper

## **Minds On**

Have students form small groups of two or three. Tell students that you are going to give each group a copy of an article from the New York Times (see above for hyperlink), a piece of paper and a pen. Give students the following instructions, which they can write down on the paper (they are also on the graphic organizer at the bottom of the article):

- 1) Answer the Who? What? When? Where? Why? questions about the article.
- 2) What stands out in the article about the Amish community's response to this tragedy?

Once groups have completed this task, invite them to share their responses with the larger group.

Say something like: Most of us are shocked to read about the remarkable way that this Amish community lived out grace and forgiveness to the family of the man who committed this terrible act. Why do you think they responded this way?

## **Action:**

Have students form small groups of three or four. Give them a copy of the Lesson 2 handout "Finger Pointing or Forgiveness." Assign one the following passages to each group: Mark 2:1-9, Luke 7:36-50, Luke 19:1-10, John 8:1-11, Acts 9:1-19, Give students the following instructions:

- 1) Read the passage together.
- 2) Who was the "sinner" in this passage and why were they described this way?
- 3) What was the response of the Pharisees or other religious people?
- 4) What was Jesus' response?

When groups have completed this task, invite them to share their responses with the larger group. You may want to keep track of Jesus' and the Pharisees' responses on a large whiteboard or piece of chart paper.

Ask students: Why do you think that the Pharisees and other religious people acted the way they did in the stories we've read? Why do you think that Jesus' acted the way he did? Which of these responses is most like the way Christians today tend to respond to other people's sinfulness? Explain.

Say something like: In each of the stories we read Jesus has a remarkable response. The one person who has every right to point the finger at us for our sin chose a different approach with many of the people he encountered during his earthly ministry. When Jesus was confronted with human sinfulness he regularly offered hope instead of retaliation.

Ask students: How do you think we can become more like Jesus in this area without turning a blind eye to sin or giving people the impression that sinning is okay? Is it ever okay to point fingers at people's sin? If so, when and how?

Ask students: Can you think of any other descriptions in the Bible about sin and forgiveness?

Obviously, there are many: the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23); if we confess our sin, God will forgive us (1 John 1:9); as far as the east is from the west, so far as he removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12); while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8); The Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15); etc. You may want to have some of these prepared ahead of time for your own reference. As descriptions are suggested, keep track of them on a large whiteboard or piece of chart paper.

## **Consolidate/Debrief**

Tell students that you are going to give them a piece of paper and that you want them to create a picture/cartoon that best puts the concept of forgiveness into picture form. Ask them to draw on some of descriptions just mentioned for inspiration. Once students have completed their drawings, have students discuss them with a partner. When students have finished sharing with their partners, invite a few of them to share their drawings with the larger group and explain why they drew what they did.

Ask students: What are some of the risks and rewards of being more forgiving to the people around you? Why do you think it is often so hard to show grace and forgiveness to people? Is there a person/persons that you need to forgive/let go of a grudge against?

Pray. Make sure to include in your prayer those that need to offer forgiveness to someone this week.