

TOTAL REVOLUTION of PURPOSE

Session #5 – Revolution of Identity...I am forgiven.

Session Objective: Today our objective is to help young people to realize that they are a new creation in Christ Jesus, that they are forgiven people, and as a result have a brand new identity! For young people struggling with guilt or unhealthy self-concepts this is so important.

Minimum Prep: Read through this session and consider the opening exercise as an important “action” towards the learning of the ideas we will be focusing on today.

Extended Prep: Read through this session, consider how you could make the opening exercise effective in your ministry, and then think through the application exercise at the end of this session. You would need to find a sword – real or costume, or make one. If you make a sword – use it for this exercise and then mount it on your youth wall – maybe with a plaque under it – explaining it’s purpose – that it is a reminder that your students have been “knighted” – “Saint Sue” etc. There may be a scene or two from the movie “**Shrek**” that would fit in this session. I haven’t given a specific one.

- You could likely also use a scene from the movie “**Eraser**”. One of the ideas in this movie is that a person’s past was “erased” or totally hidden from viewing by anyone else. What a powerful illustration of how our sin is erased when we come to faith in Jesus Christ. I don’t have a specific scene to point you towards...so this is truly extended prep!
- To introduce the idea of how sin has corrupted our entire nature, get a bowl of water and a dropper of food colouring. All you will need to do is make one good drop of red food colouring into a bowl. Watch as the food colouring spreads throughout the entire bowl. In the end the bowl will not be deep red, but it will be red! Ask the question: How much food colouring did it take to stain the entire bowl of water? If I were to add just a single drop every day for the next week, what colour would the bowl of water become? (It is possible that someone will say – “it’s just a little coloured” – ask them if they would be willing for you to wet your finger and draw it across their light coloured shirt (white would of course be best)
- A powerful experience for this topic would include a communion service with your young people...to powerfully illustrate the forgiveness of sins, have someone in your church build a cross (cedar 4 x 4’s work well). Have students write out their sins, and then go forward to the cross, kneel down and pin their sins (the piece of paper) onto the cross. At the end of

the evening, destroy the sins – a paper shredder, if outside you could use a small fire (be careful!), or just ripping them up and flushing them down a toilet could all work. Have the students do this exercise during the distribution of the cup during communion. A time of worship following would be powerful, first intimate and then more jubilant.

- If you are not doing a time of communion, you will notice a final application at the end of the session that will require you to have a sword. Make a sword, buy a sword (or buy a sword, but return it – tell the store what you are doing, ask them if that would be alright)

Session Outline

Opening Exercise:

Have three people in the group volunteer to “introduce themselves” to the group. It is very likely you and the group may know these people very well. Have a white board, paper or overhead available and take notes of what they say. How do they start? What details of their life do they share? Simply have one person after another stand up and share. Have both guys and girls, people who have been Christians their whole lives, and people who just came to faith, or someone who has lived in your community forever, vs. someone who has just came. Limit their sharing to 3 minutes each.

At the end of the three introductions – as a group begin to “dissect” their introductions...what did they tell you about themselves? Was there anything you noticed they left out? Was it important? Why did they leave it out? Ask them why they choose to tell you certain facts over others. Ask the group “What do we know now about these people we didn’t know before?” Does this information help us to know them better?

After this discussion, lead into a conversation as follows:

Leader Preamble:

This past series has been all about learning more about who we are since we became Christians. (Did any of the three share about their Christian faith? Did any mention that they are forgiven? (Not likely). When we tell others about ourselves, we have to make choices about what we say. Not many of us would take three minutes and include all of our sins, or the dumbest things we have ever done.... but not many of us consciously state that we are forgiven either. Over the past weeks, we have learned that we have a new self, and that by feeding the new self, we can begin to starve the beast. Today we want to focus on the idea that we have been forgiven – and that our forgiveness changes EVERYTHING. We have been forgiven, not just once, or twice, but completely ...we are completely different people, because we are people who live as forgiven people. This is as radical as if our fingerprints were to change – in fact it

is more radical. Knowing you are a forgiven person changes the way you live...remember, right thinking, leads to right living... What you believe matters!

Read – I John 3:1

- 1. According to this verse, what is an important aspect of our identity if we are followers of Jesus?**
- 2. Why is it important that we know we are children of God? What are some of the benefits of being a child of someone?**

Leader Note: Brainstorm things like inheritance, prestige, finances, reputation, etc.

Read I John 2:1-2

- 3. According to this verse, what happens when we sin?**

Leader Note: This passage makes reference to Jesus as our propitiation – a big word, but very important theological term. Different versions translate this concept differently. The NIV says, “atoning sacrifice”, while other translations will use different words. The idea is that of a court room...God has taken us to court, because we are guilty of sinfulness. The word that is used is “wrath” – God’s wrath would be poured out on us for our rebellion and sinfulness, but Jesus acts as our defense, he is the one who turns away the wrath of God – because Jesus already paid the penalty. So the best definition of propitiation, is “the turning away of God’s wrath. Another term you may want to teach the students is “expiation”. This concept is similar, but has a different focus. The definition of expiation is “Christ’s covering of our sin” – the metaphor is of Christ covering us with his holiness; think of a white sheet being placed over a black object.

Read Romans 3:21-26

- 4. According to this passage – who is responsible for the death of Christ?**

Leader Note: In vs. 25 we see, “God presented him as a propitiation” – What an awesome truth to share with the young people – God in his holiness despises sin. But God loves us so much that he made a way for us to come into his presence – God presented Jesus as a way to appease his own wrath – because God’s wrath for sin was poured out on his own son, rather than you and I. This is the truth and power in the verse (John 3:16) “God so loved the world that he gave his only son ...”

5. **What is the requirement to experience God's forgiveness according to this passage?**
6. **How do you think God responds to the person who is a follower of Jesus when they do something wrong?**
7. **What would you rather own.... A very clean, but rusty old Dodge K-Car or a filthy dirty but brand new Volkswagen bug? Why?**

Leader Say: *This question helps us to understand what happens when we "become a new creation in Christ Jesus". Before we were a Christ-follower or when we look out into our world – we see many people trying to clean up an old rusty K-Car. Self-help programs, work out schedules, all those kind of things are only so helpful. You can only get that old rust car so clean, and even when it is clean – or maybe even more visible after it is cleaned up – the rust is still there. On the other hand, when someone becomes a Christian, they become a new creation – a shiny Volkswagen Bug. But we still do things wrong don't we? We still dishonour God, and we still get ourselves dirty.*

But who we are has changed – fundamentally – our core is different. God loves us so much that He doesn't keep us the same – He begins to change us – more and more over time if we co-operate with Him, and that change is so radical, it is like becoming a new car, when before you were a rusty old clunker.

Continue with: "as believers in Jesus Christ, you and I are still sinners. We still do things wrong. But God tells us that we are no longer defined by our sin. We are now also considered "Saints" You are "Saint Sue" and "Saint Mark" and "Saint Jordan" now. That is how God sees you!

8. **After hearing this truth, which we learn in the Bible, does it change the way you think about yourself? What are some of the important ways in which this impacts how we think about ourselves?**

Leader Say: *I think this is important because it really changes the way we think about ourselves. As we begin to change as Christians, we are not becoming something we weren't – but we are becoming all that we were meant to be. As you and I grow as Christians, and come closer to Jesus, and live more like God wants, we become more like God intended us to be! Why is their evil and wrong all over our world? Because so few people actually live as God intended them to! What a revolutionary change that has happened in you and I – we now have the capacity to be completely different from the world around us. We now have the Spirit of God living in us to do things we have never done before! Our identity in Christ makes a huge difference!*

Read I Corinthians 15:3-7

9. What do we learn about the death of Christ from this passage? Why is this a very important passage for us to know?

A Call to Faith: For those of you who have a number of students who are not followers of Jesus...before you do this exercise make a challenge for some to experience their new identity in Christ. If you need help with this, please contact BCOQ YOUTH for assistance, we would love to walk through this with you!

Application: (if you are not doing communion...) I can't think of a non-cheesy illustration, but while this idea may be slightly cheesy – I also think it could be very powerful. Find a sword, a real one would be best, but a costume sword, or something that you make out of cardboard and tin foil could work too. Finish this session with a “knighting ceremony”. Have your students kneel in rows, and knight them – pray a blessing over them, as you touch their shoulders with the sword – give them new names – “I knight you ‘Saint Jonathan’ a child of the king” - or something like that. I believe a powerful verse to read over people is Romans 6:11-14. Read this passage once if you have a large group, or read it each time you knight a student in smaller groups. Buy diploma templates from your local stationary store, and run them through an inkjet printer – with each person’s name on it, but name them, “saint John” or “Saint Sue”. If you have made a sword, consider hanging it on your youth room wall – with a plaque quoting Romans 6:11-14, and the words, “we are a fellowship of Saints – holy and pleasing to our Lord”.

Comments and Feedback

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.