

Rooted in Godly Values

Lesson 2: “My Body, Your Home” (Character Trait: *Purity*)

Objectives

Students will:

- To demonstrate that our bodies are the temples of God – his dwelling place
- For students to consider positive ways to treat our bodies in light of the knowledge that God lives in us

Materials Needed

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Picture(s) of the church Hagia Sophia (there are many available online)
- ☐ Numerous magazines, preferably ones that are read by teens (you can even ask the youth ahead of time to bring in some they read). Be cautious of using ones that boys as well as girls read (at the risk of being stereotypical, wrestling or video game magazines as well as fashion magazines)
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glues
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Bristol board

Minds On

As students come in, say something like: Throughout time people have found it very important to create places for God to dwell. In the Old Testament this place was the Temple. This was a very important site for people who followed God. Since then, many people have spent a lot of time and money to create beautiful places for God. Perhaps the most significant of these is a church called Hagia Sophia, which means 'Holy Wisdom'. (Show picture or pictures). Hagia Sophia was built in what is now Istanbul, Turkey between 532-537 A.D. It was an architectural wonder, covered in a dome that still amazes and astounds modern architects. It was filled with priceless art and relics to honour God, and for nearly 1000 years it was the biggest church in the world. People were proud of this great building and saw it as a testament of the greatness of God. This was at the time when Christianity flourished in this part of the world.

Ask the students: How do you think the workers felt about this building? How do you think the Christians felt about it? How about God?

Then say: In 1453, the Ottomans took over the city. Because the Ottomans were Muslim, they converted Hagia Sophia into a mosque. The beautiful paintings of the stories of Jesus were covered with plaster. They tore down the bells and the altar. Outside the dome they added the minarets (those tall things that look like small towers), an element of worship in Islam. The beautiful Temple had been destroyed. Today, Hagia Sophia still stands in Turkey, as neither church nor mosque, but as a museum. It is no longer a place of worship.

Ask the students: How do you think the people who worshipped in Hagia Sophia felt when they saw it destroyed? How would you have felt? How do you think God felt? You may want to ask the students how they would feel now if they saw their church destroyed needlessly.

Then say: We know how it would feel to see a building for God destroyed, yet in Scripture God says that he lives in his people – not in a building. If you think of how you thought God might feel seeing a building destroyed, just think: he says that you are where he lives. This means

when we destroy our bodies he is even more upset! Today we will look at how this means we must treat our bodies – his true Temple.

Action

Part One: Digging Into Scripture

Invite students together to read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. Before you do you may want to review the background of the series briefly (Corinthians as a letter written to a group of Christians in a hard situation, etc.). What are things that we use to “destroy” the temple listed here? (sexual immorality – ask students to elaborate on what this might be – sex with a prostitute, pornography, premarital sex, etc.) This means that sexual sin is like people tearing down the altars to God in a beautiful Temple! They may have many other ideas here that you might want to run with such as disordered eating, cutting, etc. Explain: One of the values that God demands of us as Christians is Purity. What does it mean to be pure? Why is it difficult? Why does God have such issues with sexual sin? How do you feel about the idea of sexual sin harming the temple of God? Does it feel weird to think of taking part in sexual sin as being the same (even worse) than plastering over or tearing down a beautiful church?

You may want to explain here that one of the common practices in paganism was to sleep with a prostitute as a form of worship. Many temples had prostitutes as part of their “staff.” For the new Christians of Corinth, the lines between worship and sexual promiscuity may have been very confusing!

Part Two: Apply It

Invite students to make a collage using the magazines you have provided. This collage will represent things that destroy our “temple.” They can go through the magazines in groups or on their own, and make one large collage or several smaller ones. They can add to it with words of their own if they desire. As they are working, invite them to share why they think the things they have chosen dishonour their bodies.

When they have finished, invite them to now look for pictures that HONOUR God. Likely, there will be noticeably fewer. Ask them to consider why might be. Allow them to share/reflect on the contrast between how the world tells us to treat our bodies and how God tells us to. Ask them to share ways they can work to stay pure in such a culture.

Consolidate/Debrief

Ask all the students to imagine again. Get those who are comfortable to close their eyes. Ask them to imagine that Jesus is literally standing beside them each and every moment of every day, and they can see and hear everything he says and does. Then ask them to complete the sentence, “Knowing this, would you:

- See “how far” you can go with your girlfriend/boyfriend?
- Download pornography?
- Read magazine articles about how to be more “sexy” or “hot”?
- Watch a steamy sex scene in a movie?
- Be sexual promiscuous?
- Make a dirty joke?
- Have sex with someone you are not married to?
- Post pictures of yourself on facebook in skimpy “sexy” clothes?

Take a moment to pause after each question, to let them consider it. You may have ideas to add to these.

When you are finished, say: Not only is Jesus actually with us all the time, he actually LIVES in us! We represent him on earth. Beautiful buildings like Hagia Sophia may be nice, but God is most present in us, His people. Let’s pray that we can live pure lives that honour him.

Lead the students in this prayer:

God, thank you for choosing me to be your Temple. Help me to honour you with my body. Help me to live a pure life. Lord, if I have lived in ways that don’t honour you, I am sorry. I ask you to forgive me for...(moment of silence to reflect). Thank you for forgiving me. Amen.