

Let's Face It

Dinner with Sinners

BIG IDEA: Jesus heals us from our sins, so we can follow Him even though we're sinners.

BIBLE BASIS: Matthew 9:9-13

KEY VERSE: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23 (NIV)

SCHEDULE

ESTIMATES

WELCOME KIDS AND FREETIME

6:15 PM

SMALL GROUP CONNECT

6:30 PM

WORSHIP

6:45 PM

JTS SHOW & DISCUSSION

7:00 PM

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

7:30 PM

GYM TIME?

7:45 PM

PICK UP TIME AND FREETIME

7:55 PM

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

As a child, I was fully convinced that the toy store was a modern day Eden. It had all that I could ever hope for — Nerf guns and Legos, coloring books and trading cards, bouncy balls and candy. It was paradise.

But like the biblical Eden, this, too, had one restriction: "With every toy in the toy store thou may play, but thou art not to stray from my side; for in the day that thou strayeth, thou shalt surely be delivered into the hands of kidnappers." I'm sure my mom didn't speak like King James, but that's how I remember it.

On one particularly memorable trip to the toy store, I decided to rebel. I wandered off from my mom while she tried to stop my two-year-old brother from taking a plastic baseball bat to the Barbie display. After a few minutes, I realized that my little moment of independence had, in fact, resulted in what felt like an irreconcilable separation between me and my mom. I had expected freedom, but I experienced fear. Within a few minutes (though it seemed like hours), I could hear my mom calling my name. She was looking for me. She was seeking the rebellious little girl that had strayed from the safety of her side.

Like a mother searching for her rebellious child, Jesus comes seeking sinners. He doesn't leave them to wander aimlessly. He does not abandon them. He does not condemn them. Instead, He searches after His precious children and invites them to come back to Him.

As the writer of Hebrews said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Instead, come back to the safety of His side.

Casey Jordan
GO! Contributor

SMALL GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Helping Quiet Kids to Open Up

Cricket. Cricket. Cricket. This is the sound that emanates from a group filled with quiet kids. Fortunately, it's not often that you'll have a group made up entirely of kids who are "vocally challenged." Quiet kids are often deep thinkers with quiet spirits. That's not a bad thing at all! Nevertheless, it's important that you create a safe environment where (with a little bit of encouragement) they'll be willing to share their thoughts and feelings with others. This gives them the opportunity to voice their struggles, challenges, fears, hopes, and dreams. You never want to force a kid to share, so here are a few tips that will help encourage them to share.

Engage them outside of group. Some kids need to know and trust you before they're willing to open up in a group. Take some time during drop-off or pick-up time to talk one-on-one with your quiet kids. As they become more comfortable with you, they'll be more likely to share during group time.

Seat the kids in a circle. When kids are seated in a clump rather than a circle, it's easy for kids with less inclination for sharing to hide or get lost in the back of the cluster.

Call on quiet kids directly. Sometimes quiet kids need to feel invited into a conversation. When you call on a kid directly, it communicates that you want them to be a part of the group and that you're interested in what they have to say.

Be okay with silence. It might take some kids a moment to put words to their thoughts. That's okay! Don't feel the need to "rescue" them too quickly. If they can't or don't want to join the conversation just yet, that's okay too. But don't let that be the last time you call on them.

Affirm them after sharing. For some kids, sharing aloud in a group is a huge emotional and social risk. If you affirm them after sharing, it *greatly* increases the chance they'll share again. A simple, "Wow! I love the way you think!" or "Great answer — thanks for sharing!" will often do the trick.

★ SMALL GROUP CONNECT

“LET’S FACE IT” STORY PREP

Remind kids about being respectful.

1. **Respect God** - Worship, listen, use kind words
2. **Respect People** - Be kind, share, follow leaders
3. **Respect the Building** - Take care of the space & supplies

Question: If you were going to throw the world’s best dinner party, what kind of food would you have there?

ADDITIONAL TIME ACTIVITY — THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

Simply ask the kids in your group to share one good thing that happened this week (thumbs up) and one not-so-good thing (thumbs down). This is a great way for your group to share celebrations and struggles with one another.

★ LARGE GROUP LESSON

Lil Climbers Will Join Us

Open with worship.

Lil Climbers Leave

Leah will introduce the series.

Watch Journey Today Show – will pause a couple times for reading and discussion.

1st Video Pause:

Read Mark 2:13-17

THE BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS

Directions: After reading, answer the following questions:

For Younger Kids:

1. What was your favorite part of this story?
2. Why do you think Jesus wanted to be with people who sinned?

For Older Kids:

1. What do you think this story teaches us about Jesus?
2. Jesus said, “Those who are healthy don’t need a doctor. Sick people do.” What do you think He meant by that?

2nd Video Pause:

Ask: When you sin, do you think it makes Jesus not want to be around you? Why or why not?

★ SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

FALLING SHORT (Application Activity)

Set up: For each small group, place two strips of tape on the floor. Make the strips parallel to each other with 15 feet (about 4.5 meters) between them.

Say: Today we learned that everyone sins. The Bible says in Romans 3:23 that “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (NIV) We’re going to do a challenge right now that will help us understand what this Bible verse is talking about.

Directions: Have the kids in your group line up behind one of the strips of tape on the floor. Tell them that the challenge is to do a standing broad jump (a.k.a. standing long jump) all the way to the other line of tape 15 feet (4.5 meters) away. To do a standing broad jump, kids must stand with both feet slightly apart, bend their knees, and swing their arms forward as they jump toward the opposite line. Begin by asking the kids if they think they can make it all the way to the other line. Ask them why or why not. When finished, allow each kid to give it a try one at a time. If you would like, you can mark each kid’s distance by placing a piece of tape on the floor with their name at the spot in which they landed. If time permits, allow each kid to have two tries. When finished, tell the kids to take a seat.

Say: Imagine that line is God’s glory. In other words, it’s living a perfect life with no sin.

Question: Were any of us able to jump that far? Do you think anyone in the world could jump that far?

Say: The world record for the standing broad jump is just over 12 feet (3.6 meters). That line of tape is 15 feet (4.5 meters) away. No one could jump that far. That’s what our Bible verse for today is talking about. We all fall short of the glory of God. No one can live a perfect life without sin.

Question: What did God do for us so that we could cross that line and be perfect in His eyes? (Answer: He gave us His son, Jesus.)

Question: How have you fallen short of God’s glory? In other words, what are ways you have sinned?