



GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Purpose: To share God's unconditional forgiveness

Supplies:

- Bibles

Total Time: 35-45 minutes

ACTIVITY

LARGE GROUP

(8-15 minutes)

Video: *Lump* by Rob Bell (various versions of the same video included below)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbetLANAg38> (1:27 minutes)

OR

<http://vimeo.com/6718694> (full video 10:31 minutes)

Discussion Questions: *allow the teens to share their thoughts.*

1. Why do some people go into "hiding" when they've done something wrong while others brag about what they've done?
2. What potentially can happen when our "junk" catches up to us? READ: Galatians 6:7,8.
3. Does anyone want to share about a time when their "junk" has caught up with them?
4. What happens if someone keeps running instead of facing the truth of the situation or themselves?
5. Why do you think it's so hard for some people to let go of their "junk" instead of finding forgiveness with God, with others, and in themselves?

SMALL GROUP

(20-30 minutes)

Story: Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

Either read Luke 19:1-10 OR *rewrite* this story in a familiar way so the teens can relate.

Discussion Questions:

1. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. In those times, tax collectors were known for ripping off everyone else so they could become rich themselves. **Was Zacchaeus a very popular guy? According to the passage, what did everyone think about him?** Everyone would have known good old Zac! It would have been because they hated to see him coming! It might be safe to say that some wished Zac would get a taste of his own medicine!
2. **Did Jesus know that Zacchaeus was an unpopular, sinful, rip-off artist?** Yes.
3. **How did Jesus respond to Zacchaeus?** He asked him to eat dinner with him. It's like an expression of forgiveness, like nothing has happened to get in the way of a friendship.
4. **What would your response be to that kind of forgiveness?** *Allow the teens to share.*

Ask the following questions:

- **What does God's love and acceptance look like?** After they answer, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a.
- **How do you gain or earn God's love and acceptance?** It's nothing I can do myself. It's totally based on Jesus Christ and what he did.
- **Who does God not accept?** He loves everyone and desires to have everyone come to him, but God has given everyone the choice to receive or reject His love. So...God can't accept or receive those who reject Him because of the sin that remains.
- **Does God want you to change your life first before He can accept you?** NO!!!! It's His amazing grace (undeserved favor) that He takes us as we are! It's only Jesus that allows you to be accepted! You just need to realize you need Jesus' help and follow Him!

It's up to you! Do you want to accept God's acceptance of you or would you rather reject His gift to you? It really is your choice...you've got to really want to receive His gift. If you are ready to live God's acceptance of you and receive His grace and experience His love, stay around so we can talk more!

WRAP UP

Galatians 6:7-8 says that our sin/"junk" will destroy us when we don't take care of it. That means we all have 2 choices in life: 1) Hide under the covers, or 2) face the truth of our sin and "junk" in our lives.

In order to face the truth, there are 2 things we must believe!

1. **God forgives...not just that He forgives, God forgives EVERYTHING and ANYTHING!**
Read Luke 7:47-50. **What do these verses say about God's forgiveness?** What we have made high priority in our lives holds us back from seeking forgiveness. That means we want to hold on to it because it's important. Maybe that memory of abuse, bad choice you made, a death of someone special, life has been a bad rap, or whatever is your situation has over taken your life. That's what you "love" and cherish in your heart. The reason we do this may be different for each of us, BUT according to these verses, when we seek God's forgiveness and place God as the most important thing in our life, we find great peace/confidence in Jesus Christ. This woman in the verses was forgiven of MUCH as the Bible tells us she was living a sinful life. We can take great comfort in knowing God will do the same for us as well...forgive us of our sin no matter what it is!
2. **You and I must BELIEVE in your heads and hearts that God forgives. What do you think this means?** When we know something without a doubt, our actions prove what we believe. So, when you and I believe in God's unconditional forgiveness, we live it! We let go of past wrongs against us and our past choices because we know God has let go of our past sins...they don't exist anymore! They are gone! Wiped away! Zapped away!!

Read Romans 8:38-39 This right here should give us the hope and power to believe in God's forgiveness! His love is indescribable! Nothing...I mean nothing we do will change His love for us! Nothing!

Be available for any teens that might need/want to talk more about God's forgiveness in their lives. Below are verse to use with teens to share God's hope and love.

CHALLENGE

1. Read the story of Zacchaeus, then encourage the teens to read through Luke 19:1-10 at least 3 times by the time you meet again.
2. Memorize Romans 8:38-39.

SALVATION VERSES

God's Amazing **Forgiveness** that Leads to Eternal Life with Him!

- We all are sinners: Psalms 51:5, Romans 3:9-12, Romans 3: 22-24, 1 John 1:8-10

- We are chained to our sin: John 8:31-36, 2 Peter 2:19, Romans 6:16-18
- We cannot be close to God because of our sin: Colossians 1:21-22, Ephesians 2:12-13
- Sin has a punishment: Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23, Galatians 3:10
- We cannot save ourselves from our sin: Romans 8:7-8, Ephesians 2:1-5, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:4-7
- JESUS saves us!!! John 1:12, John 3:14-16, John 10:11, 14-15, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Ephesians 5:25-27, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Romans 5:8
- We can be rescued when we trust Jesus: Romans 10:9-13
- God will never turn anyone away! John 6:37, Romans 10:13
- Your new purpose in life: Romans 8:1-14, Ephesians 5:1-21, 2 Corinthians 5:15