

See Christ in Every Person

LUKE 7:36–48

2



GOAL

Using the ministry of Jesus as an example, youth learn the importance of seeing all people as God's children.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Gracious God, show me where I fail to welcome others, so that I can be a better example to the youth I teach. Amen.

THIS SESSION

We must welcome others, not just because it is a nice thing to do, but because of the *imago Dei* (“the image of God”) in all people. Every single person is made in God's image. Not only must we welcome newcomers to our church or the new kid in class; we should be hospitable to every person we encounter—including people who are different from us and those on the margins of society.

THE BIBLE STORY

While Jesus is a dinner guest in the home of a Pharisee, a woman enters and falls at Jesus' feet. Weeping, she washes Jesus' feet with her tears, and dries his feet with her hair. She kisses his feet continuously and pours an expensive jar of ointment on them. The owner of the house scoffs that Jesus should not allow such a sinful woman to touch him in this way. Jesus rebuts that the woman has shown more hospitality than his hosts. Jesus sees she is made in God's image and worthy. No matter her past, the woman's sins are forgiven.

This story highlights the reciprocity of hospitality. When we understand that God has extended immense love and grace to us, we are inclined to extend the same to others. When we recognize the humanity of all people, we are most able to show hospitality to everyone we meet.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Many youth, concerned about fitting in, work hard to find others with whom they have things in common. We feel confirmed in our identity when others are like us. Yet we must also value those who are different. This session will stretch them to see the value in all people.

SESSION PREPARATION

- Reflect on how the previous session went. Were youth engaged? How might you adjust the session to improve your time together?
- Consider reading the foundational essay if you have not already done so.

GETTING STARTED

- Small pieces of paper
- Pens

THANKSGIVING ACTIVITY

Have small pieces of paper and pens available to youth as they enter the room. Invite them to reflect quietly on some things for which they are grateful. Instruct them to write down a few of these things on their piece of paper. When they are done, have them fold their paper and encourage them to pray a silent prayer of thanksgiving to God.



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- Small pieces of paper
- Pens
- Cup or bowl

“WHEN I SEE YOU . . .”

Have each of the youth write their name on a small piece of paper, fold the paper, and place it in a cup/bowl. Then, have each youth select a name from the cup/bowl (if they select their own name, they should return the slip of paper and draw again). Based on the person whose name they select, invite them to complete the following sentence: “When I see you, I see . . .” Their response to the prompt should be something positive they view about the selected person. Continue this until all of the names have been drawn from the cup/bowl.

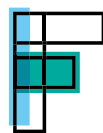
PRAYER

Invite a volunteer to lead the youth in prayer:

Loving God, help us to hear from you today. Let us see what you want us to see as we grow in your love. Amen.

RECAP

Invite volunteers who attended the previous session to tell what they remember about welcoming others. How were they able to practice welcoming others during the past week?



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE


Choose one or more options.

- Bibles

THE BIBLE STORY

Have youth form groups of two or three. Instruct each group to read Luke 7:36–48 and consider the story from the perspective of a different character (e.g., Jesus, the woman, the owner of the house, or other bystanders). After they are finished, invite the groups to share how they would tell the story from the perspective of their particular character.

Invite youth to ask questions or share what the story brings up for them. Consider one or more of these questions for discussion:

-  Imagine you were in the room when this scene unfolded. What do you think it was like? How do you think you would respond if you saw this woman washing Jesus’ feet? Put yourself in Jesus’ shoes. How do you think you would respond?

- ➔ Why did the owner of the house not approve of what was happening?
- ➔ Why did Jesus tell the story about the creditor and debtor? What does he want us to learn about this unusual occurrence?
- ➔ What does the story tell us about who is welcomed and who is not?

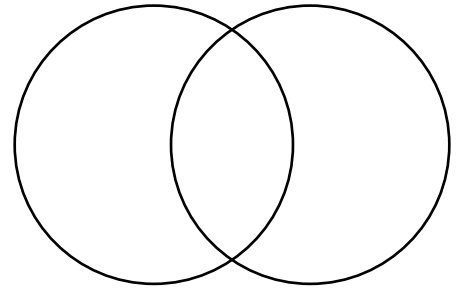
VENN DIAGRAM

AT C CT

In some instances, it is clear who is the host and who is the guest. Other times, the lines between host and guest become blurred. Choose some of the characters in the story and discuss the ways in which they are hosts and/or guests. Who is hospitable in the story? Who is not? Create a Venn diagram to categorize the characters as either host, guest, or both.

- Paper
- Pencils

VENN DIAGRAM



You may adapt this activity to be an individual activity. You may also make it a bit more active by forming teams and having them work together to fill in Venn diagrams.

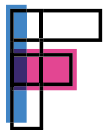
If you have participants who were present for the previous session, invite them to recall examples of hosts and guests in the story of Abraham and Sarah entertaining their guests. What do these Bible stories tell us about hospitality? Why is it important?

Select this activity if you have time.

COMPARING BIBLE STORIES

AT C

Read the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John 13:1–15). Compare this story to the story of the woman washing Jesus' feet. What can we learn from these stories? How do these stories help us to be more like Jesus?



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

ABOLITIONISTS

C CT

Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and review the history of notable people and organizations who were instrumental in abolishing slavery in the United States. Discuss some of the following questions.

- ➔ Which of these people or events did you know about already and what did you know?
- ➔ Why do you think these individuals chose to do abolition work?
- ➔ How might we relate these people and events to our biblical story?
- ➔ How did these people and organizations embody our practice of "Welcome All"?

- Copies of Resource Page 1

HOMELESSNESS VIDEO

AT C T

Ask youth if they have ever encountered anyone who was homeless.



Keep in mind that some of your youth may have experienced homelessness.

- Internet-enabled device

Consider some of these questions for discussion:

- ➔ What do you do when you see a person who is homeless? Do you try to avoid them or look in the other direction? Why do we have a problem with *seeing* people who are homeless?
- ➔ Why do you think some people are homeless? Does it even matter why they're homeless?

Then, watch this video about Tony, who used to be homeless ([bit.ly /FMHomelessYouth](https://bit.ly/FMHomelessYouth), 3:24), and discuss the following questions:

- ➔ What do we learn from hearing Tony's story?
- ➔ Who made Tony feel unwelcome?
- ➔ Who showed hospitality to Tony?
- ➔ If we see Christ in everyone, how should we treat people like Tony?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

SERVICE ACTIVITY



Have youth think about some issues in their neighborhoods that need to be addressed. Who are the most vulnerable in the community? Examples might include homelessness, poverty, public education, assistance for immigrants, drug addiction, or voting. After brainstorming a few topics, collectively decide which issue you would like to address. As a group, design a service activity to address the need and assist this vulnerable population of people. Work with parents/caregivers and church leaders to implement the service activity you create.

Apron or hand towel

HOSPITALITY ACTED OUT



Ask for two youth volunteers. One of them will act as the host, and the other will be the guest. You may denote the host by having them wear an apron or by draping a hand towel over their arm. Read one of the scenarios below and invite the volunteers to act out the scenario. The person playing the role of host should do their best to extend hospitality to the person playing the role of the guest. (You may wish to demonstrate playing the role of host first and ask the group to suggest what you can do to show hospitality to your guest.) After the volunteers finish their scene, ask the group whether they think the host showed a warm welcome. Consider whether there was something the host could have done differently. Discuss why it was so important to show hospitality to the guest. Continue with another set of volunteers until everyone has had the opportunity to be either a host or guest (as time permits).

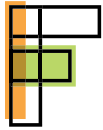
- Someone joins the church.
- A new student is assigned to your class at school.
- A family moves into the neighborhood. They have immigrated from another country.
- You and your parent/caregivers are at the store. You encounter a person with a sign that says, "HOMELESS PLEASE HELP"
- Someone sits next to you at lunch. Other kids have been bullying them because they are gay.
- A new person joins our weekly group.

HOW DO PEOPLE SEE ME?



Invite youth to hold a piece of paper in landscape orientation, fold it in half, and open it back up. On one side, have youth write “What people think they see,” and on the other, “Who I am.” Encourage them to be creative in answering the prompts. They may write words, draw pictures, or perhaps compose a poem. Ask them to think about how people’s perceptions of them match with who they really are. If time permits, invite volunteers to share their work.

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- Paper
 - Pens



FOLLOWING JESUS

CLOSING ACTIVITY AND PRAYER

Prepare to listen to the YouTube video “Carole Alston Kum Ba Yah” (bit.ly/FMKumBaYah, 3:03). Before you listen to the song, explain that it is an African American spiritual that originated with the Gullah Geechee people who live on the southeastern coast of the United States. Although many people think of the song as a whimsical children’s campfire tune or as a meaningless punchline to calls for unity, the song has deep significance for the descendants of enslaved Africans and was a common rallying cry during the Civil Rights Movement. As youth listen, invite them to sing along.

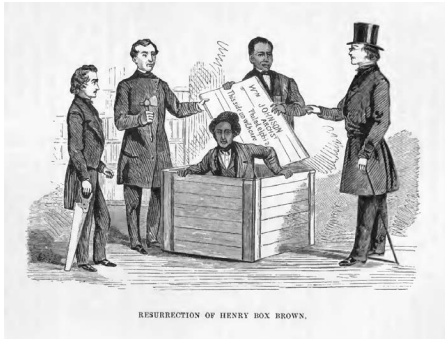
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- Internet-enabled device

Invite the youth to repeat after you as you pray:

Dear God, /
thank you for welcoming us into your family. /
Help us to welcome others. /
Allow us to see you in every person we meet. /
Amen. /

Abolitionists

Many Christian leaders were heavily involved in movements to abolish the practice of slavery in America. Read more about the events and leaders who were instrumental in the abolition of slavery.

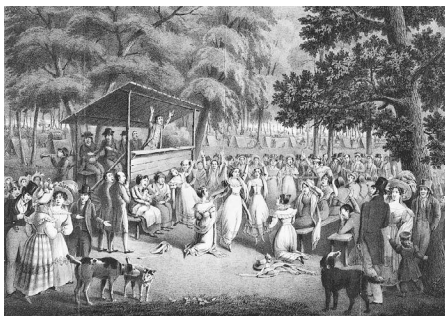
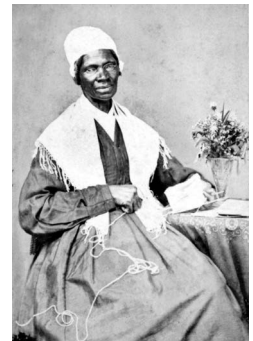


THE QUAKERS

The Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, were among some of the first white people to denounce the practice of owning slaves. They began speaking out against slavery in the 1600s and continued to do so until American slavery was finally abolished in 1863. Several notable Quakers were incredibly instrumental in slavery abolition, including John Woolman, who worked to convince other Quakers to support abolition, and Thomas Clarkson, who wrote a powerful essay in 1785 that brought attention to the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade.

SOJOURNER TRUTH

Sojourner Truth (1797–1883) was a formerly enslaved woman who escaped to New York with her newborn child. She was forced to leave her other children behind, and her former owner illegally sold one of her children. Sojourner Truth sued for custody and won the case, making her the first black woman to win a lawsuit against a white man. She became a Christian and an evangelist, and she worked to recruit black soldiers to fight during the Civil War—the war that ultimately led to the abolition of slavery.

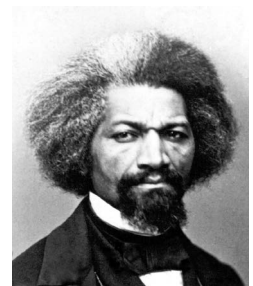


THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

In the early 1800s, there was a major religious revival known as the Second Great Awakening. The Second Great Awakening involved mainly Methodist churches and led to a number of movements for social reform, including the abolition of slavery. This awakening inspired leaders such as William Lloyd Garrison, who is known for his prominent anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator*, and Charles Finney, who preached anti-slavery messages throughout the northeast region of the United States.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

As an enslaved boy, Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) learned to read and write, even though it was illegal for slaves to do so. At church, he secretly taught other enslaved Africans to read. Frederick Douglass escaped to freedom in 1838. As a free man, he regularly gave lectures at abolition meetings and published articles in newspapers.



LEONARD GRIMES

Leonard Grimes (1815–1873) was a pastor who played an active role in the Underground Railroad. He worked as a horse-and-carriage driver, which he used as a cover for his abolition work. Even after he was arrested in 1839 and sentenced to two years of hard prison labor, he never deterred from his work to abolish slavery. He later became the pastor of Twelfth Baptist Church, where he continued assisting enslaved Africans to escape to freedom. He was credited with helping hundreds of freedom seekers make their way to Canada.