

“Flushing Guilt Away”

1. Have the youth teepee the room, go crazy!

2. After that is done, have each of the youth grab some teepee, and break into smaller groups. In the smaller groups, discuss guilt/sin and how it weighs upon each of us. Luckily for us, who constantly fall and make mistakes, there is forgiveness through Jesus Christ, but we need to also forgive one another and ourselves. A story that can be shared from *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, by Brennan Manning:

Perhaps you’ve heard this story:

Four years ago in a large city in the far West, rumors spread that a certain Catholic woman was having visions of Jesus. The reports reached the archbishop. He decided to check her out. There is always a fine line between the authentic mystic and the lunatic fringe. “Is it true, ma’am, that you have visions of Jesus?” asked the cleric. “Yes,” the woman replied simply. “Well, the next time you have a vision, I want you to ask Jesus to tell you the sins that I confessed in my last confession.” The woman was stunned. “Did I hear you right, bishop? You actually want me to ask Jesus to tell me the sins of your past?” “Exactly. Please call me if anything happens.”

Ten days later the woman notified her spiritual leader of a recent apparition. “Please come,” she said. Within the hour the archbishop arrived. He trusted eye-to-eye contact. “You just told me on the telephone that you actually had a vision of Jesus. Did you do what I asked?” “Yes, bishop, I asked Jesus to tell me the sins you confessed in your last confession.” The bishop leaned forward with anticipation. His eyes narrowed. “What did Jesus say?” She took his hand and gazed deep into his eyes. “Bishop,” she said, “these are his exact words: ‘I CAN’T REMEMBER.’”¹

Another lesson to be learned is that Jesus came, not just to heal the sick, the broken, and the diseased, but to heal the guilt of sinners. Jesus says in the Gospel according to Mark 2:8b-9:

“Why do you raise such questions in your heart? Which is easier to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say to the paralytic, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk?’”

Perhaps, as an exercise in understanding the ministry of Jesus, have the small group answer the question posed by Jesus, and compare the different types of healing Jesus did. Next, have each of the youth write down on the teepee those sins/guilt that weigh upon each of them. (This doesn’t necessarily need to be discussed, but allow plenty of time for self-reflection.)

3. Next, reconvene as a large group and gather in a bathroom. The youth will one-by-one, place the piece of teepee into a toilet. The marker will begin to bleed off of the

teepee and into the water of the toilet (showing that our sins are already forgiven us even before we let them go). Say a prayer aloud, asking for forgiveness and the power to let go. Finally, flush the sins away.

4. Last, we will walk back into our freshly teepee'd room. Time to clean-up! (This is a lesson in taking responsibility for that which we have done—the messes we make in the world—*our sins*). Have the youth do this while listening to the song, "Ocean Floor," by Audio Adrenaline:

The mistakes I've made
That caused pain
I could have done without
All my selfish thought
All my pride
The things I hide
You have forgot about
They're all behind you
They'll never find you
They're on the ocean floor
Your sins are forgotten
They're on the bottom
Of the ocean floor
My misdeeds
All my greed
All the things that haunt me now
They're not a pretty sight to see
But they're wiped away
By a mighty, mighty wave
A mighty, mighty wave
Your sins are erased
And they are no more
They're out on the ocean floor
Take them away
To return no more
Take them away
To the ocean floor

1 Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, Multnomah Publishers, Inc., Oregon, 2000: p. 115-16.

-Aaron Shopa