



SESSION 2 of 4

Simon and the sinful woman

MEETING AIM

To explore some of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness and to consider our response to his generous gift.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 7:36-50

BACKGROUND

Simon's attitude is in stark contrast to that of the woman, who is not named in this passage. Despite all his rule-following, Simon had forgotten the place of grace, generosity and forgiveness in his life. The woman, on the other hand, was so completely overwhelmed by her love for Jesus and what he had done for her, it flowed out and could not be contained. In this session we consider how we respond to Jesus' love and forgiveness, and demonstrate our gratitude for his generosity.

5 CIRCLE TIME

As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle. Encourage them to talk about a generous act or big gift that has been given to them. Explain that it doesn't need to have been something expensive to have been valuable, but rather something they really appreciated. How did they feel to receive such generosity? How do they feel towards the person who gifted it? Explain that they may find it helpful to think back to these feelings when you get to the story.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: table and chairs; cutlery and crockery; refreshments

The way you choose to do this will depend on the length of your session and the facilities available. Involve the children in setting up the table, ready for a 'feast' together. You could serve a small meal, if appropriate, or work with your children to ice and decorate small cakes or biscuits

ready to share together. As you prepare and share your 'meal', talk about the children's experiences of a special meal. Did they go out? What did they eat? Who would they most like to share a meal with?

15 BIBLE STORY

You will need: three large sheets of paper or card; paint and paintbrushes; pencils
Arrange the children into three small groups, giving each group a piece of card and access to the art materials. If you have any children who may struggle to participate in this as a group activity, provide extra paper for them to use by themselves. Assign one character from the story to each group – Jesus, Simon or the woman – and explain that as you tell the story you want them to work together to create a portrait of their given character.

Simon was a Pharisee, a good follower of God. He knew what he had to do to make God happy. He knew all the rules and kept them. Well, most of them, anyway. He had seen Jesus around and heard some of the things he had to say. He was interested in finding out more. Was Jesus following God or was he breaking the rules? Simon would invite Jesus round for tea, suss him out a bit and find out what was going on.

Jesus accepted Simon's invitation. He sat himself down at the table ready to share a meal with Simon and his friends.

Then a woman joined the party. She had not been invited by Simon and was not interested in him at all. This woman had only come to see Jesus. She rushed towards him, tears streaming from her eyes. She could see that Jesus was someone special, but *she* didn't feel special. She knew she had broken many of God's rules, and deep down she was very sorry. She wanted Jesus to know.

She poured special perfume over his feet. She wanted Jesus to know just how special he was to her.

Simon didn't think this was right. He wasn't very happy. He challenged Jesus. Why would he accept this woman's gifts when she didn't keep God's rules? Why would Jesus want to spend time with her?

Jesus challenged Simon right back. He asked: "Who gives the most? The person who owes the most or the person who owes the least? This woman recognises the wrong she has done and she is forgiven because of her love for me."

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to contribute:

- Why do you think Simon invited Jesus to tea?
- What led the woman to act in this way?
- How do you think Simon would have been affected by these events?
- What does this story tell you about Jesus?

15 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: live or recorded music, dance flags and ribbon; percussion instruments

Explain to the children that you want to give them the opportunity to respond to Jesus, just as the woman did. Pouring expensive perfume and washing someone's feet with our hair and tears would be rather strange to us, so we are going to respond in a way that is more normal today.

Play some music that will work particularly well with your group and worship Jesus together, thanking God for all he has done for you. If this is an unfamiliar thing for your group, allow enough time for them to engage and participate. You may find it helpful to also provide another outlet for your children's praise, such as paper and art materials.

5 PRAYER

You will need: a bowl of water; towels; hand wipes

Set out the water, towels and hand wipes. Invite the children to symbolically wash their hands clean. Pray: "Thank you Jesus that you forgive us for all that we do wrong. You have washed us clean. Help us to always remember that nothing can separate us from your love, and help us to praise you for your generous gift of forgiveness. Amen."

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