



SESSION 2 of 4

Simon and the sinful woman

MEETING AIM

To explore humility, and how we need God's forgiveness.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 7:36-50

BACKGROUND

Jesus meets with one of the religious leaders, Simon the Pharisee. Throughout the New Testament Jesus clashes with the religious leaders, both in public and in private. He regularly points out that their priorities are wrong: how they focus on the law, major on appearances and condemn those who don't meet their rules. Jesus is visiting the home of a Pharisee having been invited to dinner... What could possibly go wrong?

5 GATHERING TOGETHER

As the young people arrive, share out any refreshments you have provided and chat about the past week. Share a story from your own week if appropriate. Ask if they have ever been to someone's house and seen something completely extraordinary. What happened? How did your host react?

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: newspapers; large sheet of paper (lining paper or similar); scissors; glue sticks

Encourage the group to look through the newspapers to find images and stories about good and bad people. Group the stories together and stick them on the paper: all the good people on one and the bad on another.

Ask your group members how they decided who was good and bad. What was their reasoning? Were the decisions based on any prejudices that were not related to the current news story, for example something they know the person did in the past? There should be no judgement about the reasons the young people give, but you might want to return to any issues raised at a later point or in another session.

10 BIBLE EXPLORATION

You will need: equipment to create a 1st Century dining room in your space (low table, cushions, rugs, etc); some food to share; jar
Sit the young people around the table on the cushions and share out the food. Ask one person to be Jesus, another to be Simon the Pharisee and a third to be the woman. Read the following script, pausing to ask questions and encouraging the actors to follow the story:

Simon the Pharisee had invited Jesus to a meal at his home.
How nice is this? A meal where Jesus and the religious leader sat together, sharing food.
Then a woman arrives, she is crying. She washes Jesus' feet with her tears and hair before pouring scented oil over his feet. Foot washing was a custom that often took place when a guest arrived at a house.

- How do you feel about seeing someone crying?
- The woman washing Jesus' feet is not one of Simon's household, and it is not her job to wash a guest's feet. What does this say about Simon and the way he treats other people?

Simon tells those closest to him that the woman is a sinner. Surely if Jesus had known that he wouldn't have let her wash and anoint his feet, would he?

- How often do we judge people based on their past actions?
- Should we give people more than one chance?
- Do we give people second, third or fourth chances?

Jesus tells a story about two people who owed someone money. One owed a lot, the other not so much. The person let the two people off. Jesus asks Simon which of the two would be more grateful and love the man more. Simon answers correctly.

Jesus points out that Simon hadn't done the things a host should do. He hadn't welcomed Jesus into his home, as was the custom. But the woman had enacted her own version of the custom. Because of the love and compassion she has shown, Jesus tells her that her sins are forgiven.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Use the following questions to continue the discussion, encouraging everyone to join in:

- What was your favourite part of the story?
- What surprised you about it?
- What does the story of Simon, Jesus and the woman tell us about people?
- What does it tell us about God?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

Use the following script as a meditation. You may want to have some quiet instrumental music playing while you read out the words.

What sort of person am I? Good, bad or somewhere in between?
Pause.
Simon was a good man. He had kept the law. He was religious. He was hospitable. He wanted to meet Jesus.
Pause.
The woman was a sinner. The religious people saw her as a sinner. She wanted to meet Jesus.
Pause.
Simon thought he was good. The woman knew she was a sinner. Both met Jesus.
Pause.
What sort of person am I? Good, bad or somewhere in between?
Pause.
Do I want to meet Jesus?
Pause.

This session may bring up issues of not feeling good enough to meet Jesus. Make sure the young people know you are there to talk about any issues they may have. As today's story points out, 'good' and 'bad' people can meet Jesus. We only need to come to him as the woman did.

5 PRAYER

You will need: sources of pleasant smells such as perfume, aftershave or air freshener; small pieces of card; pencils

Give the group a few pieces of card each and a pencil. Ask them to imagine Jesus standing before them now. What would they want to say to him? This could be something they want to ask him or say sorry for, or words of praise or adoration. Give the group space to think about that and then ask them to write down what comes to mind.

Encourage the young people to talk to Jesus about what they have written down. Then ask them to choose a scent and apply some to their card. This could symbolise being forgiven, or could simply add to their words of praise.

DARREN HILL
tells stories at thecreativeminimalist.com.
.....
For the rest of this month's sessions go to youthandchildrens.work/together