

What did Jesus do? **Forgiveness and Salvation**

Clip- Life in 6 words G.O.S.P.E.L

Leader:

4 minutes used to explain life using 6 words. **God. Ourselves. Sin. Paying. Everyone. Life.**

5 Mins

Game: Misdirection

Leader: *Josh and Bernie*

Pick 3 volunteers- one student is blindfolded and asked to build a person puzzle using giant Duplo blocks. One of the two other volunteers is told to use words to help the blindfolded student build the puzzle- the other is told to stop them completing the puzzle. The blindfolded students must determine which voice to listen to in order to finish the puzzle in the allocated time.

5 minutes

Point: we all have to decide which voices we will listen to in life- who will we follow and what will we stand for. It's an important decision as there are eternal consequences.

Which voice should we follow?

Leader: *Glen*

Using the analogy of an in car GPS system- how we set them and follow them to get us where we need to go. But they can't be trusted- Glen or Bernie to do this section using this idea that the gps systems often lead astray and don't get you where you want to go. We trust them to make life easier but sometimes they don't always do that. Life's like this so many things vying for us to follow them- to fill our lives with them. We need to be discerning as some things won't live up to their promises- the world makes us promises- if we work hard, get a good job, have money etc. then we will be happy- but it really can't deliver on this promise. Only God can.

5 minutes

Game: Sticky

Leader: *Ben*

7 to 10 students are each covered in strips of masking tape (around 10 strips each) a time limit is set- the aim is to have no strips on you by the end of the time limit. They can only remove strips by placing them on other players. They cannot move outside of the square taped on the ground.

5 mins

The point: the reason the world can't live up to its promise of Joy, happiness and fulfilment is because of our scars. Our baggage. We all have stuff in our lives we regret. Removing our scars, guilt and shame is an impossible task as there are always being more added. There's no way we can remove them ourselves- we need God to take them from us.

Sarah's story

Leader: *Bernie*

The story of the prodigal son from Luke 15 told in today's setting. Just tell the story as if it is a story don't mention it's from the bible. At various times the story will pause and questions will be asked to get the students to put themselves into the story.

6 mins

Peter's Story

Leader: *Glenn D*

After Sarah's story stops before she returns home Glen will continue with Peter's story- Peter is Sarah's dad. It's the prodigal son told from the father's perspective. Again questions will be asked at intervals to get the students thinking/ interacting.

4 mins

The conclusion

Leader: *Bernie*

Sarah's reunion with her family and ultimate forgiveness.

3 mins

Song- Beautiful things by Gungora

Leader: *Josh*

Song Beautiful things with lyrics on screen. Talking about how God makes beautiful things out of the dust and how he is making us new. Link this song and the prodigal son passage together concentrating on God's love and forgiveness for each of us. How he patiently waits for us to come back to him and make use of his forgiveness plan- which is Jesus of course!

8 mins

The exchange

2 Corinthians 5:21

Leader: *Bernie Or Michael Cruz*

Illustration using a glass of water (labelled "us") bottle of out of date milk- (labelled "sin"). Explain what sin is and how we all have it in our lives and what the consequences of sin are in our lives. Pour some milk in to contaminate the water and illustrate this. If we can't just tip it out and start again What can

5 mins

<p>be done to clean it up? Have a large jug of water (a lot larger than the glass is- enough to fill it 3 times over- labelled "Jesus") explain that we can't get rid of the yucky stuff ourselves-link back to the sticky game (we are also adding more) and also Sarah's story- to heal her life she needed her father's forgiveness. By dying on the cross Jesus took the punishment for our sins and made it possible for us to receive God's forgiveness. Now Gods waiting for us to turn back to him and when we do he gets rid of the yucky stuff for us by exchanging it with good stuff- he pours his love and forgiveness into our life- pour the water from the jug into the glass until all the water from the jug is in the cup and the cup has no original water left in it. Can take a drink of it to illustrate that it's actually all new.</p>	
<p>Video- "I forgive you"- God</p>	
<p>Short clip using a dirty car made clean whilst talking about Jesus offer of forgiveness.</p>	<p>5 mins</p>
<p>Conclusion and small group break up</p>	
	<p><i>Leader:</i></p>
<p>Announce that for protestant small groups who do the Pepsi challenge a Pepsi challenge is a question that focuses on today's themes of forgiveness and salvation. Questions from the things they heard today in the seminar.</p>	<p>5 mins</p>

Sarah's story- Told by Bernie not read

I want to tell you Sarah's story.

Sarah was a normal teenager really. She had friends, went to school and lived with her mum and dad and little brother Tom.

When she was 15 her friends started to get piercings and she wanted to get her nose pierced but her parents wouldn't let her, they always expected her to be home by 10 even on weekends and were always on her back about everything. They didn't like her friends and said they were bad influences. She was always fighting with them. One night she was out late with her friends and she decided to get her nose pierced so she had her friend do it for her. When she stumbled in the house her mum was waiting for her and when she saw the nose ring they ended up having a huge fight. Sarah couldn't take it anymore. She felt like she wasn't allowed to be herself and she just couldn't live like it anymore.

*Ask a question here- that gets the students to put themselves into the story- **have you ever felt like this? What would you do if you were Sarah?***

Sarah decided to leave- she waited for her parents to go to sleep and she stole all the money from their wallets and their credit and bank cards. She packed her favourite clothes in a backpack and left. Went to the nearest ATM and withdrew all the cash in her parent's accounts. Around 10 thousand dollars. As soon as the shops opened in the morning she purchased items from Harvey Norman and Bunnings that she knew could be sold for cash. She bought new clothes and a prepaid phone and some jewellery got her hair and nails done. She stayed with friends in the city for a while and used the credit cards to pay for food and other stuff that she continued to sell until her parents cancelled the card.

What do you think of Sarah's choice? Was it the right one? Its easy to say it isn't but what choice would we really make in the same situation?

Sarah made a friend with connections in Melbourne and decided a fresh start would be great so she flew to Melbourne. Started hanging out with her new friends- got a few more piercings and tattoos, partying, drinking and then after a while trying all sorts of other stuff too.

Eventually the money she had taken was all gone- it didn't take long. She had nowhere to stay, no money, was addicted to heroin.

With no more friends to stay with Sarah found herself living rough on the streets of Melbourne.

What would you do in Sarah's situation? What do you think Sarah should do?

10 years went past. Sarah was still living on the streets, no money, and no job, addicted and alone.

One day while she was looking through a bin outside a restaurant for food, Sarah saw a young boy walking a little white dog and it reminded her of her brother Tom and his dog Jack.

Even Jack was better off than she was now- he had somewhere warm to sleep and he always had food and family.

Throughout the years Sarah had picked up a pay phone and thought about calling home. She had dialled the numbers a few times, asked strangers if she could use their phone to call someone but she had never mustered up the courage. She wasn't sure her parents would even care where she was let alone want her back. She had been terrible to them, had stolen from them, lied to them and then the life she had lived they would never understand nor accept- she couldn't even accept half of it herself. She was ashamed.

But after seeing that dog she finally managed to dial her old home number- wondering if it was even still connected- perhaps they had just packed up and moved on.

As the phone rang at the other end Sarah was so scared but thankfully it was just a message no one was home. The sound of her dad's voice on the message made her cry and through the tears she said "dad it's Sarah, I'm sorry. I want to come home if you will let me. I will understand if you don't want me to." Sarah then explained to her dad on the message what train she would be on and asked him to meet her at the station if he would let her come home.

On the train Sarah was so nervous- wondering if he got the message, would he come or not? Did they want her home? Would they even recognise her?

Have you ever needed forgiveness? What does it feel like to seek forgiveness? It's hard to recognise when we need forgiveness and even harder to step out and ask for it as we rely on others to give it and sometimes we don't really even deserve it.

Peter's story- told by Glenn not read!

Peter is just a regular bloke. He works for a construction company is married with two children and a dog. Loves fishing and football! He loves his children his steady and reliable son Tom and his daughter Sarah. His daughter was a good girl, so loving and always laughing but she had gotten herself into trouble and she ran away when she was 15. She stole a heap of money from him and racked up a huge credit card bill. Almost sending him broke. He had to sell his house and downsize, he almost lost his job and his marriage almost fell apart. His relationship with his younger son Tom was never the same. Tom couldn't understand why Peter kept on loving Sarah- he was angry- she chose to leave while he had stayed but his dad was so caught up on Sarah. Tom didn't understand- he couldn't

Question: did Sarah's decisions affect Tom and Peter? I wonder if she thought about this at all. Do you think she did? It's easy to say we wouldn't make decisions that affect the ones we love so much- yet we do it every day- make decisions for ourselves and our own happiness that directly impact other in negative ways.

Peter never gave up on Sarah. He couldn't, he loved her. He had to move house- but he kept the same phone number, email address and gave up numerous job offers so he worked at the same place- Hoping that one day she would call. He would hope it was Sarah every time his phone rang and no caller ID came up.

He had a bank account and put money into it each week in case he ever needed to help her, he had so many people all over the country searching for her. He had flown to Adelaide following a lead that didn't pan out. He spent countless nights in the city just looking everywhere for her. 10 years went past and he kept waiting and hoping.

Do you have anyone you love that much? To wait 10 years to forgive them and show them again that you love them?

Then one night Peter checked his messages after work and although the voice was different it was Sarah. She wanted to come home and would be at the train station tomorrow afternoon.

Peter started putting his long awaited plan into action.

Sarah and Peter's story conclusion- told by Bernie

As the train pulled up Sarah sat by herself in the very last carriage- afraid to even get off- what if no one was there? What if they were there? What would she say- what could she say?

She pulled her hood up over her hair and with her head down got off the train full of fear and dread.

Then she heard voices calling out “sarah, sarah” She looked up and there was her whole family. Mum, dad, tom, her aunties, uncles and cousins and even faces that she didn’t recognise but looked familiar somehow.

They were holding up a huge hand- made sign that said welcome home. And had flowers and balloons.

They ran to her hugging her and kissing her and smiling and crying.

It’s hard to imagine that kind of forgiveness isn’t it. That kind of love a parent can have for a child- and it’s hard to imagine what it would be like to receive it.

This story isn’t a story about someone I know- it’s not a story from the internet or 60 minutes or a Hollywood movie- it could be I suppose but it isn’t. It’s a story from the bible- I made it a bit more culturally relevant- but it’s a story from the bible that Jesus told. That tells us something about God and about us.

Lead into the song beautiful things by Gungor