

Who's Your Daddy?

SMALL GROUP LESSON



Lesson Objective:

In lesson two, we saw how God created Adam and Eve in his image in order that they might represent him to all creation. Then, in lesson three, we saw that Adam and Eve failed to “represent.” Consequently, they underwent an identity shift and got a new daddy. They could not fulfill their God-given commission despite being created in God’s image. Now, in this lesson, students will be challenged to identify their Daddy.

Set Up Info:

Supplies Needed:

1. Computer or internet connection to watch the YouTube video.
External speaker would be an added bonus as parts of the clips are hard to hear.
2. A pair of dice
3. Vanity mirrors for all students and a Student Response worksheet
4. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the ones below)
5. A passion to see students transformed in their thinking about who we were created to be – our identity.

Instructive Prep:

If you are following these lessons sequentially, we will recall that we began with Jesus’ identity. Then we looked at the two images Adam and Eve represent. Initially, they had God as their daddy. But after their fall from innocence, they got a new daddy - Satan. That background helps to establish the framework for this lesson. We can only serve one of two daddies. For reasons that may not be obvious to them at this stage of life, students need to come face to face with their daddy. Only after we square with reality can we deal with it effectively.

This session is, therefore, designed to have students come “face to face” with their real daddy. This may be a painful realization for some of your students so take care to create a safe emotional environment. Part of what makes figuring out our identity such a tricky endeavor is that it requires a great deal of self-reflection. To that end, students need to know that a small group is a place where honesty and confidentiality are honored codes of conduct. A teen’s world is often so noisy that to quietly probe their own hearts can be unsettling. Nevertheless, if we are to be responsible youth leaders, we must lead them to truth. This is the essence of spiritual growth.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: *learn, feel, do and what next*. We want students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some degree, and participate in doing something during study that brings them to a point of decision. Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change of attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, the goal is a complete transformation in kids’ lives (i.e. spiritual, emotional, mental, and behavioral), so the application section based on God’s truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

INTRO:

Les Miserables is a powerful movie. Themes of unmerited love, forgiveness, redemption, grace, mercy, and justice touch the viewer deep inside their soul. There are a number of different ways this movie could be used to convey God’s timeless truths, but for our purposes, we will focus on the scene where Jean Valjean comes face to face with “God” and his prodigal-father-forgiveness in the form of a priest (monsignor).

INTRO STORY:

“And don’t forget. Don’t ever forget. You promised to become a new man....Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil. With this silver, I’ve bought your soul. I’ve ransomed you from fear and hatred. And now I give you back to God.”

These words, spoken by a representative of God to a representative of Satan, prove to be the turning point in Jean Valjean’s life. He was transformed from a convicted felon to an upstanding community servant and benefactor. Let us never underestimate the power of our words! In a bold act of faith, the elderly priest courageously parts with what little material wealth he possessed because he valued a human soul above all else.

Before viewing this scene at the link below, let's first catch the context into which it was spoken. Jean Valjean is a heartless convict. As a child he stole bread to survive. This seemingly small crime was punished with 19 years of hard labor in a prison camp. To be sure, those years of abuse turned Jean's soul inward where anger, bitterness, and resentment expressed itself in pure rage. Upon his release, he crosses paths with a priest and his housekeeper, Madame Gilot. They invite him into their home, feed him his first decent meal in two decades, and bed him for the night. For all their hospitality and kindness, Jean repays them by stealing their silverware, hitting the priest across the face as he flees the scene. Hours later, police capture Jean. It would appear as though he will face another long bout of hard labor. Yet, amazingly, the priest forgives his perpetrator, gives him the silver, and commissions him to be a new man. The rest of the movie powerfully tells the story of the complete transformation Jean Valjean underwent.

The clip begins with Jean secretly attempting to steal the silverware. With that in mind, check out the most powerful 3 minutes and 14 seconds of the whole movie!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wF3FX43F-7Y>

Note to leaders: If you want to help your students get the fuller context, I have included another longer portion of the clip for your benefit. You can view it at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDJzvTekKoM>.

Intro Questions:

1. What is one of the silliest or dumbest things you've ever done?
2. Have you ever been wrongly accused of something you didn't do? Or have you ever been punished in such a way that did not fit your "crime?"

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Use a pair of dice to determine the order that kids will answer the next questions. Have everybody roll the dice and then answer in the order with the highest roll going first and the lowest roll going last. After the first question is answered, roll again and do the same thing for subsequent questions.

1. Who was the bigger man in the video clip, the priest or the criminal? Why?

2. Why was the housekeeper crying in the morning? What was more precious to the priest, the silver or the soul? How do you know?
3. Imagine yourself in the priest's shoes. Suppose a criminal were to come to your door. How would you respond? What do you believe motivated the priest to respond the way he did?
4. Why do you think the priest's words were so foreign to Jean Valjean?
5. Do you believe the priest has a strong sense of his identity? What about Jean Valjean?
6. After reading Acts 9:1-19 together, what similarities do you see in Saul's story and in Jean Valjean's life?

CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES:

The following two passages in Acts are selected because Saul (later known as Paul), Peter, and John all had direct encounters with Jesus Christ. They came face to face with a new daddy. As you read, notice some of the changes that took place in these men's lives as a result of meeting Jesus.

Acts 9:1-19

Saul's Conversion

¹In the meantime Saul kept up his violent threats of murder against the followers of the Lord. He went to the High Priest ²and asked for letters of introduction to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he should find there any followers of the Way of the Lord, he would be able to arrest them, both men and women, and bring them back to Jerusalem.

³As Saul was coming near the city of Damascus, suddenly a light from the sky flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?"

⁵"Who are you, Lord?" he asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you persecute," the voice said. ⁶"But get up and go into the city, where you will be told what you must do."

⁷The men who were traveling with Saul had stopped, not saying a word; they heard the voice but could not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground and opened his

eyes, but could not see a thing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was not able to see, and during that time he did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰There was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. He had a vision, in which the Lord said to him, “Ananias!”

“Here I am, Lord,” he answered.

¹¹The Lord said to him, “Get ready and go to Straight Street, and at the house of Judas ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying, ¹²and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come in and place his hands on him so that he might see again.”

¹³Ananias answered, “Lord, many people have told me about this man and about all the terrible things he has done to your people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he has come to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who worship you.”

¹⁵The Lord said to him, “Go, because I have chosen him to serve me, to make my name known to Gentiles and kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶And I myself will show him all that he must suffer for my sake.”

¹⁷So Ananias went, entered the house where Saul was, and placed his hands on him. “Brother Saul,” he said, “the Lord has sent me—Jesus himself, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He sent me so that you might see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸At once something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he was able to see again. He stood up and was baptized; ¹⁹and after he had eaten, his strength came back.

Acts 4:13

¹³The members of the Council were amazed to see how bold Peter and John were and to learn that they were ordinary men of no education. They realized then that they had been companions of Jesus.

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Take the mirror and find a quiet place in the room, building, or house. Close your eyes for one minute. During that time, ask God to reveal himself to you in a special way. Then look intently into the mirror for 5 minutes. As you look at yourself, imagine that God is looking back at you. When he looks at you, what do you think he sees? At the end of the five minutes, journal everything you heard God say. After you have written everything down, look intently into the mirror for another 3 minutes. This time ask God to reveal to you who

your real daddy is. In other words, who are you really 'imaging' to the world? Journal your thoughts.

2. Is there someone at your school like Jean Valjean who needs a touch of grace and mercy? Brainstorm some ways you can show him or her a touch of kindness. Report back next week on any personal interaction and/or changes you might have noticed in that person.
3. Come up with your own challenge:

STUDENT ACTIVITY: WHO'S YOUR DADDY

1. With a mirror, find a quiet place. Close your eyes for one minute and pray:
Lord, like Jean Valjean who came face to face with you through the priest and like Saul and Peter and John who literally came face to face with you, I ask that you would reveal yourself to me in a special way. Amen.
2. Next, look intently into the mirror. Imagine God is looking back at you. Do this for five minutes. At the end of that time write down everything that you heard God say to you. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.
3. When you're finished journaling your thoughts, take another three minutes to look intently into the mirror. Begin this time by asking God to reveal to you your real daddy. *Lord, I admit to you that sometimes I have no idea who I really am. Whenever Satan seeks to lure me into thinking that he is my daddy, help me come to understand and to know that you are my real daddy and that you only want what is best for me. Thanks! Amen.*
4. When that time is complete, write God a short note, thanking him for the way in which he has revealed himself to you as your real daddy.