

Lesson 2 / March 14, 2010

The Sin Solution

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 2 Focus:

Jesus can forgive our sins.

Lesson 2 Bible Basis:

Mark 2:1-12

In today's lesson, students will talk about the problems of trying to be good and allowing ourselves to be forgiven. understand why only God can forgive man's sins.

Very few middle school students in America have not heard about Tiger Woods and his recent infamous scandal. Since more and more young people are adopting a media-influenced theology, it is important to help your students discern with a biblical lens what they see and hear. With today's lesson focused on confession and forgiveness, this introduction will clarify the difference between being good and being forgiven.

Many of your students have probably seen full or partial clips of Tiger Woods' recent public statements about his infidelity and public image. Rather than having students watch the full version, you may find it helpful to read a passage that introduces the difference between man's view of forgiveness and God's.

(The entire transcript can be found at the link below)

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/02/19/sportsline/main6223331.shtml>

Begin your lesson by asking how many of your students have heard about Tiger Woods and his recent troubles. It is important to de-emphasize the details of his infidelities, so be aware of students who are overly eager to share every piece of Internet gossip they have heard in the last few months. Ask them this opening question: What is the difference between being *good* and being *forgiven*?

After your students have shared some of their answers, tell them that you would like to read a section of Tiger Woods' confessional public statement, made just several weeks ago.

"What I did is not acceptable. And I am the only person to blame.

I stopped living by the core values that I was taught to believe in. I knew my actions were wrong, but I convinced myself that normal rules didn't apply. I never thought about who I was hurting. Instead I thought only about myself. I ran straight through the boundaries that a married couple should live by. I thought I could get away with whatever I wanted to. I felt that I had worked hard my entire life and deserved to enjoy all the temptations around me. I felt I was entitled. Thanks to money and fame, I didn't have to go far to find them.

Lesson 2
Memory Verse

If we confess our sins,
he is faithful and just
and will forgive us our
sins and purify us from
all unrighteousness.

—1 John 1:9

I was wrong, I was foolish. I don't get to play by different rules. The same boundaries that apply to everyone apply to me. I brought this shame on myself. I hurt my wife, my kids, my mother, my wife's family, my friends, my foundation, and kids all around the world who admired me.

I've had a lot of time to think about what I've done. My failures have made me look at myself in a way I never wanted to before. It's now up to me to make amends, and that starts by never repeating the mistakes I've made. It's up to me to start living a life of integrity.”

Given the context of his words, ask your students the following questions:

- ▶ **Do you think if a person just tries hard enough that he will be able to live a sinless life?**
- ▶ **Is it only sin if you get caught? Why or why not?**
- ▶ **Is it possible for Tiger Woods—or anyone else—to “never repeat the mistakes I’ve made” without God’s help? Why or why not?**
- ▶ **Tiger says “My failures have made me look at myself in a way I never wanted to before.” How can suffering and pain caused by our mistakes often be a blessing?**

Because this week’s lesson is focused on forgiveness, explain that Tiger Woods’ reaction to his failures will give them a starting point for discussing God’s best plan for His children.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher’s Guide*; Step 4 appears below.)

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The Sin Solution

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STEP 4

Lesson 2 Focus:

Jesus can forgive our sins.

Lesson 2 Bible Basis:

Mark 2:1-12



Students will reflect on the lyrics of a Sanctus Real song, and discuss why only God can forgive man's sins.

When you come back together from Step 3, give your students a chance to quietly reflect on the lesson through music. A recent song by Sanctus Real entitled “Forgiven” is particularly effective for middle school students. You can find the link to the lyrics and music here:

<http://www.klove.com/Music/>

Depending on the nature of your group, consider asking them to shut their eyes while you play this song. Another idea—especially if your group has trouble staying focused—is to give students a small piece of paper and spread them out to solitary places around the room. Encourage them to write down lines from the song that have particular significance to them. For example, *When I don't think and I don't feel like I belong anywhere, I'm a treasure in the arms of Christ.*

After the song is finished, ask different ones to share their lyrics with the class, prompting them to make connections to the Bible lesson. If your students need some prompting, you can start them off with these questions:

-  **One lyric says, “That devil just won't let me forget [the wrongs I've done].” What do you think that means about how God views our sins?** (*The devil is the one who holds our sins against us; God is willing to cleanse and forget our sins.*)
-  **Do you usually feel like “a treasure in the arms of Christ”? Why or why not?**

After you've allowed enough time for discussion, close in prayer, reminding them that Jesus' forgiveness is not just an illusion, but a powerful gift that Jesus Christ provides freely.

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