

Theme Class

Day One:

Finding the Road

TODAY'S PARABLE: Luke 15:4-7

The Lost Sheep

CONCEPT: Each person is of value to Christ. Sometimes we take the people around us for granted. Christ calls us to discover the worth of all persons

Pre-class Preparation

Create maps showing pathways around the campgrounds. All paths should start and finish at the same point but the journeys will be different. Walk the path first yourself to make sure it keeps the campers away from poison ivy and other potentially dangerous areas. If possible, design the pathway so that it goes through some of the less traveled areas of camp. The map should show landmarks along the way to help guide the group. Walking this path should take about ten minutes maximum. The pathways should not be tricky or confusing.

If the class is large, create several different paths that begin and end at the same location. They may overlap each other, but it would be best if everyone does not go in exactly the same direction. Keep all paths as close to the same length as possible.

Make a list of possible "treasures" along the paths and write them down (flowers, birds, bugs, cattails, fish, trees, dew on the grass, butterflies). You may even wish to hide a few of your own "treasures" (pictures of people, cross, geodes) along the way.

Announce that everyone should meet for today's theme class at the beginning point of the pathways with their counselors. If all the counselors cannot attend class, arrange for substitute adults to join the groups.

Find a way to create a signal that can be heard from any point on the pathways (a dinner bell, a loud cow bell, a car horn, a trumpet, a loudspeaker, or loud music). Ask someone to help you test this out. Do not assume they can hear it,

Lesson Activities

1. Map Journeys

—about 18 minutes

When all cabin groups arrive hand out the pathway maps. Explain that they are to follow the signs and landmarks indicated on their map to find their way around the path as quickly as possible. Each group will be timed to see how quickly they can get through the course. The next activity will take place when everyone has returned. Before they leave, let them hear the sound of the signal. When they hear the signal, it is time to move onto the next activity and they should return to the end as quickly as possible. Have everyone start on the journeys at the same time. Play background music, sing, and visit as everyone arrives. After seven minutes, sound the signal so everyone knows it is time to head back quickly. You may wish to have the optional activities" set up for the groups who get back first.

2. Map Journey Process Time

—about 11 minutes

When everyone has returned, gather the class back into their groups. Acknowledge the times praising the fastest teams enthusiastically. Give each group a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to write down all the things they actually saw along their path. Let the groups share their list with the class. Discuss the parable used in the morning devotion. In the parable the shepherd took the time to go look for the one lost sheep. He did this because he knew the value of even that one sheep. Christ is

our shepherd, and we are each of value to him. We are also called to find the value in each other. Point out the fact that when we hurry through the pathway of life, we often forget to take time to stop and recognize the value each person has to offer.

3. In Search of the Lost Sheep —about 21 minutes

Give each group another piece of paper on a clipboard. Ask them to walk the same pathway again. This time request that they slow down and look for treasures or things of value along the pathway. Explain that what is a treasure to one, may not be of value to others. However, everyone's treasures count and should be written down on the piece of paper. Remind them to listen for the signal to know when it is time to head back.

4. Finding the Lost Sheep —about nine minutes

Gather everyone together to share the treasures and things of value they found along their path this time. Talk about how much more they saw and appreciated when they took the time to look and listen. If no one has listed the people in their group as something of value along their path, make reference to this point. Compare the two journeys with their own lives and their call to find the value in each other. Break the class back into cabin groups to discuss the following questions.

What can you do this week to discover the value of the persons in your cabin?

When you go home, what can you do to get to know the people at school, your friends or even the people who live next door?

Do you believe everyone has value that makes them worth the time it takes for the shepherd to go and look for them? Are you worth getting to know better? Share one

value you would like others to see in you.

Remind the campers that Christ is never too hurried to see the things in each of us that are of value and worth. Each of us gets lost and needs someone to help us find our way back. Challenge them to become shepherds this week, willing to take the time to help bring back the lost sheep.

***Optional Activities**

1. Toothpick Shuffle: Give each group a box of toothpicks. Before class, use a marker to place a mark on one toothpick in the box. If desired mark one toothpick for each camper. Ask the group to dump the toothpicks out and see if they can find the one which is different.

2. Potato Me?: Set out a bowl of potatoes. As the campers arrive, ask them to choose a potato. Ask them to get to know their potatoes. How does it feel? What does it look like? What are the potato's unique features? Have the campers place their potatoes back together, and then mix them up. See how many of them can find "their" special potato. Ask them why they are sure it is theirs. Remind them that each person also has unique characteristics that make them of special value to God and to life.

Day Two:

Along the Road

TODAY'S PARABLE: Luke 10:25-37
The Good Samaritan

CONCEPT: We are called to be like the Good Samaritan, ready to help wherever we can. We are called not to help only in big ways, but in the little ways that nobody ever sees or hears about—the ways that make a cumulative difference in the lives of others.

Pre-class Preparation

Collect a wide variety of miscellaneous items (*teddy bear, ice cube tray, pen, paper, guitar or other instruments,*

books, bandages, pillow, small blanket, food, cooking utensils, coins, dog leash, cleaning supplies, gardening tools).

If you desire to create signs in activity #3 prepare the signs or rocks. If signs are to be left on the campground, or if you plan to work on any other project which affects the campgrounds, be sure to clear it with the camp and campground's director. You should also check with other Junior, Junior High, or Senior High church camps that are using the same campgrounds during the summer. Multiple camps may want to work together to create a summer-long project.

If classes will be painting, find an appropriate location with water available for cleanup.

Prepare prayer assignment spots for activity #4.

Announce where campers should meet for class,

Lesson Activities

1. In Everyday Ways

—about 12 minutes

Have the class sit in a large circle. In the middle of the circle place a variety of miscellaneous items. There should be more than enough items for each person to have a choice. These can be anything from a teddy bear to an ice cube tray, a pen to a guitar, or a book to a bandage. With all the items in the middle to begin to jog their thinking, discuss how servanthood does not always come in big packages. They do not have to give lots of money or work with large organizations like Habitat for Humanity or Outreach International to be of service. These are good things, but our greatest call to servanthood is in our everyday life. The Good Samaritan did not set out that day to help someone, but he also did not walk away when he saw a need where he could make a difference. Challenge everyone to think about times in their life where they can be of

service to someone else. Ask everyone to choose one item from the middle of the circle and then think of a way they can use it to help someone else. They may think of a very personal, specific situation, or a more general one. Choose one of the less obvious items to use as an example, for instance, "*I chose the ice cube tray because I can offer a nice cold drink to my friends when they come over for a game of basketball.*" Go around the circle and give everyone a chance to respond. If someone cannot think of a way to serve with their item, let the rest of the class think of ideas for them.

2. The Good Samaritan

—about 13 minutes

Ask for four volunteers to act out the parable of the Good Samaritan as someone reads it from Luke 10:25-37. (*See the morning devotions section.*) After they have acted out the parable, explain that Jesus used this parable to help his followers understand their call to servant ministry. Ask the campers to explain their reactions to this parable. Compare this version with the modern-day parable they saw today at morning devotions. Talk about how they think Jesus might change this story if he were telling it to them today? Is it safe for you to pick up strangers hitchhiking by the side of the road and carry them with you? How can you help? If a stranger comes to your door and asks for help, what should you do? The challenge to accept and help everyone would not change. Would Jesus want us to put our life in danger, or would he prefer that we prepare ourselves to help? How can we be "*Good Samaritans*" without putting our lives at risk? Does servant ministry sometimes mean being ready to take risk?

3. The Gift that Keeps on Giving —27 minutes

Discuss how service is a gift that usually keeps going after we have left. (*As you brainstorm ways service can make a difference in the lives of others, you may wish to write key words on a flip chart, chalkboard, or overhead.*) For instance, when you give food or clothes to the homeless, those gifts are going to help them long after they have been delivered. If you help someone who is hurt, like the *Good Samaritan*, they may not only have changed their life, they may even have saved it. If you give someone a ride to an activity, you might have possibly made the difference of whether or not that person could attend. Remind them again that their service often comes in small ways. Ask them what happens when they share a smile, a kind word, a warm hug with someone during a day. How can those simple gestures make a difference in that person's day? Explain to the class that they are going to get an opportunity to create something that can make someone else feel better, even when they are not around. They are going to create signs of good cheer. These can be pictures that make someone smile or positive thoughts that provide encouragement and praise. (*An adult should approve all sayings and pictures first!*) A small list of positive sayings has been included at the end of this lesson. Many books of positive thoughts are available at local bookstores. To create a "Gift that Keeps on Giving, you might choose to write positive thoughts on paper, wooden signs, or rocks. These can be placed around the campground for others to see and enjoy. Paper signs would be temporary and taken down at the end of camp. Wooden signs could be made nice enough to leave along pathways where people walk. Rock messages can be placed along paths, beside doorways, and in other landscaped areas around the campground.

Alternative: Work on a project for the campgrounds as a camp or as a continuing summer project between camps. Be sure to clear all camp projects through the appropriate channels,

4. Journey Prayer —about 7 minutes

Divide the class into groups. Counselors or other adults should be a part of this activity to keep the groups focused. Give each group a slip of paper with their prayer assignments. The assignments should connect the type of prayer to a physical place. For instance, at the dining hall or canteen say a prayer for the hungry in this world; at the tall pine tree by the barn pray for strength in your everyday tasks; at the birds nest in the oak tree say a prayer for your families; and where two roads or paths cross, pray for guidance in your choices; and at the lake pray for the calmness of peace in our world. Before sending the groups to their locations, explain that one of the best ways for us to continually serve our friends and families is to remember to uphold them in prayer. Read off the different types of prayers which will be offered by the class, then let them move on to their individual prayer locations.

Day Three:

Fork in the Road

TODAYS PARABLE: Luke 8:4-15

The Sower

CONCEPT: Through life we will be thrown many kinds of seeds. Some of them will be good seeds. Some of them will be weeds, God has given each of us the ability to choose, it is our responsibility to make the choices that will be best for our lives. We all come from different backgrounds and we all have different goals for our futures. Therefore the choices we make along the way may be different for each person.

Pre-class Preparation

Create a maze by stringing rope between items like trees poles, chairs, benches, and playground equipment. Be sure to set it up in a place where campers can remain sure footed at all times. Avoid rocky, uneven ground. The finished maze should have only one way in and out.

Cut strips of fabric to create blindfolds for half the class.

Place a variety of carnival trinkets, treats, and tools in a large box with a lid (*candy bar, soda pop, pencils, notepads, key chains, silly toys,*).

Arrange for use of a flip chart or overhead.

Make sure you have paper, pencil, and envelopes for each camper

Instruct counselors and campers where they need to meet for today's class. Your beginning site should not be the maze.

Lesson Activities

1. The Choice Is Up to You

—about 9 minutes

Before class place a variety of carnival trinkets, treats, and tools in a large box with a lid (*candy, soda pop, pencils, notepads, key chains, and silly toys,*). As the campers arrive in class, ask them to choose one thing from the box. When everyone has had a chance to choose, gather the class in a circle so everyone can see what the others have chosen. Go around the circle and ask each person to tell why they made the choice from the box that they did. Some may have no idea and you will have to help prompt their response. Note all the different kinds of choices the group has made. Discuss how God has given us the gift of agency—the ability to choose.

No two people will ever make all of the same choices.

It is each person's responsibility to make the choices that are best for them.

2. Follow the Leader

—about 11 minutes

Explain that the next activity is a game of "Follow the Leader." You are the leader and they are to do everything you do. As you lead them from the circle area over to where the maze has been set up, do a multitude of different actions. Walk around trees, go up and down stairs, wave your hands in the air, and walk with crazy steps. All the campers will not choose to follow everything you do. In fact, the older your campers, the less likely they are to choose to follow these directions. Once you have started, do not acknowledge what the campers are doing behind you. Even if nobody chooses to follow your actions, keep on going! The only thing that really matters here is that they end at the next location. When they reach the maze area, gather them together. Discuss their reactions to the game of "Follow the Leader."

How did the activity make them feel? Did they like it or dislike it? Did everyone react the same to the game?

Did they like being told what they had to do? How many of them made the choice to do something different? Why?

Is it okay to not always follow the leader? How do they know what choices to follow?

3. Listen to the Voice

—about 18 minutes

Turn the classes' attention to the maze which has been set up before class. Explain that each of them will get an opportunity to go through this maze. Make sure they notice that there is only one way in and out of this maze. Divide the class into groups of two, then blindfold one person in each pair. Ask the sighted person to lead their partner through the maze using their voice only. They can walk beside their partner, but they cannot touch them at any

time. When the team has completed the maze, switch blindfolds and repeat the process. Watch the time. If some teams are taking too long to get out of the maze, have them stop and switch partners. When everyone has had a turn, take a moment to talk about what it felt like to be the blindfolded person. Relate their partner's voice to the seeds from which Christ has sown for us to choose.

Where can we find help to make our choices?

Talk about how their partner's voice was like the guides we have been given through prayer, scriptures, family, friends, teachers, and experiences.

4. Weeding Out —about 21

Break into partners again and have one partner put on the blindfold. This time ask the class to hold their partner's arm as they guide them into the maze. Turn *them* around a few times to disorient them, and then leave them inside the maze. The sighted partner should then go around to the outside of the maze and wait until all blindfolded persons are inside. At the count of three, everyone on the outside of the maze should try to guide their own partner to the outside using only the sound of their voice. Everyone on the outside will be speaking at once, but their words will be guiding only their partners. The blindfolded persons will need to listen for their own partner's voice to hear how to get out of the maze. Allow about five minutes for the blindfolded persons to get out, then stop and switch places. Repeat the process. After everyone has had opportunity to experience what this feels like, gather the class back together. Discuss what it felt like to try to listen for the one voice that was suppose to be guiding you.

Compare this with all the voices in this world that are trying to tell us what to

do. Talk about some things those voices might try to get them to do (drugs, steal, lie, cheat, give up).

Discuss how hard it is to weed out the voices that will turn you away from where you want your life to go.

Ask the campers what one voice they can always count on and where they find that voice? For some it may be through prayer, for others through that still small voice called a conscience, for others it may come from people they know they can trust

Day Four: **Rocks in the Road**

TODAY'S PARABLE: Luke 15:11-24
The Prodigal Son

CONCEPT: Christ calls us to love unconditionally. Yet, sometimes situations and actions don't make this an easy thing to do. In families, friendships, at school, and on teams, we find that the choices others make can affect our lives, too— sometimes in positive ways, sometimes in negative.

Note: This is a very full class. If you feel campers will respond and need to talk personally in activity 4, consider omitting activity 2.

Pre-class Preparation

Cut paper into 2" and 4" squares. You will need several 2" paper squares for each team in the second activity, as well as one straw per person. You will need one 4" paper square and a pencil for each person in activity four.

Find time to meet with the counselors and other adults who will be helping you this day. Explain that this lesson could potentially open hurtful wounds within some of the campers. Encourage them to be listeners, not counselors. The design of this lesson is to help the campers see that we are called to love

unconditionally, not to solve their problems.

Write a set of statements from activity three onto slips of paper and place them in a “hat” for each small group.

Ask everyone to wear tennis shoes or socks to class. Sandals or thongs without socks will not work.

Create a self-standing cross from wood. At the center of the cross, place a large nail with the sharp end sticking out on the front side,

Instruct campers where to meet for class. You may wish to start and end the class at different locations since the last activity will be best if done in a place where campers coming from other classes do not interrupt.

Lesson Activities

1. Shutout

—about 4 minutes

Set chairs into small circles for about eight people. If the class is small, be sure to have at least two circles. These chairs will eventually divide the class into the teams for activity #2. As the campers arrive, instruct them to take a chair. No chairs should be added to any circle. When a circle is filled, campers will have to move onto other chairs. After everyone has arrived, take a moment to discuss how they feel about the seating arrangements.

Was there anyone who could not sit where they wanted? Did that bother them?

Did they feel that the instructors choice of seating arrangements had unfairly affected them?

2. One for All

—about 10 minutes

Use the seating arrangement to divide the class into teams. Have the teams stand in lines with everyone facing the back of the person in front of them. Only the first person in line will not face another person's

back. Give each person a straw. Then give the first person in line a 2” square of paper. Show everyone how to suck one end of the straw to hold the paper onto the other end. Instruct the teams to pass the piece of paper from the front of the line to the back, using only their straws. If the paper falls, the person who was passing the paper can pick it up with their straw and then continue the pass. Hands should not touch the paper at any time. Be prepared with extra pieces of paper in case one blows away. Try to allow enough time for everyone to pass the paper. If one team is struggling, and everyone else has finished, go ahead and conclude the activity. Give the people who have not touched the paper with their straw and piece of paper of their own so they can see how the process works. Gather the whole class together to discuss their reactions to the game.

How did it feel to watch others struggling and you couldn't help? Did you want to step in and help? Did you want to do it for them?

How did the actions of your teammates affect you?

3. Not My choice

—about 11 minutes

Stand everyone in a straight line. Try to find a space where there can be at least 20 feet in front of the line. Explain that you are going to make a list of statements. If the statement applies to their life, they are to move one step forward. Following is a list of possible statements. Add statements that apply directly to the lives of campers in your group.

If you are part of a family, take one step forward.

If you have a brother or sister, take one step forward.

If you share a room with someone else, take one step forward

If someone else in your family plays in sports and you have to go to their games move one step back.

If someone else in your family plays an instrument and practices at home, take one step forward.

If you go to school take two steps forward

If you think you have too much homework for school, take one step forward.

If your parents make you go to church take one step forward.

If you have ever been in a car accident, take one step forward.

If your parents have been divorced, take one step forward.

If your parents have remarried, take one step forward.

If your family has ever moved to another house, take one step forward.

If your family has ever moved to another town, take one step forward.

If you have ever changed schools, take one step forward.

If you brother or sister likes to watch TV shows you don't, take one step forward.

If you have ever experienced a death in your family, take one step forward.

If someone in your family has moved out of you house hold for college or marriage, take one step forward.

If your parents set a curfew for you, take one step forward.

4. Affected by Others —about 12 minutes

After you have finished the statement exercise, ask the class to tell you one thing every statement has in common. Guide them to the answer that all the statements are a choice someone else could make that might affect your life. Note how everyone responded to different statements. Break the class into smaller, more comfortable groups with an adult. Print the statements used in the previous activity on

slips of paper and place them in a “hat” to be drawn. Each group will need their own set of statements in a hat. Ask each camper to draw one statement from the hat. Go around the group and have them read their statement. If the statement is not true for them, ask them to pretend it is. Each person is to answer the following question with their statement in mind: “*This choice makes me feel _____ because.*”

If the reactions to the feeling are negative, help the camper process ways they can turn the situation into something positive. The goal of this activity is to help the campers see that even though choices others make can affect our lives, sometimes even in negative ways, we can still find ways to respond positively. (*Campers may choose to talk about a real situation in their life instead of drawing one from the hat.*)

5. Burdens of Pain —about 14 minutes

Give each camper a 4” square piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to write something on their piece of paper that represents a situation in their life that they cannot change, but still bothers them. Explain that no one will see this paper but themselves. Encourage everyone to write something on their paper even if they chose not to share with the group. If they can't think of anything, ask them to write down the situation they drew from the hat. Give the campers a few minutes to write on their papers, and then ask them to wad them up into a small ball and place them in their shoe. After everyone has placed their paper in their shoe, play a quick game of tag or keep-away. The type of game is not important. The point here is to get everyone moving around on their feet. After everyone has had opportunity to run around and participate in the game, gather the class back together again. Ask them how it felt to play the game with a wad of paper stuck in their

shoe. Compare this pain with the gnawing pain that *can* accompany negative feelings we don't let go. Ask the campers to remove the paper from their shoes. *How does it feel now?* Compare this to how wonderful it can feel if we will give God our negative feelings and allow ourselves to love unconditionally.

6. Letting Go of the Burdens —about 8 minutes

Gather everyone together in a semicircle. Place the cross in the front. Play a melody of soft, thoughtful songs for the group to listen to as they meditate. Ask everyone to open their squashed piece of paper to read it one last time. Encourage them to think about the situation that has bothered them and why. Quietly talk to them about how easily it is for us to let situations hurt us. Explain that sometimes things happen with family and friends that we have no control over, yet they do affect us. The negative feelings that can result from these types of situations are sometimes the hardest things we have to let go. Give the class time to think. Tell them when they are ready, to bring their burden up to the front and stick it onto the cross with their words facing backwards. This is still just between God and them. When everyone has placed their piece of paper on the cross, pull the pieces of paper slightly apart and then light it with a match. Watch together as their problems are released and turned into a beautiful black rose.

Day Five: On the Road

TODAY'S PARABLE: Luke 14:7-24
The Great Banquet

CONCEPT: No Excuses! As we go back into the "real world," away from the shelter of camp, we must each ask ourselves the

question, "Am I ready to answer Christ's call?"

Note: Consider changing the last day's schedule so all campers can meet together for this final theme class. If your camp does not go through five days of classes, adapt this day's class for a closing service.

Pre-class Preparation

Choose a location where two areas can be established—one where tables can be set up like a banquet, and the other through an adjoining doorway. The wall and door between the two can be created with props, but the area with the tables should be blocked off from first sight. There needs to be room in this area for either a large TV/video screen or for several actors,

Set tables to look like banquet tables. Use items such as tablecloths, candles, centerpieces, placemats, and place cards to make the setting feel special. If possible, place tables to create a u-shape or circle so everyone feels connected. Each table should also have a large cup of juice and a small loaf of bread on it.

Place two colors of Post-it Notes at each place setting. (*Everyone should have ten stickers total, five of each color.*) Label five large sheets of paper or poster board with the words:

Family, Friends, Church, School, and Community. Each paper should have a different label. If available, set up a P.A. system so that a voice can be heard from another room.

If this class is to be presented more than once, arrange for extra help between classes to get the tables set back up.

Create personal invitations to invite the campers to dine at the table with the Master. Activities should start in the area outside the banquet room. Include this location on the invitation. Deliver the

invitations to each cabin the night before.

Use the following scenes to create a video or skit to be shown before the campers enter the room for the banquet activities. *To set the scenes up in a video*, have the person with the camera stand at the door like they are Christ asking to come in. You will never see the “Christ” figure in the video. Use a different door and different actors for each scene. *To use the scenes as a skit*, set up at least one doorway in the room for different persons to answer. Make knocking sound effects from behind the door. Again, the “Christ” figure at the door should never be seen.

Scene 1:

(Knock on door. You hear a girl’s voice before she answers the door.) *Hey, you’re early! You weren’t supposed to be here before 7:00.* (A girl with curlers in her hair answers the door.) *Oh, my... what are you doing here? I’ve got a dance at school tonight and I really want to go. I’ve been trying to get this guy to notice me for months. I know he’ll be there tonight and this is my big chance, Could you please come back tomorrow? I really need to get ready right now.* (Close door.)

Scene 2:

(Knock on door. Teen with paint clothes on and a paint brush in hand answers the door.) *Oh, I didn’t know YOU were coming! Sorry I’m so dirty. I’m working on a school project that’s due tomorrow. It’s really getting late and I’m afraid I won’t finish it. I’ve got to finish this if I’m going to make the grade. Could you come back another day? Just give me a call and we’ll pick a time when I don’t have so much work to do. I’ve got lots of questions I’d like to ask you. I really would like to talk with you, but I’m just so busy tonight.* (Close door.)

Scene 3:

(Knock on door. Someone peeks through the blinds, and then opens the door.) *Hello? Oh! Hold on a minute. I’ve got somebody on the phone.* (Shut door for a few seconds then open back up.) *They said they could wait. I just got back from camp and the house is a mess. You know—dirty laundry and suitcases everywhere. There’s not even food or soda pop to offer you. Maybe you could come back a little later after I have time to get everything put away. I’ll even go by the store and get some snacks. Listen. My friend is still waiting on the phone. They want to know how camp went. I got to go. I’ll see ya later, okay?* (Close door.)

Scene 4:

(Knock on door. An adult and teen come out with keys in hand, ready to leave. The teen is dressed for a soccer game. They talk as they head toward the car. If you are videotaping, have them walk over to a car and get in. If it is a skit, have them walk away.) *Oh, this is really bad timing. We’re just on our way out. . We’ve got to get to a soccer game by 5:30 and we’re already running late. This is the most important game of the season and Adam is the team’s goalie. He has to be there, you know. They can’t play without a goalie! Sorry we have to run, but we’ll have to catch up with you another time.* (Wave bye and get into car or walk away.)

Scene 5:

(Knock on door. Person answers the door with soft drink can in hand.) *You re not supposed to show up now! We’re in the middle of Monday Night Football.* (Voice in background yells.) *“Hurry up, they’re going to make a touch down,”* (Person at the door turns back and shouts.) *Okay, okay, I’ll be right there.* (They then turn back to person at the door.) *Look. I have really got to go. I don’t want to miss this. Check back another*

day. I'm sure sorry, but you know how it is. Can't miss the game! (Closes door.)

LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Will You Accept?

—about 9 minutes

As the campers arrive, gather them into the area outside the banquet hall. Play music to help calm the group, but give little instruction or explanation. When everyone has arrived, play the video or act out the script for the group to see. At the end of the video or skit, have a voice ask the question, “Are you ready to let Christ in?” After a moment of silence, open the door so the campers can enter into the room with the banquet tables.

2. No Excuses

—about 10 minutes

Let the campers enter through the doorway and instruct them to find their place at the table. Try to keep everyone fired up as they work through the next few activities. Strive to create a feeling of praise and celebration as you ask questions like: “*You have all chosen to come through the door. Does that mean you are ready to sit at the table with the Master? Does that mean you are tired of making excuses? Are you ready to let him into your life? Are you ready to walk with him in your daily life? Are you ready to serve him?*” Ask the campers if they have ever made excuses when it comes time to help a friend, participate at church, find time to study the scriptures, or pray. Give them a few moments to think about this, and then have everyone break into partners of two or three. Encourage each one to share at least one of the excuses they have used to get out of doing something for their Lord. Next ask them to share how they want to respond the next time a similar situation arises.

3. Ready to Serve

—about 14 minutes

Focus attention to the ten blank “Post-it-Notes” at each place setting. (*Five should be of one color and five of another color. For explanation purposes they will be called yellow and blue.*) Explain that posted around the room are blank pieces of paper ready for them to fill. Part of accepting a place at the Master’s table is to look at ways they can better listen to their individual call from Christ to serve others. It’s time to say, “I HAVE NO EXCUSES” On the yellow stickers they are to write things they are doing today which are of service to their family, friends, church, school, and community. As they think of things to write on these stickers, invite them to place them on the appropriate signs hung around the room. They may or may not have a sticker for each poster. Play lively praise music as they are writing. This will not only give them a frame of time to work in, but also help to keep the mood joyous. When the song(s) has finished, tell them its time to fill their blue stickers. This one is harder. On these stickers they are to write new ways they believe they can serve their Lord. After they fill in their blue stickers, ask them to again go and place them on the appropriate signs. Play some more music and allow time for them to think and write. Remind everyone that their name is not on these stickers. This commitment is just between them, the wall, and Christ. However, their willingness to place this commitment on the wall in front of others can be their way of saying, “I’m tired of all my excuses. I am ready to serve!”

4. Join Me at the Table

—about 10 minutes

Read the scripture, Matthew 26:26-29 NRSV While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat, this

is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Explain that on their table is a loaf of bread and a cup. These have become symbols for us of how Jesus sacrificed his life so that we who are sinners might be forgiven. This has also become an opportunity for us to accept that forgiveness and recommit our lives to Christ. Ask the campers to join hands at their tables while someone offers a prayer for the campers, their journey back into the real world, forgiveness for the excuses used in the past, and strength for the commitment they have chosen to make this day. After the prayer, invite everyone to share the bread and wine together by breaking off a piece of bread and dipping it in the wine before they eat it. This may be done in silence or to the background of a song that has become meaningful to the group.

5. *On the Road* **—about 17 minutes**

Provide opportunity for those who desire to publicly share one of the commitments they made today. Close by gathering the whole group together in a circle. As you hold hands, remind the campers that when they go home, the love and support they have found this week at camp will go with them. Their journey with Christ is just beginning. Read the following scripture from John 14:1- 4 then sing a song

of sending forth.

[Jesus said,] *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe in me also...I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and will take you to myself so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.”* Thomas said to him, *“Lord we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”* Jesus said to him, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”*