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# RV CHAPELS BY TIME OF WEEK

EARLY WEEK	MID WEEK	LATE WEEK
Big Rocks First	Body of Christ	Baggage
Camp Soup	Butterfly Effect	Black Hole
God in the Driver's Seat	Campfire	God in the Driver's Seat
I.L.A.C.	Cracked Pot	God the Janitor
Plink	Flash Flood	Inside Out
Rainbow Fish	Fleet Foot & Running Deer	Parable of the Sower
Sneetches	God in the Driver's Seat	Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard
The Day the Crayons Quit	God is Coming for Dinner	Prodigal Son
The Potter's Shop	Growing Up	Ten Lepers
Train Car Named Adventure	I.L.A.C	The King, the Kingdom, and the Enemy
	Inside Out	The Lord's Prayer
	Kalepo	Your Heart
	Parable of Workers in the Vineyard	
	Rainbow Fish	
	Stuck in Sin	

	Talking to God	
	The Day the Crayons Quit	
	The Journey	
	The Lost Teddy	
	The 3 Trees	
	The Wemmicks	
	The Wise and Foolish Builders	
	Trader Jim	
	Yay-Yuck	

\*\*\* FRIDAY ONLY CHAPELS: Sagamore Squad\*\*\*

## LV CHAPELS BY TIME OF WEEK

EARLY WEEK	MID WEEK	LATE WEEK
Big Rocks First		A Mission of Great Importance
Camp Soup		Baggage
God in the Driver's Seat		Black Hole
I.L.A.C.		God in the Driver's Seat
Plink		God the Janitor
The Day the Crayons Quit		Inside Out



# 1 – A Mission of Great Importance

Message: Take what you've learned here at camp and share it with the outside world.

Setting: LV; late-week

Scripture: Matthew 5:16 "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Characters: Narrator, camper, counselor in green shirt, angry camper, counselor in blue shirt, counselor in white shirt, friend in red shirt, cabin mate in purple shirt, counselor in yellow shirt

Props: duffel bag, Brave shirt, table, swim band, button name tag, green shirt, blue shirt, white shirt, red shirt, purple shirt, yellow shirt, Blazer shirt, Warrior shirt, Pathfinder shirt, torchbearer medallion, torchbearer candle, devotion candle, frisbee, gymp, broom, chair

*Camper enters with a duffel bag wearing a Braves shirt. During the first paragraph, the camper goes through the check-in desk at the CAC, meets their counselor, takes a swim check/gets a swim band.*

Narrator: You are on a mission of great importance. You came to camp to have fun-- to fly off the blobs, to sleep out under the brightest stars, to laugh with your cabin mates and counselors-- and you have absolutely had fun this week. But, there is an even more important reason why you're here. This camp is a training ground. (*Camper looks at narrator, quizzically*). All week you've been preparing to be the kind of people that the world needs. (*Points to self, "Me?"*)

*During the next paragraph: Angry camper enter other side of stage. Regular camper walk over to angry camper. The two are clearly at odds, arguing etc.*

Narrator: The world needs people who will learn responsibility. We need people who do the right thing. We need people who can get along with someone who is different from them. We need people who can talk, who can

communicate, and who can compromise. We need people who will one day go on to work in government and realize that it's not about black versus white, or red versus blue.

*Counselor walk over to the campers.*

Counselor: Listen, I know you're both frustrated. I would be too. But I also know that we have a responsibility to try to see things from the other person's point of view. It's not easy, but it's something that we try to do as a community. You think you two can do that?

Camper: *\*initially hesitant\** Yeah, you're right. *\*shakes angry camper's hand\**

*Exit counselor in green shirt and angry camper.*

*During the next part: Enter counselor in blue shirt on other side of stage with frisbee. Camper walks over to the counselor.*

Narrator: We need people who have grown in trust-- who do what they say they are going to do because they know others are counting on them.

Counselor: If I let you borrow this, I'm gonna need you to bring it with you to the flagpole between second and third period clinics, okay?

Camper: Okay!

Counselor: We need it for ultimate frisbee clinic today. I'm trusting you to do this for me. Are you up for the challenge?

Camper: *\*Pause\** You wouldn't be able to play if I don't bring it back to you, would you?

Counselor: That's right.

Camper: Oh... *\*thinking\** I'll do it. I promise.

*Exit counselor in blue. Camper takes off Braves shirt to reveal Blazers shirt. Walks over to third scene: cleaning up the porch alone, sweeping the porch and straightening shoes.*

Narrator: Our world needs people who know what initiative looks like. Who

aren't afraid to work hard even when no one is looking. People who don't expect everything to be handed to them and don't give up when it's not easy.

*Enter counselor in white*

Counselor: Oh hey, I didn't see that you came out here. \*looks around at floor\* Wait, did you do all of this?

Camper: \*a little embarrassed\* Oh, I mean, um, yeah. I just thought I would clean up a little while we wait for devos.

Counselor: That's so nice of you! Our porch has been the weakest part of our clean cabin score all week. Thank you so much!

*Exit counselor in white. Enter friend in red on other side of stage, sit down on bench or wall and look sad. Camper sees the alone friend and pulls gym bag out of pocket and contemplates giving it to her and then walks over and sits next to her.*

Narrator: We need people who invest in friends and strive to make new ones. People who don't just talk to people who look, act and sound like them. People who show empathy and caring and working with others and realize they have more in common with the people around them than they have differences.

Camper: \*to peer\* Hey, you okay?

Friend: Yeah... Today just hasn't gone well I guess...

Camper: That's too bad. Well I've enjoyed hanging out with you in gym clinic this week, and I wanted you to have this. \*gives gym bag to friend\*

Friend: Wow that that is the nicest thing that anybody has done for me all week. Can I play a game of carpetball with you?

Camper: Yeah that sounds great!

*Friend in red exits. Camper takes off Blazers shirt to reveal Warriors shirt.*

Our country needs joyful people. Not people who smile for the selfie so everyone thinks they have it all together, but people who strive to bring joy and

happiness to a situation when it's easier to grumble. People who speak well of others when they aren't there instead of gossiping and slandering.

*Enter cabinmate in purple on other side of stage. Camper walks up to them.*

Cabinmate: \*sighs\* I can't believe lake time was canceled today. This is the worst. And when stuff gets rained out our counselor never lets us do anything fun.

Camper: I heard our counselor has something up their sleeve this time. I wouldn't set your mind against it just yet. Plus, this is the closest I've ever been to the other people in my cabin, and I think that's more important than what we end up doing.

Cabinmate: \*smiles\* Yeah, I guess you're right.

*Enter counselor in yellow shirt with devotion candle and all previous characters except the angry camper, including main camper sit in devotion circle (or half circle so that everyone is seen) around the candle with counselor in yellow at the head of the circle and the main camper next to them.*

Narrator: And our world needs people who have faith. Not faith that divides and segregates, but faith that God loves them and wants them to love others. Faith that a relationship with God is more important than all the money in the world. And people who believe that no matter how much we mess up, God is standing there to forgive and nothing can separate us from Him.

Camper: To be honest, the thought of going into my last year of middle school scares me. High school is just around the corner, and I've heard that friend groups change and that it's hard work and... I don't know. But I have a feeling God's gonna do great things this year. I don't know what it's going to be, but I have faith that everything's going to work out one way or another.

*Everyone from devotion circle except main camper and counselor in yellow stand in line in order of green, blue, white, red, purple with their backs facing the audience with the arms around each other. Counselor in yellow stand facing the audience. Camper takes off Warriors shirt to reveal Pathfinders shirt. Camper walks up to yellow counselor, who hangs a leather medallion around their neck and gives them a hug. The counselor gives the camper a torchbearer candle and lights it and then the*

*counselor joins the line with back facing the audience next to the purple person.  
Camper stand towards the front but not in front of the line.*

Narrator: All week long we have seen the results of your training. We have seen campers who practiced patience as they waited in line for cereal in the morning. Some of you tried something new and took a risk when you went off the zipline even though you're afraid of heights. Your counselors saw hard work and persistence as you worked on your swimming stroke and kicking until you moved up a swim band level. And we witnessed compassion when you cared about your new friends and went out of your way to make sure people felt included in this family.

But your mission isn't over yet. When you go home your job will continue-- God has called you on this mission of great importance to be a person of *(characters in line turn around and face the audience when the trait that matches their color is said by the narrator)* responsibility, trust, initiative, friendship, joy and faith. We believe in you.

Camper: *\*beaming\** I am on a mission of great importance!

Conclusion: What we do here wouldn't matter if you forgot everything you've learned the second you left camp. We do what we do here so that you may be inspired to climb ever higher in your quest to be the light unto the world. The world's a scary place, and we need people like you to spread God's love to everyone around so that people may feel like they belong in life-- so that they are challenged in love and truth--and so that we may inspire others to pass on that very same love.

Diving Deeper: What does it take to do that?

## 2 - Baggage

Message: God, out of His abundant love for us, wants us to give Him our baggage. He does not define us by that baggage.

Setting: RV/LV; late-week

Scripture: Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

1 Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

John 10:10b “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Psalm 34:17 “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.”

Characters: Main character (Seth), Dad, sister, brother, childhood friend (Isabella), brother’s friends

Story:

Seth: *\*to audience\** Baggage. What is baggage? It is the things we get from other people. What they say to us, the way they act towards us, and the way we carry these memories around.

*First scene: Isabella is playing a game at the playground. Seth notices Isabella and approaches her.*

Seth: Oh, hey Isabella! What're you doing?

Isabella: Hi. I'm playing peteca.

Seth: That's really cool! Can I try?

Isabella: Uhhhhh... No, I don't think you would be able to.

Seth: No it's fine! I'm sure it can't be that hard.

Isabella: Actually *\*picks up a bag and shoves it into Seth\** I just don't like you.

Seth: *\*to audience\** Sometimes, our baggage comes from people we're close to.

*Second scene: Seth notices his brother and his friends walking his way.*

Seth: Hey guys, what's up?

Brother: Oh, haha. *\*to friends\** No I don't know him.

Seth: Bro, you're coming to dinner tonight.

Brother: No way, I'm going to be with my friends. *\*to friends\** yeah he's so weird. *\*bumps hard into Seth as he's passing, gives Seth a bag\**

Seth: *\*to audience\** Other times, it comes from the people we look up to the most.

*Third scene: Seth is dejected, father approaches.*

Dad: Son, what happened out there? You had it.

Seth: The ball slipped, I don't know... The lights got in my eyes.

Dad: The lights got into your eyes, sure... Do you know how many times I got up early before work so we could work on this?

Seth: Dad, I'm sorr--

Dad: \*cutting Seth off, grabbing a bag to shove into Seth\* I don't want to hear it. Get in the car.

Seth: \*to audience\* Sometimes the weight of our baggage becomes so great that we try to pass some of it off to others, but it backfires.

*Fourth scene: sister approaches*

Sister: Hey Seth, I was wondering if you could give us a ride?

Seth: Wait, what?

Sister: I was wondering if you could give my friends and me a ride to school.

Seth: \*shoving bag into sister\* I'm not going to give you and your loser friends a ride to school.

Sister: \*looks at bag, looks at Seth, angry\* \*shoves bag back with another bag\* Well at least I HAVE friends.

Seth: \*to audience, looking at bag labeled SIN\* And then there's THAT one. My sin. The thing that I don't want anyone to see. \*picks up bag, struggling\* And it gets to the point where I'm weighed down by my baggage and can't even move. \*to God\* God! Take this baggage away from me. I can't live like this anymore. Please, God!

\*drops everything\*

And you know what He does? He takes it.

Conclusion: Jesus gave His life so that we might have life and have it abundantly, and He wants us to cast our cares on Him. These things that weigh us down, these things that restrict us are not what God wants for us in life. He wants us to confide in Him, rely on Him so that we may be free from the things that weigh us down.

Diving Deeper: What baggage have you been carrying?

# 3 – Big Rocks First

Message: God should be the most important part of our lives. When we put other things like people, ourselves, our future, pleasure, etc. first, we do not leave room for God in our lives.

Setting: RV/LV; early-week, Monday suggested

Adaptations: Packing Your Bags for Camp

Scripture: Matthew 6:33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Colossians 3:1,2 “Since, then you have been raised with Christ, set you hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

Characters: 1 Teacher, 1 Student (also needed: 1 container of water labeled “Thoughts and Actions”, 1 container of tiny rocks labeled “Stuff That I Have”, 2 containers of small rocks labeled “School and Work”, 1 container of medium rocks labeled “Friends”, 1 very large rock representing God, 1 clear container)

Story:

Teacher: Good Morning class! Today we are going to do an experiment to help us realize what is important in our lives. In order to do this, I’m going to need a volunteer (teacher picks out of the crowd a pre-chosen volunteer to be the student). Thank you, everybody give (name) a round of applause! (the crowd cheers)

Student: OK, What do I do?

Teacher: Well, we have some containers here that represent various things in our lives; such as the stuff we have, school, work, friends, family, and God.

Go ahead and take some of these things from the containers that represent your life and put them into this container. If they are really important, add a lot, if they are not as important, add less.

Student: (Chooses desired amount from all containers and adds to the clear container, then tries to put God [the large rock] in last...but it wont fit.)

Teacher: Hmmm, that didn’t seem to work out very well. Try it again, but this time put the “big rock first” and put all of the other

things in afterwards and it should all fit.

Student: (Rearranges the clear container to put God in first, and all the other stuff should fit.... topped off with water[thoughts and emotions])

Thanks for helping me to realize what needs to be the most important thing in my life. From now on, I'm going to put God first!

Conclusion: There are so many good things in our lives that are very important: our families, our friends, our work at school, sports practices, music lessons... all these things are wonderful and deserve our attention and time. The most important thing above all these other things is God and our relationship with him. If we put him first in our lives, if we consider him before everything else, then he will take care of the rest of the good things in our lives. But what does that even mean? There's a lot of ways to put God first, depending on how you look at it... It means depending on God in prayer and in faith. It means investing in a relationship with God and developing a desire to know about Him more, and it means living out the love that He first showed us. In short, it means pursuing God with a fraction of the reckless abandon with which He pursued us.

Diving Deeper: Who are some people in the Bible who either sacrificed other things to put God first or put God in the background to favor other things?

## 4 – Black Hole

Message: Only God can make us feel whole.

Setting: RV/LV; late-week

Adaptations: Change the scenarios depending on the age of audience or day of the week, can take place at camp instead of the real world (buying things from trading post, having more fun in activities, getting more rest)

Scripture: Ephesians 3:19 “May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”

Characters: main girl, store employee, coach, boyfriend, Christian friend

Props: black hole sign, white hole God sign, a different shape sign for each scenario (3)

Girl: I don't feel happy, I am missing something in my life, I feel like there is a black hole.

Girl: What can I do to fill it? I know. I can buy things!!! Money and buying stuff makes you happy right?  
(go to the store)

Store employee: Welcome to shopping town how can I help you?

Girl: Well I have this black hole in my life and I know buying and spending money will make me happy. Isn't that right?

Store employee: Yes! The only way to do it is to spend every last penny...then you will be happy I am sure. Just think of all the cool stuff you will have!

Girl: I want an iPod, new computer, new clothes, etc.

(Girl picks up items, puts on new shape, and leaves)

Girl: (goes back home and reflects...then says) I am still not happy. I think I am still missing something.

Girl: I know I will try really hard at basketball and then I'll win awards and championships. (play basketball until coach comes over).

Coach: You did such a great job this year. We won the championship and you were the most valuable player, thanks for breaking all of those school records! (coach give her new shape to put on)

Girl: Thanks coach!  
(Coach leaves)

Girl: I really had a great experience, I made some friends, got an award. But now that it's over I have had some time think and I still feel that gap in my life. I am definitely still missing something.

Girl: I know, I will get a boyfriend. Maybe I will even get married!  
(boyfriend come in)

Boyfriend: We have been together for a long time now, do you think we should get married?

Girl: Yes!  
(Boy gives her shape and ring and leaves stage)

Girl: Wow my husband is really great, he does such nice things for me all the time. But you know. I thought he was going to fill the gap in my life...but he didn't. I am out of ideas. I have no idea what is wrong? What could fill the gap?

(Christian friend approaches)

Christian friend: Hey \_\_\_\_\_! How's it going?

Girl: I have all these great things, success, love, but you know what? I still have this gap in my life...something is missing and I can't figure out what it could possibly be.

Christian friend: Well do you have a relationship with God?

Girl: Well... I went to Church a couple of times with my family.

Christian friend: Well having a relationship with God filled the hole in my life, and it can fill the hole in your life too.

Girl: It can? How?

Christian friend: Well to have a relationship with anyone you have to spend time together and communicate. With God we need to speak to him through prayer and read His word to hear from him.

Girl: I guess I hadn't thought of that. It sounds like a good idea!

Christian friend: Do you want to borrow my Bible? I have a verse marked in there that may make you feel better.

Girl: Wow thanks that would be awesome! Thanks!  
(Christian friend give her bible and white circle sign)

Girl: Read bible verse out loud and put on shape. I think I'm feeling a lot better already.

Conclusion: We all have the same God-shaped-hole in our lives that this girl had. Although we cannot see them, they exist within our lives. The only thing that can fill this void in our life is the precious love Jesus Christ offers us. We can try many things to fill this hole, but it will not be filled until we turn to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Diving Deeper: What does filling the hole feel like? What does it mean in the day-to-day?

## 5 – Body of Christ

Message: As members of the Christian community, each person is valuable.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 “For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.” (other parts of 1 Corinthians 12 work as well)

Characters: Legs, Arms, Eyes, Ears, Mouth

(All Five parts walks on stage in a line, holding hands.)

Everyone: We are the body of Christ, the body of Christ that works together.  
(while swinging arms in unison)

Legs: My legs are so pretty. I can walk everywhere!

All others: (ad lib different taunts) Aww, who needs you, get outta here leggy!

(As legs leaves the stage, the rest of the group falls down and ad lib the problems of having no legs.)

All others: (finally out of desperation) Come back legs, come back!

(legs returns to stage, group stands up and links arms again)

Unison: We are the body of Christ, the body of Christ that works together.

Arms: My arms are so strong, I can lift big things!

All others: Who needs you! Arms aren't useful!

(As arms leave stage, rest of group lose their arms)

All others: Arms!! We need you!

(Arms returns to stage, group stands up and links arms again)

Unison: We are the body of Christ, the body of Christ that works together.

Mouth: My mouth is sooo pretty, I can sing and say lottsa stuff!

All others: Get outta here, we don't need you!

(As mouth leaves stage, group loses voice finally the rest of the group makes motions to get mouth to return to the stage as mouth returns to stage, group stands up and links arms again.)

Unison: We are the body of Christ, the body of Christ that works together.

Eyes: My eyes are such a pretty color, and I can see for miles!

All others: We don't need you around! Get out of here!

(As eyes leave, group goes blind)

All others: Eyes come back! We need you!

(As eyes return to stage, group stands up and links arms again.)

Unison: We are the body of Christ, the body of Christ that works together.

Ears: Look at my ears, they are so great! I can even put pretty earrings in them!

All others: Who needs ears? Get outta here!

(As ears leave, the group lose there hearing)

All others: EARS! COME BACK!

(As ears return to stage, group stands up and links arms again.)

Unison: We are the body of Christ, the body of Christ that works together!!!!

Conclusion: Every Part of the Body of Christ is needed. The body is one, made up of many parts, all equally important. Just as each part is important in making up the body, we too are important in the Christian community (or body). God has put us all here for a reason and each one of us is important to the body of Christ.

Diving Deeper: What is the goal of the Body of Christ?

## 6 – Butterfly Effect

Message: We love others out of the overflow of God’s love for us, which we can better appreciate by focusing on Him.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 3:12 “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.”

Characters: Jesus, 3 campers

*Jesus begins behind the stage. Person 1 starts on stage. Person 2 is off to the right. Person 3 starts off to the left.*

*Person 1 wakes up and looks at the time.*

Person 1: Oh shoot! I’m gonna be late to flagpole!

*Person 1 frantically rushes to get ready and runs into Person 2 who drops the supplies she is carrying.*

Person 1: Sorry, sorry! But I’m in a huge rush. There are so many things I need to do today. I don’t have any time to help you.

*Person 1 walks away then sits on the right edge of the stage and acts stressed out and worried.*

Person 1: So many responsibilities! I have to clean my cabin, do

my popstop form, make it to clinics on time. And when I go home, there's chores and homework and soccer practice. It's too much. I can't do all of this on my own.

*Person 2 grumbles as she collects all that she dropped. Person 3 quietly enters the scene looking downtrodden and Person 2 stomps past him, ignores him, and sits on the left edge of the stage and acts angry.*

Person 2: Why does everything bad always happen to me? I get stuff knocked out of my hands. My family is moving away from my friends. And I can't even win a game of gaga to make me feel better. Nothing in my life seems to go the way I want it to.

*Person 3 sits at the center edge of the stage and acts sad.*

Person 3: Everyone ignores me. No one will even look at me. It makes me feel worthless. I never feel like I belong.

*Jesus emerges from the back and puts a heart around Person 1's neck.*

Person 1: Man I know I have a lot going on in my life, but I am really feeling guilty about not helping that girl with her stuff. I know Jesus would have wanted me to do the right thing instead of being selfish. I wish I could go back and do it all over again.

*Jesus claps his hands. Everyone goes back to their starting positions.*

*Person 1 wakes up and looks at the time.*

Person 1: Oh shoot! I'm gonna be late to flagpole! But first...

*Person 1 gets on their knees and prays.*

Person 1: Hi God. Thank you for this beautiful day at camp. There's a lot I need to get done today, but I pray that you pour down your love on me and that I can glorify you in all that I do. In your name, amen.

*Person 1 hurries to flagpole and bumps into Person 2, knocking her supplies out of her hands.*

Person 1: Oh my goodness! I'm so sorry! Here let me help you.

*Person 1 helps Person 2 pick up her things and puts the heart around Person 2's neck.*

Person 1: Have a great day!

*Person 1 goes to right edge of stage, closer to the center than before.*

*Person 2 continues to walk then notices Person 3's sadness and stops to*

*talk.*

Person 2: Hey, what's going on? You're looking pretty down on yourself.

Person 3: It's just... I was in mountaineering and my friends were joking that I didn't even need to climb because I was already tall enough to kiss the owl. They're always making fun of my height, and it makes me feel like I don't have any value. They make me feel like I don't belong.

Person 2: I can see how that makes you feel bad. It's disappointing that they can't see past your physical attributes and see what an awesome friend and child of God you are.

*Person 2 puts the heart around Person 3's neck.*

Person 3: Wow, that actually means a lot. Thank you so much.

*Person 2 and Person 3 join Person 1 on the edge of the stage*

All three: Dear God, thank you for your love. Thank you for giving us the people in our lives that reflect Your love onto us.

Person 1: Especially in times when we're stressed...

Person 2: can't see the good things...

Person: or don't feel worthy.

*Jesus comes out and puts his arms around them.*

Conclusion: The love we have for each other is the love of God. When we open up to God and place our focus on Him, that is when God's love flows through us toward others, even in difficult situations. By loving others, we fill them up with God's love, too.

Diving Deeper: What does love actually look like with people that we don't like?

## 7 - Camp Soup

Message: Even though there are a lot of things that contribute to our time at camp,  
God truly is the one that ties this camp experience together.

Setting: RV/LV; Monday only

Adaptations: Cooking show

Scripture: Matthew 22:37 "...love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...love your neighbor as yourself."

Characters: Chef, ingredients (also needed: a large pot, a large spoon, papers with ingredients written on them or items to represent the ingredients)

The chef enters with a big pot and stir spoon.

Chef: I am going to make 'Camp Soup'! But, I am not quite sure of the ingredients... I want to make a soup that when you eat it, you will have the best Camp experience possible. And then when you go

home, you will feel good about your time here and you will carry the things you learned here home with you.

In walks someone with “friendship”.

Person: Hello, Chef! What are you making!?

Chef: Well, I am making some Good Old Camp Soup.

Person: Camp Soup? That sounds great! What are your ingredients?

Chef: Well, that’s the thing; I am not sure exactly what the perfect combination would be for really great Camp Soup...

Person: Well, I have some friendship, here. I think that would be a great way to start out your soup. We friendship is a super part of a great Camp experience. Making new friends at Camp is one of the greatest things about being here!

Chef: That is a WONDERFUL idea! What a great way to start out Camp Soup! With some wonderful new friendships!

The Chef “adds” friendship to the pot.

Other ingredients are added in a similar manner they may include:

Friendship

Enthusiasm

Unity

Fun

Love

God

As the ingredients are added to the pot, the Chef tastes it and claims that it never tastes quite right... not until the last ingredient is added: God.

The chapel skit ends with the Chef tasting the Camp Soup and declaring:

Chef: This is the best Camp Soup I have ever tasted! Wow, each ingredient has such a flavorful taste, each is so important in this soup! I can’t imagine one thing being left out from my pot. I hope

you all enjoy this soup, it is very good, and there is enough for everybody!

Conclusion: There are many things that are a part of a great experience at Camp. We are all important ingredients of camp this week, we all need to work together to make sure no one is left out! And let's not forget the most important part of all: the Lord! Following the I'm Third motto will insure that the Lord makes our camp soup taste great!

Diving Deeper: How does God add flavor to our Camp Soup? Sure, WE do stuff like graces, devotions, and chapels, but how does God and our inclusion of God enrich the camp experience?

## 8 – Campfire

Message: Building our relationship with God (and our faith) is a process that takes its own means and its own timeline. We need to be attentive to its needs and its pacing.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: Matthew 13:31-32 “He told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.’”

Characters: Three friends

Props: Logs, twigs, fire supplies, camping supplies

Once upon a time, there were three friends who decided to go camping. They were determined to go all-out: no electricity, no fancy stuff, just their wits, basic supplies, and the elements. Now, these hooligans loved to challenge and compete against each other with the knowledge that at the end of the day, it was all in good fun.

As they were walking out into the wilderness, one of them pointed out the fact that it was getting fairly late in the day. The sun was starting to hang low in the sky, and they probably only had a few more hours of daylight left. So, the three of them found shelter and started casting lines to catch some fish for dinner.

As they had some time to kill, the three friends decided to have another one of their friendly competitions. They wanted to see who could build a fire to cook the fish the fastest. By that time, the friends had quite the catch of fish, so they decided that the winner would be decided by who could cook a fish the fastest.

[three friends could adlib about their ability to win the competition]

So, the first friend took his hatchet and darted off into the woods while the other two started gathering sticks and twigs nearby. After a couple minutes, the two friends could hear the sound of chopping wood in the distance.

Eventually, the two that stayed behind had a sizeable and varied collection of wood for their fires. The first friend could be heard from a mile away dragging huge logs and limbs from the forest.

The first friend grabbed all of the tinder he could find and made a huge mound in his area of the clearing. The second friend, eager to get his fire started, threw together a starter fire from some of the smaller pieces of wood he had and started to work on lighting it. The final friend seemed sluggish in comparison, carefully constructing a solid and ventilated teepee structure.

With a single strike of a match, the first fire flared up instantly. Excited, the first friend dumped his huge logs on the flame. Much to his surprise, the logs were so large that they snuffed out the fire without hesitation.

At this point, the second friend had a decent starter fire going. Eager to win the competition, he started blowing harshly on the wood to cause the fire to flare up even more. With each blow, the three of them could see the big bright flames, and with each inhale, the flames got bigger and bigger. But the friend

eventually blew on the fire too hard and the tinder supply burned out, killing his fire because the flames hadn't burned long enough to catch.

The final friend had been carefully putting the final touches on his structure. With a strike of the match, the flame leapt to the tinder. The first two held their breath as the third friend sat there intently paying attention to the needs of the fire. When the flames were dwindling, he gently blew on the coals to grow the fire. When the wood on the fire caught, he would let it burn for a while before adding larger and larger things. The third friend knew that a good and lasting fire takes time, and after a few more minutes of careful attention, the three friends had a wonderful fire for their dinner.

Conclusion: When we are working to build a relationship with God, it can be hard to make sense of it: step 1, how it changes, what our role is within it, etc. In fact, making sense of it can be so intimidating that we start to deceive ourselves in terms of what is best for that growth. Sometimes we try to jump to the endgame where our faith is a mighty flame burning from giant logs. We do this when we take risks of faith that are well beyond what we're ready for, and when things don't pan out the way we want them to, it snuffs out our fire. It snuffs out what little faith or relationship with God we have. This would be like if camp sets us on fire for God and we set out to make a monumental difference in the world with everything we do day in and day out. Eventually, we burn ourselves out with this task for which we aren't ready. On the other side of things, sometimes we try to quicken the process, rushing things beyond their time. This can burn us out. Air is a thing that fire needs, but as seen in the skit, too much of it killed the fire. We can burn ourselves out by forcing ourselves to constantly do things we think are right for our relationship with God when our hearts simply aren't there (like constantly reading the Bible or constantly praying). But on the other hand, we know that's the direction we want to go, so what gives? St. Teresa of Avila once said, "Oh God, I don't love you, I don't even want to love you, but I want to want to love you." When we get ourselves to a position where the desire is there--when we want to start taking those steps towards God, *that's* what God runs with. That's what leads us to a lasting relationship with God where He guides us through the stages of building the fire. Those stages start with a flame for God, by having a desire to grow closer with Him. When we start genuinely exploring our relationship with God through prayer, community, reflection, and Scripture, that's when that fire starts to catch.

Diving Deeper: Is it possible to take jumps in faith or quicken its growth dramatically?

## 9 – Cracked Pot

Message: The Lord will use our flaws; in our weaknesses we can find strength.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9: But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Characters: 1 Narrator, 2 pots, bearer, (another person to put out flowers)

Props: Fake flowers, pot, pot with holes, pole

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master's house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

[Perfect pot brags and insults the cracked pot]

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts." The pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the Pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Conclusion: Each of us has our own unique strengths and weaknesses. In a way we are all cracked pots. But if we will allow it,

the Lord will use our flaws to grace His Father's table. In God's great economy, nothing goes to waste. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and you too can be the cause of beauty. Know that in our weakness we find our strength.

Diving Deeper: What weaknesses can this skit apply to, and what uses can there be for these weaknesses? In other words, how does this tangibly apply to us?

## **10 - Flash Flood**

Message: God hears our prayers and is quick to help us out. Sometimes we don't recognize it, though, because God acts according to his plan, not ours.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Adaptations: different people that come to the rescue, for example the Avengers

Scripture: Psalm 32:6-7 “Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”

Philippians 4:19 “And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.”

Characters: flood victim, news reporter, lifeguard, boater, helicopter pilot, God

Flood victim walks on stage and talks about going to the lake, pool, river, some type of waterfront activity.

News reporter: This just in—this area is in danger of a flash flood! Water levels are becoming dangerously high! Everyone is urged to take shelter immediately!

Flood victim notices the water is getting higher and starts to panic. They pray for God to come save them.

Lifeguard comes by to help.

Lifeguard: Here, hold on to my rescue tube, I’ll get you to safety! (can adlib more stuff)

Victim: No thanks, I’ll be okay! God will save me.

Lifeguard: Are you sure? You should let me help you. The water’s getting deeper.

Victim: Oh no. I’ve been praying, and I know God will help me.

Lifeguard leaves. The victim now has to climb higher to keep on top of the water. He continues to pray. Boater comes by.

Boater: Hey there! Looks like you could use a hand! Climb in my boat. I’ll help you out.

Victim: Oh, that won’t be necessary. Thanks anyway though.

Boater: Are you crazy? You’ll drown out here!

Victim: God will save me. I'll be alright.

Boater: Alright have it your way!

Boater leaves. Victim has to climb higher to keep out of the water. He keeps praying. Helicopter comes.

Pilot: Hello down there! Grab this rope. I'll take you to safety!

Victim: Thanks, but no thanks. I've been praying. I know that God will come to save me.

Pilot: Please! The water is continuing to rise! Let me help you!

Victim: I appreciate your concern but don't worry about me. I'll be okay. Like I said, God will save me. Helicopter leaves.

God: (Speaks victim's name)

Victim: God?! Is that you?

God: Yes.

Victim: What has taken you so long? I've nearly drowned! Haven't you heard my prayers?

God: Of course I have, and I have tried to help you. I sent three rescuers to you, but you denied each one of them.

Victim: What? I don't understand...

God: You expected me to rescue you in a miraculous, earth-shattering way, but sometimes when I work, I'm a bit more subtle, like leading a lifeguard or a boater or a pilot to stumble upon you.

Victim: Oh... I'm so sorry God, I didn't know. I promise I'll take what you give me this time.

God: Ok, I will send someone to save you.

One of the previous rescuers comes back and saves him or a new type of rescuer can come.

Conclusion: God provides us with what we need. It may not always be in the form that we are looking for, but he will answer prayers and his way is always best. Look for the answers God is giving to your prayers, and when you see them, be thankful!

Diving Deeper: What is an example in the Bible of people missing out on God's answer to prayer because it wasn't the way they wanted their prayers to be answered?

## **11 – Fleet Foot and Running Deer**

Message: As we go through life, God would like us to help each other.

Setting: RV/LV, mid-week

Scripture: Matthew 20:26-28 “Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must become your slave. For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.”

Characters: Narrator, Chief, Fleet Foot, Running Deer, Man, Blind Woman

Props: 2 bags, rocks for each bag

A long time ago in a great Native American tribe there was a wise old chief. The Chief realized that he had served his tribe long and well and his time on the earth would soon come to an end. The Chief looked to his tribe and asked the great spirits to show him who the next chief would be. The Chief thought long and hard and finally narrowed his choice down to two strong warriors, Fleet Foot and Running Deer. The great Chief brought these two warriors before him. The Chief told them of the many great leaders the tribe had had before him, and that one of them would be next in line to be chief. It would be the one who proved herself to be the most worthy by a test of their skill, strength, and thinking. Fleet Foot and Running Deer would both be given a bag of hot coals. With this bag they were to run across the plains and the mountains in a great race. Once they completed the running they were to return to the tribe’s campsite and use the coals to light the Chief’s fire. The first person to successfully do all of this would be the next chief.

The day came for the race and Fleet Foot and Running Deer stood at the starting line. The great Chief gave the signal and the runners took off. Fleet Foot sprinted into the lead and slowly lengthened the gap between herself and Running Deer.

Fleet Foot had gained a small lead when she saw an old man by the side of her path. She slowed down and the man cried out, but Fleet Foot knew she must be the first one back to have a chance to light the fire and win the contest, so she continued on.

A few minutes later, Running Deer came across this man and stopped. The man spoke of how he was waiting for his son to return from hunting and his fire had gone out. He was unable to move to restart the fire and would surely die in the night without warmth from the fire. Running Deer thought for a moment and then poured her hot coals into the fire pit. She got the fire relit and helped the old

man. Once Running Deer saw the old man was okay, she gathered some coals for her bag and started to run again.

Fleet Foot was getting farther ahead now. She was almost halfway done when she saw a woman searching the ground with her hands. She slowed down to see what she was doing and quickly realized that she was blind. Knowing that the woman would be no help to her in this race, she ran past her and continued on.

A short time later Running Deer came along the same woman. She stopped and the woman told her that she was blind and could not see to light her fire. Running Deer once again emptied her coals onto the fire pit and started a fire for the blind woman. When she saw that the blind woman was okay, she took some coals from her fire, put them in her bag, and started to run again.

By now Fleet Foot was way in front of Running Deer. She could see the tribe's campsite in front of her and the others cheered as she approached. As the Chief watched, Fleet Foot poured her coals into the chief's fire pit. Fleet Foot blew and blew on the coals to try to start the fire but the coals had cooled off on the long journey and would not relight.

About this time Running Deer was spotted running toward the campsite. She ran to the Chief and emptied her coals into the fire pit. Within a few minutes Running Deer had created a fire with her hot coals and a new chief had been found for the tribe.

Conclusion: Running Deer was successful in the race and pleased the Chief because he considered other people's needs above his own. If we want to be successful in God's eyes and please him, we need to help others along the way. This is what makes us great in God's kingdom: Putting God first, others second and yourself third.

Diving Deeper: How does Running Deer using his acts of service to renew his coals relate to our faith journey?

## **12 – God in the Driver's Seat**

Message: We value the I'm Third motto here at camp, but how often is that a guideline as opposed to a way of life? If we really want to pursue God and a relationship with Him, we must sacrificially live out His kingdom here on Earth.

Setting: RV/LV; early/mid/late-week

Adaptations: Change conversation topics to make it more or less serious

Scripture: Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Characters: Jesus, camper

Props: chair, steering wheel, keys

*Camper approaches Jesus.*

Camper: Hey, Jesus! So I've been thinking recently, and I've decided that I really want to give you these. \*gives keys to Jesus\*

Jesus: Wow! I'm honored! You want me to drive? You know what this means, don't you? The person who sits here in the driver's seat gets to make all of the decisions.

Camper: Right! There have been a lot of times where I've made decisions that haven't turned out well, and I've been trying to live out the I'm Third motto... So I thought it would be best if I trust you to guide me.

Jesus: That's absolutely wonderful, Alexis. \*sits in chair as if getting into the driver's seat of a car\*

Camper: Ohhhh this is SO exciting! Okay. Make some decisions.

Jesus: Alright \*starts driving\* So what're you up to now?

Camper: \*Excited\* Well, right now I'm waiting in line to play some carpetball.

Jesus: Awesome, a great chance to show sportsmanship and humility. \*squints off ahead\* Hey what's that over there by flagpole?

Camper: Oh, that's just Robby. He was pretty upset in riflery today because his aim was a bit off.

Jesus: Ah, I see. \*starts turning\* I think we should go see if he's okay.

Camper: Oh, woah, woah, woah, woah \*steadily scooching Jesus off the seat\* I'm sure he's okay. Plus the bell's about to ring any minute, and I've been waiting here a long time \*Jesus falls off chair, Alexis swerves back car\* Oh sweet, it's my turn.

Jesus: \*calm\* Hey Alexis?

Camper: Yeah?

Jesus: What's up?

Camper: Nothing much, you?

Jesus: I mean I thought you gave the keys to me.

Camper: \*stops, deer in the headlight moment\* Ahhhhh, right. My bad. Okay, come back. I'll be good this time; I promise.

Jesus: \*sits in driver's seat\* Alright, it looks like we have lake time next. How fun is that? Great opportunity for healthy community.

Camper: Yeah, I'm so excited to go on the Blob and the Wet Willies!

Jesus: While we're on the way, do you mind if I ask you about something?

Camper: Go ahead!

Jesus: So, the other day, you seemed to lash out a bit at Jess during that game of Running Charades.

Camper: Ah! You know, I knew you were going to bring that up. \*starts climbing over Jesus to grab at the driver's wheel\* I was going through a lot of emotions, and I decided not to get too upset over it because everybody has those sorts of days.

Jesus: \*calm\* I actually think you should apologize.

Camper: \*slowly succeeding in getting Jesus out of the seat\* Oh but that would be SO embarrassing and it's really not a big deal.

Jesus: \*stands up\* Hey Alexis.

Camper: Yeah?

Jesus: You're doing it again.

Camperr: \*guilty\* Yeah... You're right.

Jesus: Alexis, if you really want to put into practice everything you're learning here at camp, you have to do things that might make you uncomfortable. You're going to have to give up some things, like your spot in the carpetball line or your pride in apologizing to Jess. Hopefully someday you find joy in Being Third, but it's not going to be easy. In fact, here at camp is probably one of the easier places to do it because you have this loving community that is here to encourage you in that way.

Camper: I understand. I'm really sorry for doing this. Please. \*gestures to seat\*

Jesus: Thank you. \*sits down\* \*lighter in mood\* Wow that was a fast week. Next stop, home! You know, if you want to know me more, a great way to do that is to read what I say in the Bible.

Camper: \*starting to go for the seat, slowly\* You know, I was thinking about that. Camp is such a special place, and I really don't think it'll be quite the same without--

Jesus: \*looks over at Alexis\*

Camper: Right. You're right. I want to do this. Let's go.

Conclusion: Saturday is a long way off from now, but what happens when we go home? How easy is it to slip back into the desires that we follow? I'd like for you to think of camp as a training ground. We want to inspire all of you to Be Third in a sacrificial way, and that can be really hard. However, I encourage you to persevere, as it is well worth the fight.

Diving Deeper: What people in the Bible tried to give up their keys but couldn't?

## 13 – God is Coming for Dinner

Message: When we bless other people, we bless God.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Adaptations: God is Coming for Rest Hour, God is Coming for (Hobo) Dinner

Scripture: Matthew 25:35-40 “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

Characters: Husband, Wife, Voice of God, Old Beggar, Stranded couple, Father, Daughter

The skit begins with a family is sitting around the house and talking when they get a phone call from an unexpected stranger.

“Ring Ring” – over long-ranger

The husband picks up the phone.

Husband: Hello!

God: Yes, this is God

Husband: God?

God: Yes, God! I am going to come and visit later today. Make sure that you are ready for me.

Family starts running around trying to clean the house and make sure that everything is in perfect order.

While they are getting ready for God to arrive an old beggar shows up at the door.

Old Beggar: Hello there. I haven't had a bite to eat in days. I was wondering if you could spare some extra food for me.

Husband: I'm sorry. We are expecting somebody much more important tonight. We don't have time for you. We need to save our food for our special guest.

The family continues to prepare the house for God.

A man and his wife show up at the house and knock on the door.

Man & Wife: Hello. Our car broke down just a little ways down the road. The next city is miles away. We were wondering if we could stay here for the night.

Husband: I'm sorry. We are expecting someone much more important. You will have to find somewhere else to stay tonight. Sorry!

Later on another man comes to the door with his daughter. She is very sick and needs a place to stay for the night.

Man: My daughter is very sick and I was wondering if you could help us. She needs some medicine and a place to stay. Could you help us out.

Husband: I'm sorry. We are expecting somebody important tonight. I wish we could help. Good luck!

The family continues to clean the house and get things ready. The family is very puzzled because God has not arrived yet.

God calls back again.

Ring Ring

Husband: (Somewhat impatiently) Hello

God: Yes, this is God.

Husband: We've been waiting for you. How come you haven't arrived yet?

God: I tried to come to your house three times today. I sent the Old Beggar, The Couple with the Broken Down Car, and The Young Girl who was sick. Each time I came you turned me away.

Husband: That was you God?

God: Not exactly, but when you denied those people in need, you denied me as well.

Family looks puzzled and ashamed.

Conclusion: God would like for us to care for other people. When we do this, we bless God by helping his children that he dearly loves. Ask God to show you how you can please him today by helping other people. When we do kind things for others, we are doing it for God.

Diving Deeper: What are ways we can be charitable and loving in the day-to-day?

## 14 – God is coming for Dinner (Version 2)

Message: When we bless other people, we bless God.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: Matthew 25:42 “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ And He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

Hebrews 13:1-2 “Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing people have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Characters: Narrator, Ruth, Poor Man, and Poor Woman

One winter's afternoon, Ruth went to her mailbox. There was only one letter. She picked it up and looked at it before opening it. There was something strange about it; there was no return address, no postmark, not even a stamp, just her own name and address. She read the letter.

Dear Ruth,  
I'm going to be in your neighborhood Saturday afternoon and I'd like to stop by for a visit.  
Love always,  
Jesus

Ruth's hands were shaking as she set down the letter. "Saturday," she thought. "That's today! But—why would the Lord want to visit me? I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer." With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets. "Uh oh! I really don't have anything to offer! I'd better hurry down to the store and buy something for dinner!"

Ruth reached for her purse and counted out its contents. There was not much there. “Hmm... Well I think I have just enough to make dinner!” She threw on her coat and hurried out the door, three blocks down to the store. Ruth searched the shelves and found a loaf of bread, cheese and some turkey. The money Ruth had was barely enough for her purchases. Nevertheless, she felt pretty good as she hurried home with her dinner tucked under her arm.

She was so busy thinking about how to arrange the food to look really nice that she didn't notice two people huddled in a doorway until one of them spoke. “Hey lady! Yeah, hey, could you help us?” It was a man and a woman, both of them dressed in little more than rags. Ruth paused, and the man walked up to her. “Look lady, I was hoping you could help us. I don't have a job, and my wife and I have been living on the street out here. Well, anyway, it's kinda cold this time of year, and we are hungry. We haven't eaten anything in a couple days, and I was hoping maybe you could spare something to help us out.”

Ruth looked at them both. They looked unclean and there wasn't a reason she could see why they couldn't get some kind of a job. She sighed. “Sir, I'd like to help you out, but I'm a poor woman myself. I don't have much food with me. I have a really important guest coming for dinner tonight, and I was planning on serving that to Him. Sorry.”

“Yeah, well, okay lady. I understand. Thanks anyway.” The man put his arm around his wife's shoulders; Ruth noticed how skinny she looked. The couple turned and began to walk away.

As she watched them leave, Ruth got a very familiar feeling in her heart. “Sir, wait!” The couple stopped and turned as she ran down the alley after them. “Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest.” And she handed the man her grocery bag.

The man's face lit up. “Thank you! Thank you so much!”

“Yes, thank you!” the woman added. Though she was smiling now, Ruth could see that she was shivering. It was quite cold out.

“You know...” said Ruth slowly. “I've got another coat at home. Here, why don't you take this one? I insist.” Ruth took off her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders. The couple thanked her again, and she went on her way smiling... without her coat and with nothing to serve her guest.

Ruth was freezing by the time she reached her front door. She was worried, too! The Lord was coming to visit, and she didn't have anything to offer Him! She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope in her mailbox.

“That’s odd,” she thought. “The mailman doesn’t usually come twice in one day.” She took the envelope out of the box and opened it.

Dear Ruth,

It was so good to see you today. Thank you for feeding and clothing my children.

I am so incredibly proud of you. I will see you again soon.

Love always,

Jesus

The air was still cold, but even without her coat, Ruth no longer noticed.

Conclusion: God would like for us to care for other people. When we do this, we bless God by helping his children that he dearly loves. Ask God to show you how you can please him today by helping other people. When we do kind things for others, we are doing it for God.

Diving Deeper: What are ways we can be charitable and loving in the day-to-day?

# 15 - God the Janitor

Message: God wants us to not only be open about our shortcomings with Him but also invite Him in to clean us of our impurities because He sees us for who we are and not our stains.

Setting: RV/LV; late-week

Scripture: Psalms 32:5 "Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord - and you forgave the guilt of my sin.'"

Characters: God as a janitor, person

Props: cleaning stuff, rag, mop, broom, bucket, "Sindex" bottle, "dirt" pieces (pieces of paper taped onto person's shirt), white shirt

Person: \*Looks at the cross\* Wow, when the light shines through this stain glass, you can see all the smudges on the cross. It's really dirty, someone should clean this up and dust it off.

God: \*Walks on stage\* Oh, I can fix that! \*Sprays cross and wipes it\*

Person: Whoa, that was easy! Sometimes I feel like my life is such a mess with school, and friends, and my family (add anything else you feel fits for age group). I wish it were that easy to clean my life up.

God: I can help with that! \*Spray Person\*

Person: AH! What was that for?

God: You said you wanted to get cleaned up, right?

Person: I mean yeah but..

God: \*Sprays Person again\*

Person: Okay man, you spraying me with that *Windex* isn't helping!

God: *Windex*? This isn't *Windex*, this is *SINDEX*. It helps clean you up and get rid of your sins. But it only works if you and are truly sorry.

Person: Oh..

God: Yeah, so now are you willing to give it a try?

Person: Umm, yeah I think I can give it a try.

God: \*Begins cleaning Person by spraying and rubbing and spraying and scrubbing\*

Person: \*Continually glances and tries to check out what the janitor is doing, have a little bit of awkward silence where the Janitor is cleaning and Person is unsure of how to act\*

Person: Sooo, what are you doing? Like, are they coming out, are you almost done? Can I help? What's happening?

God: \*Chuckles\* I'm just cleaning you up and of course they are coming out, it just takes some time, but you can talk to me if you want while I clean.

Person: Oh, umm okay. Well what do you want to talk about? What are you doing and how much longer do you think it will be?

God: Oh, I'm just cleaning you up but I can stop whenever you want. I'm just here to help you, but only if you want me to. It's your choice whether you want my help or not.

Person: Yeah, no I do. I guess I just didn't realize this would take so much scrubbing..

God: No worries, we all get stains.

Person: Well you've been working on this one for a long time... \*Glances at stain the janitor is cleaning\* OHHH.. I remember that one. Oh, that's from when I yelled at my mom because (and gives example/explains when that happened). \*Deep breath\* I should really apologize to her, that was so rude of me to do. As soon as I get to rest hour, instead of working on that

friendship bracelet, I'm going to write my mom and say sorry.

God: I think that's a great idea, because we all make mistakes, but being able to admit it and apologize is the challenge. OH and look at that! It came right out! On to the next one! \*begins cleaning second stain\*

Person: Huh, okay so what's this one for..? Ohhh that's for that one time when I was mean to one of my friends. He's just so good at EVERYTHING! Like all the time, anything I do he can do it better or faster or cooler or whatever. Do you know anyone like that?

God: Well no one is good at EVERYTHING, but I understand how it feels like that sometimes..

Person: Yeah or like all the time.. but the other day he tried "Gaga" and he's never played before and I've been playing for like 3 years and so he was the first person to get out and I told him that he's not very good, but that's not true, it's just that he hadn't ever done it.. but that was wrong of me. I think I'll ask him to play with me before lunch today and teach him a few of my tricks I've learned. Do you think that'd help?

God: Hmm.. I think that might help, and this stain is out too! Look at that!

Person: Wow, you're pretty good at this...

God: Well thanks, I'm not only good at getting stains though, I'm a pretty great duster too and I see you have a dust area riiiiight here. I can see you're a really good leader because you're positive, encouraging, and creative... but it doesn't seem like you've been leading very often.

Person: Well yeah.. I mean I just feel like other people have better ideas than me or are more popular than me so I just kind of let them lead, but I guess you're right.. I do really like to lead. Maybe I can teach some of my friends some of the fun camp games I learned here or tell them about the I'm third motto and lead by example.

God: That sounds like a great plan (insert their name), and now you're dust free. \*Looks Person up and down, checking to see if he's all cleaned up\*

Person: \*standing with arms crossed (or something like that) covering up one final sin/stain\*

God: Alright, well do you want me to get that last stain cleaned up for you? The one you're covering up right there? If not, that is okay, it's your choice. But no stain is too dirty or gross for me to get out. And I understand them, I get that we make mistakes sometimes, but I'm just here to help you get cleaned up if you want. It's your decision.

Person: \*peeks at the stain, hesitates, and uncovers it\* Sorry its so bad, I didn't mean to.. I just.. I didn't mean to but.. and I'm so sorry I'm really sorry and I'm really embarrassed and

God: \*Stops cleaning, looks Person in the eyes\* Oh no, it's okay. Everyone has mistakes and everyone has stains and I'm just here to help you get cleaned up. I'm here for you no matter what. I'll take care of it, I got you.

Person: \*Takes deep breath and acts vulnerable\*

God: \*finishes cleaning and hugs Person\*  
Well you are all cleaned up now and I think you are set.

Person. Wow, okay awesome! Thank you so much! I really appreciate it.

\*begins to walk away, but pauses and turns back\*  
Oh also, where did you buy that Sindex?

God: \*Chuckles\* Oh you can't buy this, you just have to come back to me and I'll get you all cleaned up again, no worries.

Person: Umm.. well see I have a mud hike later and our unit game, and I have a feeling I'm going to get pretty messy, so like could you just give me a little?

God: I'm sorry but it doesn't work that way. It is totally okay for you to get dirty again, I expect you to. But just keep coming back to me and no matter what, no matter how dirty, no matter how many stains you've made, I'll be here to clean you up, sound like a plan?

Person: Yeah.. but how will I find you, do you only clean here?

God: Well no, but if you just pray to me. Just talk to me, I'll be there to help.

Person: But like how do I do that?

God: Let's try it together, it's pretty simple, just like talking to a friend. So repeat after me..

Hi God,  
I need your help and guidance. I've sinned and made a bit of a mess. I realize I've made mistakes and want to say sorry, and I want to get better. Help me to recognize how I can work through and get rid of my stains so I can be my best self.

Think you can do that?

Person: Yeah I think I can do that.

\*Walk off stage together\*

Conclusion: We all have stains. We've all sinned before. We've all messed up, and that's okay because God is bent on pursuing us despite our mistakes. He is so incredibly willing to clean us up, help us fix our mess-ups, and get rid of our stains like in the skit. Psalms 32:5 says, "Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord- and You forgave the guilt of my sin.'" If we just talk to God about our sins, He'll take care of them.. and of our guilt too! However, it can be really difficult and humbling to confess that we messed up to God. Thankfully, God sees us for who we are and not for the dirt we have on us. At the same time, He doesn't want us to stay dirty. He doesn't want there to be anything standing in the way of our relationship with Him. May we always stay humble with God and allow Him to clean us of our dirt.

Diving Deeper: Why would trying to hide our sins from God and ourselves be problematic? What is an example of somebody in the Bible who tried to do just that?

## 16 – Growing Up

Message: God blesses us with community. He gives us people to challenge and inspire us, people to come alongside us and push us forward, and people to invest in and pass along those blessings.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: Hebrews 10:24-25a “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another”

Characters: Pine, Spruce, Maple

Close to the shore of a beautiful lake, far back in the mountains of Maine grew a very tall pine tree. Its branches reached far out as if they were trying to drink in more and more of the clear air and bright sunshine. Its roots reached far down into the earth as if they were trying to gather more and more nourishment from

the soil. Its top reached up into the air as if trying to see what was above the fleecy white clouds which floated over it. The trunk of the pine tree was strong, as it had needed to be when the cold northwest winds of winter blew over the lake.

One day, the old pine felt someone digging near his roots, and, looking down he saw a little spruce popping up out of the soil. Then he rustled all his branches for joy! There would now be someone to talk to and someone to help grow.

After the roots of the spruce were fairly well set, she began looking around to see who her neighbors were, and close beside her she found the trunk of the pine tree. She followed it up and up until she was almost dizzy. "Oh," she said, "What a big tree. How I should like to be as tall as that pine tree! How much it must see way up there in the sky. I am glad that I am planted so close to such a wonderful tree. Perhaps someday I can grow up to be big just like that."

That night, when all was still, the little tree heard a whisper; so she listened, for she felt that it came from the pine tree. Then she heard the old pine say, "Little spruce tree, I am so glad you have come to live near me. Can I help you in any way?" "Yes indeed, you can," said the little spruce, "I have been looking at you all day. What a wonderful tree you are! Tell me how to grow to be as tall as you are!"

"That is not a hard thing to tell, but it is a very hard thing to do," said the old pine. "You have to keep looking up every day and let nothing bend or break you. You must desire with all your might to be one of the tallest trees and then you'll grow and grow." "That I will do, and I will keep close by you so that I may grow like you," answered the spruce tree happily.

The days passed by, and every night the little spruce looked carefully to see if her trunk was just as straight as the trunk of the pine tree. And because she had a splendid tree to copy she too grew tall and strong.

When the winter came, the cold winds whistled about the little tree, but the old pine was a little in front of the spruce and saved her from some of the force of the wind. At night, when all was still again, the pine would whisper, "That was a strong breeze, little spruce, but it is over and you have gained strength by fighting it. Now look and straighten up, so that all the bend may be taken out of you." The little tree would murmur her thanks, straighten her trunk and nestle close to her big strong friend.

Finally, after many years, the little tree had grown so tall that her top barely reached the lowest branches of the pine. How proud she was. “I have looked up at you so long, and now at last I’m almost as tall as you. I am so happy, I don’t care whether I grow any more or not. You get more of the wind up there, but down here I am sheltered by you.” “That may be,” answered the old pine, “but you cannot give shelter if you are content to stay down there. You must not think of stopping now. Why, the world gets bigger and lovelier the higher up I grow. There is much more to see and it is much easier to breathe up here. Come up, come up!”

So the little spruce pushed ahead and grew even taller. How beautiful were the things they saw around the mountain lake! Then, to her surprise, the little spruce found that the great tree was still growing, still pushing up, still making sure that he did not bend. “Aren’t you ready to stop growing?” she asked the spruce. “Surely you are tall enough now.” But the old pine tree answered: “I will never be tall enough. I want always to grow. I have heard that there are trees in my family that have grown to be very much larger than I, and I want to be one of the best.” So the spruce spread her roots wide and deep, sent her branches far out for light and air, and kept growing toward the sky.

One day very early in the spring, when the snow was leaving the ground, the spruce was thinking of the days when she had been a tiny tree, living near the ground. Suddenly, she saw a maple sapling nestling close to her trunk. She heard the maple say to the nearby seedlings on the ground, “Do you see that big spruce way up there? Someday I am going to be like that and grow and grow.” So the pine sheltered the spruce from the blasts of the winter; the spruce helped the maple and kept the drifting snow from breaking it; and the maple spread its branches over the tender seedlings and kept them warm. As they kept striving and helping each other, they said, “We will look up and let nothing bend or break us. We must measure our growth by one who is greater and stronger than we.”

Conclusion: We can always look to God to find answers for how to follow Him through life. However, God blesses us with community in a variety of ways. He blesses us with people who are further along their faith journey who can train us and point us back to God. Counselors are some of these people. They are here to support you and challenge you in growth. Furthermore, God blesses us with people who come alongside us and share a mutual

sense of support and love, like your cabinmates. They're here to build you up in peer-to-peer love while challenging you to be vulnerable. Finally, God blesses us with people who need your investment, your help, your encouragement, and your guidance. Campers, these could be people in your cabin who are new to the faith or new to camp. They could be people in your schools or neighborhoods or youth groups that need that direction that you can give not out of pity but out of genuine love. God blesses us richly with His love and opportunity within community. When we continually try to align ourselves with what He wants for our lives, these opportunities and relationships begin to become more and more apparent.

Diving Deeper: How do we identify these people? How do we seek these people out?

## **17 – I.L.A.C.**

**Message:** Because God made us, we have value. God wants us to recognize this in each other and build each other up. We all have the ability to either tear down or lift up one another with our words and actions.

**Setting:** RV/LV; early/mid/late week

**Adaptations:** the character who is getting torn down begins to get angrier and takes it out on other people

**Scripture:** Proverbs 12:18 “Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

Characters: Person wearing ILAC sign, 3 sign crumplers, 1 nice person

The person wearing the “ILAC” sign starts off on the stage alone talking about what a great day it is and how excited they are to be at camp, etc. One at a time, the others come out and say something insulting and hurtful, teasing them. When they do, they wrinkle the sign the main person is wearing. By the time the third person is done, the sign is all wadded up. As this happens, the demeanor of the “ILAC” character noticeably changes. They are now down and not happy at all about the day.

The three that insulted the person then gather in a group to the side of center stage and continue to put down the ILAC character. The fourth person approaches the group; as he listens, he starts to defend the ILAC character with statements that complement the character. Could also just have a 4th person walk by like the others and ask the ILAC person what’s wrong and then cheer them up and smooth out their sign.

Then one by one, each of the people return to offer an apology and try to lift the person up. They also attempt to smooth the sign out a little as they do so. He is now starting to cheer up and by the end is once again very optimistic.

Conclusion: “ILAC” stands for I am Loveable and Capable. God made us this way. We all have a sign like this although it cannot be seen. We are all loveable and capable, but when people say mean things to us, it can hurt our ability to believe that we are loveable and capable. Our sign gets crinkled up. When others apologize and ask forgiveness, the ILAC sign is straightened out, but there are still wrinkles. That is why it is very important for each of us to never tear others’ ILAC signs but to lift each other up through encouragement. Loving each other like this pleases the Lord and helps us all to become the people God has meant us to be: loveable and capable!

Diving Deeper: Are the wrinkles always permanent? How do wrinkles affect us? Is it possible, when interacting with someone, to be affected by their wrinkles which were caused by somebody else? Howso?

## **18 - Inside Out**

**Message:** We often try to pack things on top of our human experience instead of letting God inhabit the deeper places of our innermost being and transforming us from the inside out.

**Setting:** RV/LV; mid/late-week

Scripture: Romans 12:1-2 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Characters: Narrator, Hiker, Friend, Holy Spirit figure, Homeless Person, Serving, Father, Son, Humility, two Helpers, Heckler, Courage (also need: chair, backpack, Bible, big log - SERVICE, blanket, rope - PATIENCE, traffic jam ladder for a bridge, brown tarp to cover the bridge initially, hammer - INITIATIVE, hand saw - HUMILITY, white flag - COURAGE)

There once was a man named Luan. Luan was a good man, but he recognized that there was something missing in his life. As he was sharing his plight with his dear friend Mel, her face lit up with delight. For she had something...Someone...to share with him. Mel told Luan about God...About how He created the earth and everything in it, including people, who actually used to walk with God in a garden...About the time that those people decided to step outside of this perfect relationship with God because they saw something that they thought would be better...About how this big mistake created a gap between God and people. She told him how God is so full of mercy and love for people that He sent His only Son Jesus to rescue those people, to take their punishment, to bridge the gap that they created...How God sent His Spirit to guide and comfort those people as they learned to follow God with their lives. She told him about how much God wanted Luan to receive His rescue and His Spirit.

Luan was overwhelmed with the power of this story and knew that this was exactly what was missing from his life, and he prayed with Mel then and there. After they prayed Mel told him that one day he would dance with God in His heavenly kingdom, but his greatest task now was to live into God’s kingdom on

this earth. She left him with a guidebook for his life...God's own Word to His people. She reminded him that the Holy Spirit is with him and told him that he would need the Spirit to understand the truths of God's Word.

As Mel left Luan, he continued to ponder the idea of living into God's kingdom on earth. He realized that he had no idea where God's kingdom on earth was, so he decided to set out on a journey to find the kingdom of God. Knowing that he had much to learn about living into God's kingdom once he found it, he grabbed a backpack and his guidebook and set out.

Luan began his journey with great excitement. Soon after he left, he witnessed something that caused him to pause and take it in. There was a homeless beggar sitting alongside the road, shivering from the cold. Many people saw her and just continued on their way, but one woman stopped and noticed. So she fetched some wood, started a fire, and invited the homeless woman to warm herself. The homeless woman hesitantly drew close to the fire to warm her hands, but she shivered still. So, the other woman reached in her own backpack and pulled out a blanket. She wrapped the blanket around the homeless woman, took her hand in encouragement, and then continued on her way.

Luan was touched by the way that this woman served and wondered if this was something he could do when he arrived at the Kingdom of God. He checked his guidebook and found that SERVING was definitely in there. He decided that this was something he should carry with him and tucked it in his backpack. Although he certainly felt the weight of it, he was left feeling slightly more prepared, and he set out again on his search for the Kingdom of God.

As he continued on his path, he came across a father and son working with a rope. Intrigued, he stopped to see what they were doing. The father was attempting to teach his son to tie a knot in the rope. Although the son tried, he kept messing it up, causing the father to have to untie the mess and start over. He watched as the father responded each time to his son's mistakes. Interestingly enough, instead of frustration, Luan saw great patience in this father. Instead of taking the rope from his son and doing it himself, he gently coached his son in the way of tying the knot...until finally, his son succeeded.

Luan was struck by this interaction between father and son, particularly by the great patience he saw in this father. He wondered if this was something he could do when he arrived at the Kingdom of God. He checked his guidebook and

found that PATIENCE was definitely in there. He decided that this was something he should carry with him and tucked it in his backpack. As he felt the rope press uncomfortably into his back, he couldn't help but feel like he was on the right track towards the Kingdom of God. So he continued in that direction.

Not long after he left the father and son, he saw a crowd gathering in the distance and decided to see what was going on. As he neared the crowd, he noticed that there was a bridge out. Underneath the bridge was a muddy, steep ditch that was unpassable. Many people stood around complaining about this hitch in their plans. But there was one man who picked up some tools and started working to repair the bridge. He worked hard while others watched. At one point he slowed down in his progress because he struggled to hold the wood while he sawed it. Two others in the crowd noticed his struggle and jumped in to help him. When the bridge was complete, the crowd began to celebrate. They started to cheer for the man who repaired the bridge, but he quickly deflected the credit, pointing to the two who held the board for him, declaring that it was a team effort.

As Luan watched the crowd disperse and cross the bridge, he was left pondering the actions and attitude of the man who repaired the bridge. Luan saw that while the others stood around whining and complaining, this man took great initiative and jumped in to fix the bridge. He also saw that when this man could have easily taken all of the credit for the bridge, he chose humility and shared the credit with the two who helped him. He wondered if these were things he could do when he arrived at the Kingdom of God. He checked his guidebook and found that INITIATIVE and HUMILITY were definitely in there. He decided that these were things he should carry with him and tucked them in his backpack. He was quite pleased with how full his backpack was. And although he was starting to struggle under the increased weight and sharp edges, he felt that it must just be a part of the uphill battle, and he set out again on his search for the Kingdom of God.

Although he moved much slower now, he continued to make forward progress. Then, along came a fellow hiker. Luan hoped to find encouragement from this man, but instead, the man began to heckle him. He used harsh words, making fun of Luan's full backpack and his struggle underneath the weight of it. He took it one step further and tried to trip him up. Just as the heckler was about to push him over, another hiker showed up. This hiker stood in the way of the heckler. He drew a white flag of truce and insisted that the heckler leave Luan

alone. He stood up to the bully and rescued Luan.

Luan was overcome with thankfulness for the courage that this man showed in the act of standing up for him. He wondered if this was something he could do when he arrived at the Kingdom of God. He checked his guidebook and found that COURAGE was definitely in there. He decided that this was something he should carry with him and tucked it in his backpack. As much as he wanted to be pleased by all that he had picked up along the way...all that would help him once he found the Kingdom of God, he found himself overwhelmed by the task of carrying it all. Nonetheless, he hoisted his backpack up to continue on his search for the Kingdom of God.

But he didn't make it very far. He just could not handle the weight of it all. And he collapsed right there on the path.

At that very same time, God had stirred in Mel's heart to pray for her friend Luan. As she prayed for him, she couldn't shake the feeling that he was in trouble and needed help. So she got up and went for him.

Mel found Luan lying under a huge backpack along the side of the path. She quickly removed the pack from his back and gently lifted him. As he came to, she asked him about the contents of the backpack. He explained that he picked these things up from people along the path to the Kingdom of God. He told her that he wanted to be prepared with all that he needed to do when he arrived to the Kingdom of God.

Mel sighed, and with a gentle look of compassion on her face, she explained to Luan that he didn't need to look any further for the Kingdom of God. She told him that the Kingdom of God was right there...that following Jesus with his life was living into the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Luan was very confused. He told Mel that it must be easier for her because she already knew what to do to follow Jesus. But he was new to all of this. He needed these things to guide him and ground him.

Mel explained to Luan that he didn't need those things to guide him and ground him in following Jesus; he needed God's Spirit, who has been here the whole time.

Luan argued that he was certain that each thing he carried was something that

he was supposed to do. He checked the guidebook, and they were all there. Luan then told Mel that he just got a bit tired, but he was ready to get back on the trail...he could handle it. As he tried to put the pack on his back, he collapsed again. Mel, once again, removed the backpack and lifted him up.

Mel explained that each of those things are good, but they are not the way there...they are the result of being there. God did not intend for us to earn our way to His Kingdom. She told him that there was truly nothing that he could do in and of himself that would get him into the Kingdom of God. She reminded him that Jesus did the work for that.

Mel told Luan that he was trying to transform himself from the outside in, but that he would never succeed in that. She explained that true and lasting transformation comes from the inside out. Instead of any work that he could do on the outside, it comes from the work that God would do in his heart...if he would only let God inhabit the deepest part of who he was.

Mel explained that the uphill part of following Jesus is not that we have a long list of things we have to do. It is uphill in that we have to surrender ourselves to God. To follow Jesus and live into the Kingdom of God, we have to be willing to let go of everything. Our priorities, our dreams, our plans...all God's.

Luan paused to let this "inside out" idea soak in. He looked at the backpack and thought of the unbearable weight of doing. Then he looked to the Lord and considered the challenge of surrender.

Mel reached her hand out to Luan, and as he took it, he said, "I will follow."

Conclusion: A lot of times when we're trying to build a relationship with God, we get concerned about the things we do, the ways we can prove our relationship to God. The thing is that when we operate this way, we spend so much of our willpower worrying about reaching a standard that it can be hard to approach God vulnerably. When we approach God vulnerably-- that is, not trying to prove anything but simply wanting to love and invest yourself into who God is and what He has laid out for your life in the Bible out of the overflow of the love God initially showed you--that's when all of the other things fall into place.



He gets alone in the jungle tree away from the other monkeys,  
F                    C                    G                    C  
But it's no fun to eat the thing that don't belong to you.

### CHORUS

C                                    G                    C  
Kalepo, bring back banana! You only hurt yourself inside.  
C                                    G                    C  
Kalepo, bring back banana! You got to get it right.

### VERSE 2

The birds in the jungle they heard about Kalepo.      C G C  
The snake and the burro, they heard it from the beetle. C G C  
They said he was a naughty boy to take from the other monkeys, F C G C  
Everyone hoped that he would learn that it was wrong to steal. F C G C

NARRATOR: "Hey, Kalepo, better come back with that banana or you gonna be in plenty hot water, man!"

### VERSE 3

Old Desmond the lion he was the king of the jungle.      C G C  
One day as he passed by he stopped to see the monkeys.      C G C  
They told the king about their friend who loved to steal bananas, F C G C  
Desmond he raised his hairy head and this is what he said:      F C G C  
"Hey Kalepo, you shame me, you are a selfish monkey!      C G C  
By stealing from others you made yourself so ugly.      C G C  
But if you bring back stolen fruit right now and say you are sorry, F C G C  
Never to rob your friends again, then we'll be kind to you."      F C G C

### CHORUS

NARRATOR: "Hey don't you know . . . when Kalepo saw how bad he had been, he brought back the bananas that time! There was such a party . . . and from then on he climbed the banana tree just like the other monkeys."

Conclusion: Sometimes it might be hard to believe that God will forgive us for all of our sins when we ask forgiveness, but that's exactly what he does! No matter what we've done, when we turn away from that sin, God wipes the slate clean. And out of that grace and forgiveness that God shows, us, we are called to show that

same grace and forgiveness to other people when they ask forgiveness for the times that they have hurt us. Forgiving people can be hard especially if they really hurt us, but remembering the ways that God forgave you for all of the things you've done might make it a bit easier. Additionally, forgiving people when it's really hard is an expression of love in response to the love God has shown us.

Diving Deeper: What does it mean to forgive? Why can this be hard for us? Is repentance a one-time thing?

## 20 – Parable of the Sower

Message: We learn a lot of good things about the Lord at Camp T, are they going to go into our heart and become a part of our lives creating fruit for God or are we going to go back to living the way we were before we heard the Good News.

Setting: RV/LV; late-week

Scripture: Luke 8:11-15

Characters: Narrator, The sower/farmer, 4 seeds, thorns, birds, a friend

Narrator: “The sower went out to sow his seed...”

Sower: Good morning everyone! I am a farmer and I am going to sow my seed! I am going to plant these seeds and hope for a great harvest.

The sower sows the seed and walks off stage.

Narrator: “...and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled underfoot and the birds of the air ate it up.”

Seed comes on stage, looks around and a bird comes and swoops down and carries it off.

Narrator: “Other seed fell on rocky soil and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.”

Seed 2: Ah, the sun, how wonderful, it is helping me grow! But ooh, this soil, it is so rocky! I can't seem to get my roots to go

down deep into the soil. Wow, it is really hot out here. If only I could get a drink of water, does anyone have water?! I can't get my roots into the soil to get water! Oh no!! I feel like I am about to faint!

The seed faints to the ground.

Narrator: "Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out."

Seed 3: Alright! I am starting to grow! This is great, I've got sun, I've got water and great soil and, oooh. Look at those guys! They are growing up right next to me, like we are buddies or something. They look kind of interesting and.... Oh no!

The thorns choke out the seed.

Narrator: "Other seed fell into good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great."

Seed 4: Wow, this is such wonderful soil! So rich and dark and the sun is glorious and I feel so strong! I just keep growing bigger and more fruitful!

Narrator: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear! Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved."

Seed 1: Chapel and devotions are interesting and all... I mean I hear this stuff every day, but I just don't believe it.

Narrator: Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away."

Seed 2: Yeah Chapel! This is so wonderful! I love chapel songs and talking around the devotion candle at night. It is JUST what I needed to hear! I love it! Seeing what the Bible has to say is also SO wonderful, and I love what I am learning at chapel! But now that I'm home, I realized I forgot how hard it can be to do all those things at home... And whenever my friends come along to gossip about people, it's so easy to just fall right back into my comfort zone... Uh... Maybe I'll just not worry about it now and maybe think about trying again when I go to camp next year.

Narrator: "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the

ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.”

Seed 3: I am so glad I learned about God and His Bible! These things are so important and good to know. I believe this is the truth and I want to live my life according to the “I’m Third Motto”. Oh look! My friends decided to stop by! I can’t wait to tell them all that happened and practice everything I’ve learned. But... what if they think that what I say is stupid...? Or what if they stop talking to me altogether because they can tell I’ve changed? I really like hanging out with them, but would they want me around if I try too hard to Be Third?

Narrator: “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

Seed 4: I really believe that the “I’m Third Motto” is the way I should live my life. I really believe what the Bible says. I am so glad I learned these things! I can’t wait to tell my friends about everything that happened.

Friend: Hey! You’re back from camp, how was it?

Seed 4: It was great, I learned so much! I got this new Bible and I am excited about reading it. Do you want me to show you a cool story? There is this story about a guy that went out to plant some seeds and some of them grew and some of them didn’t. I want to be like the seed that grows and is fruitful. I want to have God’s fruit in my life!

They walk off the stage looking at the Bible together.

Conclusion: While you were here at camp, you have been given a seed. That is God’s Word. The things you have learned in chapel, devotions, from your counselors and from each other, these are all ways the seed of God’s Word has gotten into your heart. Your heart is like soil, how will the seed go in? How will it grow? Which seed do you want to be (for the rest of camp or as you return home from camp)? May each one of us be like the fourth seed and produce a bountiful crop. There are ways to keep the experience real (for the rest of the week) when we go back home: tell others about camp

and its effects on you, pray, get involved in a faith community like church or youth group, read the bible. Keep the memories alive.

Diving Deeper: Were there parts in your life where you felt like one of the other seeds? How did that change throughout your life?

## 21 – Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

Message: No matter where you are in life, God welcomes you into leaning into the plan He has for you.

Setting: RV/LV; mid/late-week

Scripture: Matthew 20:1-16

Characters: Narrator, Landowner, First Hour, Third Hour, Sixth Hour, Ninth Hour, Eleventh Hour, Foremen

Story:

*NOTE: You can explain a bit of background in the beginning a-la-Desert-Pete to explain how back in the times of the Bible, people would be hired to work twelve hours for a full day's pay: a denarius, which was a silver coin.*

*One side of the stage is the landowner's estate, and the other is the marketplace.*

*Landowner is getting out of bed, stretching, and heading into town.*

Narrator: The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard.

Landowner: \*to First\* You, there. How would you like to be employed in my vineyard for the day? I will pay you a full day's wages for your work."

First Hour: Absolutely! Let's go!

Landowner: \*walking back to the vineyard\* Okay! We could really use some help pruning the crops. If you could do that, and once the end of the day arrives (the twelfth hour), we can meet up again so you can collect your pay.

First Hour: Alright, I'll start working right away.

Narrator: And so work on the vineyard began for the day. At about the third hour, the landowner decided that although the work being done was good and wholesome, he wanted to invite more people into the task at hand. The landowner went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them...

Landowner: You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.

Narrator: The workers looked at each other and shrugged, following the landowner back to the vineyard. They figured that even though it wouldn't be a full day's work, going to work for whatever they could get in would be worth it.

At this point, the sun was high in the sky, and the vineyard was smack dab in the middle of the heat of the day. Even though the laborers were well on their way and doing good work, the landowner wanted to bring more people into the work that was to be done.

So, he went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. At this point, the new laborers that the landowner asked were confused. Surely the landowner wouldn't want *them* to do his work. There were already perfectly capable people well on their way in doing the landowner's work in the vineyard, and surely the landowner wouldn't want to pick the leftover laborers. But, the landowner reassured them that they were welcome and that he would pay them whatever is right. So, the laborers decided to join the landowner in the work that he had laid out for them.

Just before the end of the day, at about the eleventh hour, the landowner decided that he wanted even more people to do his work. So, he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them...

Landowner: Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?

Workers: Because no one has hired us.

Landowner: You also go and work in my vineyard.

Narrator: The workers were dumbfounded. There was only an hour left to the work day. Why would the landowner bother to bring in more people to do his work? And surely they were nowhere near good enough to do his work. The workers figured that since they were the last ones left, surely they were the lowest of the low, the bottom of the barrel. But, as the landowner did for the other people he hired throughout the day, he reassured the workers and said that all he asked of them was that they would be willing to do his work in the vineyard. So, the last laborers went to the vineyard to put in an honest hour's work.

When the evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foremen...

Landowner: Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.

Narrator: The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came, and, much to their surprise, they each received a denarius--a full day's wage--even though they only worked a single hour out of the whole day.

So, when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. The same amount. A full day's wage. When they received their pay, the earlier laborers began to grumble against the landowner.

Early workers: These men who were hired last worked only one hour and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.

Narrator: But he answered one of them...

Landowner: Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?

Narrator: So the last will be first, and the first will be last.

Conclusion: It can be difficult taking the first step into a relationship with God. What do we do? Where do we start? *When* do we start? Are we even worth God's time? God is like the landowner from the skit. No matter where we are in our lives, God welcomes us into the life he has in store for us. In addition to that, when we decide to lean into God's plan--when we decide to prioritize God and His teachings above our own plans and desires--He gives us the same wonderful reward, and that is access to a relationship with Him. God meets us where we are no matter where we are in life. All God wants of us is to be willing to pursue that life with Him.

Diving Deeper: What advice can you give to the early laborers? What are the snares and pitfalls those people typically fall into?

## 22 - Plink

Message: In the Body of Christ, all parts are useful and necessary.

Setting: RV/LV; early-week

Adaptations: Be creative with what is being made, and what goes in.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body."

Characters: The Machine-maker, one or two people for each part

A “machine-maker” wants to build the world’s greatest machine, a machine made up of all sorts of parts. He will bring up pre-determined “volunteers” to help him build this incredible machine.

Two people are spark plugs. The machine-maker sets them in position and gives them a sound and/or motions to do. He has them practice their part.

Then he asks for the rest of the parts. Go through the same procedure: 1.) bring each part down one at a time, 2.) set them in position, 3.) give them a sound or motion, and 4.) they practice their part.

Suggested parts (these can be added to or deleted, be creative)

*view finder	*motor
*mirror	*computer
*runner	*calculator

The second to last item of the machine is the “ON/OFF” switch.

The last part is the “Plink” part. This is the most important part of the machine. When “Plink” is put into place, Plink’s action and noise is very simple: flick finger in and out and say “plink”.

Now have a trial run with the whole machine. Make sure to turn the machine on with the “ON/OFF” switch.

The machine-maker is so thrilled with this awesome machine that he decides to enter it in a contest so he leaves.

While the machine-maker is gone, the machine “comes to life”. Each part begins bragging about how great they are. Eventually, they see Plink and the parts begin to mock and make fun of Plink. They all say how unimportant Plink is and tells Plink that they do not need him/her. So Plink leaves feeling rejected.

By this time the machine-maker returns and decides to try out the machine one more time. (As the machine-maker was coming back to the machine, the machine parts see him, quiet down, and get back into their positions.)

The machine-maker turns the switch on and the machine revs up just a little and then dies. The machine-maker goes hysterical trying to find out what’s wrong with his wonderful machine. He checks all the parts and notices that Plink is gone. “What happened to Plink?” he asks. The machine parts all point off-stage to where Plink is.

The machine-maker goes over to Plink and asks what happens. Plink explains

and then the machine-maker tells Plink that he is important and is very much needed for the machine to work. The machine agrees.

Plink joins the group again and the machine-maker turns the machine on and the machine is working well once again. They all live happily ever after!

Conclusion: God has given us all important gifts and talents. It is good for us to appreciate these different things in one another and be grateful for the things God has given you! You are an important part of God's family!

Diving Deeper: What is the goal of the Body of Christ?

## 23 – Prayer Box

Message: Sometimes, it feels as if our prayers flutter up towards the sky, hit the ceiling, and fall back down. It can feel like God does not care about the things that we care about. Although prayers may seem unanswered, we must learn to accept that God has a plan for us, and it is much better than any plan we may create for ourselves.

Setting: LV; late-week

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The

Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**”

Characters: Jesus and a believer

*Script*

(Note: Special attention should be paid to the timing of this skit, as it will set the mood for the entirety of the skit.)

*Believer enters an enclosed room, covered with different posters.*

Believer: Where am I? \*ad lib/look around\* Is this... my prayer box? I think that I am inside of my prayer box... Woah. I wonder how many of these God has actually read!

*Begins to read some of the prayers, recognizing many of the prayers and their outcomes and collecting them along the way.*

Believer: \*joyful\* This was when I prayed for friends at the beginning of middle school. I ended up with my best friend... I am so grateful for Allie and her impact on my life. Thanks God!

\*New card, reminiscing\* Ooh, I remember being so nervous to perform in my high school production! I prayed for courage, and it definitely calmed my nerves. That was the best show I've ever been in.

\*New card, bothered\* This was when I prayed for my dog, Lance. He was so sick, and I just wanted God to help him get better. He ended up passing, and I lost my best friend... life just hasn't been the same since.

\*New card, clearly upset\* Wow. This situation put my family in a tough place. When life seemed great, my mom lost her job. I prayed and prayed that God would give her her job back, or that we wouldn't have to move... and he gave her a job, sure, but

we had to move halfway around the country. It was so hard to meet new people, and I still don't feel like I fit in here...

*\*New card, frustrated\* God! I've been praying about this for a long time. We lost our new house shortly after moving, and we are now living in this horrible apartment. I'm scared, I don't feel safe... and I just needed you to help us God... but You didn't...*

*Becomes very upset, there is an obvious tension and frustration. Then break down.*

God, what are You doing up there? I poured my heart into these prayers, I wasted hours of my life talking to YOU, but for what?! To be ignored and disappointed? I want so many things, and the things I'm asking for are not even that hard for You to do... do You even care about me?

*At this point, God enters the room. He begins to read through the prayers, gently nodding His head and smiling, handling all of the prayers carefully. Some, He flips over and writes something new on the back.*

Believer: *\*reacting to the specific actions God is doing, adlib\* What are you doing?! That one is really important. Please read that one... God, I need you to fix that. Wait, aren't you going to do anything about that?! Please, God.*

Why are You doing this to me? How can I trust You when You don't answer my prayers? *\*throws note cards she had been holding at Him\**

*God looks at character lovingly, and brings one of the cards over. He embraces them while they read the card.*

Believer: *\*annoyed\* Yes, my dog died, I know. \*God turns over the card\* \*pause, slow, processing\* You will lose your dog, but you will gain a heart for those whose hearts are breaking. You will come alongside people who are coping with loss and show*

them My love. \*pause\* \*annoyed again\* Was THAT the best way to do that, though?! And who are these people whose hearts are breaking? I mean... I mean... My friend Abby lost her dog a few years after... And I just sat with her and cried with her... And she said that she never felt like anybody understood her like I did that day.

\*flips to next card\* Well this one. THIS one. My mom STILL lost her job and we STILL moved across the country \*God flipping the card over as she's speaking\* \*pause\* You will move across the country, but you will also move your new peers. You will be challenged in Love and Truth, and you will spread Love and Truth to those who have been searching for Love and Truth for so long. \*pause\* \*quiet\* Yeah, well I... \*God gives her a third card\*

\*quiet\* This was the prayer I wrote when I asked You to give us the money we needed to keep our new house. \*flips card over\*. "They will lose their house, but they will gain a value for responsibility. They will gain a new community of support in the new apartment complex, and these people will become family."

*Believer begins to weep when they realize that God does indeed care about the things they care about, as he has answered many of the prayers, just not in the exact way that the believer asked.*

*Skit ends with God and Believer embracing and walking off of the stage together.*

Conclusion: God cares about the things you care about, and although unanswered prayers may seem like a curse, they are often always blessings in disguise. Instant gratification is something humans value. But God has crafted our beautiful story, and while trusting God's timing and His plan for you can be hard, faith means believing and trusting that whatever is beyond our personal struggle is better than any story we could write for ourselves. God does not want you to give up on Him. He wants to meet you where you are, because He cares deeply about the things

you care about. He also wants you to recognize that His plan for you is the best plan for you.

Diving Deeper: What are some times in your life when you felt like God was walking away from you, but He was actually preparing your heart for a blessing?

# 24 - Prayer Chapel

Message: There are many ways that we can pray to God.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Adaptations: Praying in different languages, praying in song

Scripture: Philippians 4: 6,7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

I Thessalonians 5: 16-18 “Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Characters: 2 People to sign praises, 1 Person to pray while doing an activity, 1 Person to so a silent prayer, 3 People to pray in a group, 1 Person to pray in another language

Five scenarios will be used to show the versatility of prayer and some of the different ways in which we can pray to God.

Scene 1: Two people singing praises to God (pick some chapel songs) in agreement with the words that are being sung as their prayer to God. Telling God that we love him.

Scene 2: Activity Prayer can be prayed while the actor is climbing MT. Wood or playing soccer, or whichever activity you choose. (NOTE: this can be framed as either prayer to overcome an obstacle or the person making an effort to set aside a specific action to simultaneously pray)

Scene 3: A person getting on their knees and bowing their head in prayer can depict Silent prayers.

Scene 4: Group prayer can be depicted as a group praying “popcorn style” out loud.

Scene 5: Someone can pray in another language.

Conclusion: We can pray in many different ways and languages

and God will hear us. Because we can pray in all these different ways, we don't have to stop whatever we are doing to pray. We can pray at all times, in all places! In fact, God wants us to pray continually and have an attitude of prayer throughout each and every day.

Diving Deeper: What's keeping you from an ongoing conversation with God?

## 25 - Prodigal Son

Message: God's love leads us to forgiveness

Setting: RV/LV; late-week

Scripture: Luke 15:31-32 "My son, the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

Characters: Narrator, Father, Younger Son, Older Son, Servant

Props: Money, food for pigs (pig bucket?), robe and ring

Narrator: There once was a man who had two sons. Together the sons and the father worked together on the land. Until one day the younger son approached his father...

Young Son: I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die.

Father: Although this grieves me, my son, I shall fulfill your wish. I will divide all that I own into two portions. Today I will give you your portion.

Narrator: A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land.

Young Son: I want to spend my father's money on all that I was not allowed to have at home.

Narrator: And so, the younger son spent all of his money on wasteful living. He thought that all of the most important treasure could be found here on the earth,

and so he indulged in many wasteful pleasures until he had no money.

Young Son: I have no more money, all that I had is gone, and I have nothing to show for the past month of my life. There is not even any food around for me to eat. I must try to find a job.

Narrator: And so the young son went in search of a job. Finally, he was able to persuade a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. But the young boy still did not have enough food for himself.

Young Son: I am so hungry that even the food I feed to the pigs looks good. At home, even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! I need to return home and say to my father, "Father, I have sinned both against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man."

Narrator: The boy left his job, and began to travel home. Meanwhile, back at home, the father was watching for the son. Many long days he had spent looking down the road, hoping to catch a glimpse of his lost son. While the son was still a long way off, the father saw him and he ran to him. He grabbed his son in his arms.

Young son: Father, I have sinned both against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son.

Narrator: But the father would hear none of it. He called out to his servants...

Father: Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening in the pen. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost but now he is found.

Narrator: And so the party began. All of the servants embraced the long lost son, and the father could not stop smiling. However, the older son was working in the field. When he came toward the house he heard music and asked one of the servants...

Old son: What is going on? What are we celebrating?

Servant: Your brother is back and your father has killed the calf we were fattening and has prepared a great feast. We are celebrating because of his safe return.

Narrator: The older brother was so angry at hearing this news he refused to go into the party. Instead his father came out and talked to him.

Old son: All these years I've worked hard for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on horrible things, you celebrate by killing the finest calf we have. I don't understand, Father!

Father: Look, dear son, you and I are very close, and everything that I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!

Narrator: And so, the son who had been lost was reunited with his father, and the son who had remained close to his father's will and heart discovered the power of forgiveness.

Conclusion: In this story, the younger son leaves seeking adventures living wildly until he spent all of his money. Tired and hungry he comes home seeking forgiveness from his father. His father welcomes him home and celebrates. In the same way, God is waiting to welcome us back from living a sinful life. God always loves and always forgives.

Diving Deeper: What is the cultural significance of wanting your inheritance early? Why does this make the conclusion of the story that much more impactful?

## 26 – Race to Know the Lord

**Message:** Our relationship with the Lord is like a race. There are many things that tempt us to stop the race, but if we continue with the Lord's help, we can win the race by finishing.

**Setting:** RV/LV; mid-week

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:1-2 "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

**Characters:**

Announcer, Slothful/Laziness, Enthusiasm/Excitement,  
Perseverance/Determination, Apathy/Carelessness,  
Diligence/Preparedness, Temptations

The skit begins with 5 racing contestant and an announcer. The runners run as the announcer commentates the entire race. The announcer begins:

"Here we are at the Camp Tecumseh Race to Know the Lord. This exciting event takes place every week as people come from miles around to witness this famous spectacle. Yes indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen, you heard right. Before your very eyes this day you are going to witness a race to know the Lord. To win the race all you have to do is finish it. That's right, cross the finish line and you are a

winner! Oh, but don't think it's just that easy, for along the way are obstacles too great to defeat unless you are committed to win.

"This morning in our Race to Know the Lord we have five racers. In Lane 1, the shortest distance around the course because it's the inside lane, we have Slothful—known for his keen ability to fall asleep at any time of day at the snap of a finger. Slothful is so lazy we had to carry him in for the race today and glue his eyelids up with Elmer's to guarantee he would not fall asleep or forget what he was doing.

"In Lane 2, we have Enthusiasm. He is so excited about the race. He was out two hours ahead of time to make sure he was ready. As you can tell, Enthusiasm is psyched-up and ready to go. I think he will make it.

"In Lane 3 is Perseverance—nothing will stop him! He has every reason not to be here. He has lost everything: his friends, his family, his possessions, his right arm is broken, his left ankle is sprained, he seemingly has nothing left to live for, but there is something special about Perseverance. He wants to know the Lord and nothing will stop him.

"In Lane 4, we have Apathy. Who knows why Apathy is here. Perhaps pride, perhaps peer pressure; but whatever it is, he doesn't seem to care.

"And finally, Lane 5 belongs to Diligence. Diligence has been working out hard for this race, carefully preparing for the task set before him. He has the best equipment, and the best trainers. He knows it won't be easy, but he's prepared for anything. The race is about to begin..."

"And they're off! Slothful is getting an okay start. Enthusiasm has not started yet, trying to encourage Apathy to enter the race. Perseverance is behind Slothful, but pressing on. Look at Diligence go! He will be finishing in no time. Oh no, Slothful is falling asleep! Looks like this is the end. Enthusiasm is encouraging perseverance to keep going. I think they'll make it!"

At this point the commentator makes ad lib comments and the different racers also ad lib their characters depending on who they are. As the runners race around the chapel they shout out things and do things that relate to their character quality.

Slothful starts out slowly after everyone has begun, falls asleep halfway through the race and snores loudly.

Enthusiasm runs to the track very excited and tries to encourage others, but to no avail. He finishes the race.

Perseverance limps around the track, slowly getting weaker and weaker, but

finishes the race none the less.

Apathy continues his one-liner “I could care less” and neither enters the race nor finishes it.

Diligence quickly races around in smooth form and finishes.

Along the way, all of the runners encounter different temptations, they may be anything from a bad character inviting the runners to a party to an opportunity to cheat to just plain getting tired and wanting to quit. The temptations and trials demonstrate that the race is not easy! And there are things that can distract the runners from the goal of finishing the race. Even the “good” characters like Diligence will be tempted and encounter trials!

At the end of the race, Diligence, Perseverance, and Enthusiasm will all finish becoming the winners. They hold hands as they cross the finish line.

Conclusion: Our relationship with the Lord is like a race, he wants us to press on to know him. As you can tell, those who were really committed to the goal in mind were successful. Apathy had a “care-less” attitude and Slothful was too concerned about his own comfort. No matter what happens, we need to keep moving forward, he will help us as we go along when we get tired and temptations try to lure us away from where we are going. The good news is that God wants us to be successful and he will help us, it is therefore very important to keep our eyes on him.

There are many ways to be diligent, enthusiastic and persevere through the race! Sharing our ideas with others, putting our whole selves into the special times at chapels and devotions to listen and participate, talking to God about the questions we have and our concerns for others, and reading the Bible are all things we can do to help us run the race and really get to know God.

This week in camp our challenge to you is to open your heart and mind to the Lord. He wants to help us run the race and finish victoriously!

Diving Deeper: How have the positive traits mentioned in the skit contribute to your race to know the Lord, whether it's in the hard times or the easy times?

## 27 – Ragman

**Message:** When we give Jesus our burdens and sins, He replaces them with His righteousness, thus giving us the gift of salvation as He died in our place.

**Setting:** LV; Friday only

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:5 “He was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed.”

**Characters:** Narrator, Ragman, Follower, Sobbing woman, Hurt child, Veteran

**Props:** dirty handkerchief, clean handkerchief, bandage, yellow hat, nice jacket, old jacket, clothes for the drunk, some type of cart or wagon, blanket

Before the dawn one Friday morning, I saw a strange sight. I stumbled upon a story like nothing my life had ever prepared me for.

I noticed a young man, handsome and strong, walking the alleys of my city. He was pulling an old cart filled with clothes both bright and new, and he was calling in a clear voice: “Rags! Rags! New rags for old! I’ll take your tired rags!”

“Now, this is a wonder,” I thought to myself, for the man stood tall, had arms like tree limbs, hard and muscular, and eyes that flashed intelligence. Could he find no better job than this, to be a ragman in the inner city? I followed him. My curiosity drove me. And I wasn’t disappointed.

Soon the Ragman saw a woman sitting on her back porch. She was sobbing into a handkerchief. Her knees and elbows made a sad X. Her shoulders shook. Her heart was breaking. The Ragman stopped his cart. Quietly, he walked to the woman, stepping around tin cans, dead toys, and dirty diapers. “Give me your rag,” he said so gently, “and I’ll give you another.” He slipped the handkerchief from her hands. She looked up, and he laid across her palm a linen cloth so clean and new that it shined. Then, as he began to pull his cart again, the Ragman did

a strange thing: he put her stained handkerchief to his own face; and then he began to weep, sobbing as grievously as she had done, his shoulders shaking, yet she was left without a tear. "This is a wonder," I whispered, and I followed the sobbing Ragman. "Rags! Rags! New rags for old!"

In a little while, when the sky showed gray behind the rooftops and I could see the shredded curtains hanging out black windows, the Ragman came upon a girl whose head was wrapped in a bandage, whose eyes were empty. Blood soaked her bandage. A single line of blood ran down her cheek.

The tall Ragman looked upon this child with sympathy, and he drew a lovely yellow hat from his cart. "Give me your rag," he said, "and I'll give you mine." The child could only gaze at him while he loosened her bandage, removed it, and tied it to his own head before setting the hat on hers. I gasped at what I saw: for with the bandage went the wound! Against his brow it ran a darker, more substantial blood—his own! "Rags! Rags! I take old rags!" cried the sobbing, bleeding, strong, intelligent Ragman.

The sun now pierced both the sky and my eyes; the Ragman was now hurrying through the streets. "Are you going to work?" he asked a man who leaned against a telephone pole. The man shook his head. The Ragman asked, "Do you have a job?" "Are you crazy?" sneered the other. He pulled away from the pole, revealing the right sleeve of his jacket--flat, the cuff stuffed into the pocket. He had no arm. "Give me your jacket," said the Ragman, "and I'll give you mine." Such quiet authority in his voice. The one-armed man took off his jacket. So did the Ragman--and I trembled at what I saw: for the Ragman's arm stayed in its sleeve, and when the other put it on he had two good arms, thick as tree limbs; but the Ragman had only one. "Go to work," he said.

After that he found an old man, shivering beneath a blanket. He was hunched over and sick. It was clear this man had nowhere else to go. The Ragman took his blanket and wrapped it around himself, and for the old man he left new, warm clothes.

And now I had to run to keep up with the Ragman. Though he was weeping uncontrollably, bleeding freely at the forehead, pulling his cart with one arm, stumbling, falling again and again, he went with terrible speed. He skittered through the alleys of the city, this mile and the next, until he came to its limits, and then he rushed beyond. I wept to see the change in this man. I hurt to see his sorrow. And yet I needed to see where he was going in such haste, perhaps to know what drove him to do so.

The Ragman eventually reached a landfill. He came to the garbage pits. I wanted to help him, but I hung back, hiding. He climbed the hill, cleared some space, & laid down. Then he sighed and covered himself with a blanket. And there on that hill, he died.

I couldn't stop crying. I mourned as one who has no hope—because I had come to love the Ragman. Every other face had faded in the wonder of this man, and I cherished him; but he died. I laid down & cried myself to sleep.

I did not know —that I slept through Friday night and Saturday and its night, too. But then, on Sunday morning, a great rumbling rose from beneath the earth. Light—pure, demanding light—slammed against my sour face, and I looked and witnessed the greatest wonder of all. There was the Ragman, folding the blanket most carefully, a scar on his forehead, but alive! And, besides that, healthy! There was no sign of sorrow or weakness, and all the rags that he had gathered shined in cleanliness.

Then, I lowered my head and trembled, for I was a sorry figure next to him. I threw myself at his feet, and I said to him with dear yearning in my voice, “Dress me.” My Lord put new rags on me, and I was a wonder beside Him. The Ragman, the Ragman, the Christ!

Conclusion: Jesus is our Ragman. Whatever is hurting us, making us sad or holding us down, He is willing to take. God came to earth as Jesus to take care of all of the mistakes we make, all of our sins. He also came to earth to take all of our sickness and sadness. All we need to do is rely on Him. When we do that, we live out His love in faith that He will provide for our needs. When we give Him our filthy rags, He gives us wonderful new clean clothes.

Diving Deeper: How can we pass on this sacrificial love to others? What rags of yours has He swapped out? What rags of yours does He keep swapping out?

## 28 – Rainbow Fish

**Message:** Sometimes we can get really attached to the things we have, but being charitable with those things is an expression of faith.

**Setting:** RV; early/mid-week

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:3-4 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

**Characters:** Narrator, Rainbow fish, Octopus, Starfish, Little Blue Fish, 3 or more other fish

**Props:** Blue cut out scales, green cut out scales, purple cut out scales, shiny silver cut out scales (tin foil), cones for starfish arms, pool noodles for octopus arms

A long way out in the deep blue sea there lived a fish. Not just an ordinary fish, but the most beautiful fish in the entire ocean. Her scales were every shade of blue and green and purple, with sparkling silver scales among them.

The other fish were amazed at her beauty. They called her Rainbow Fish. “Come on, Rainbow Fish,” they would call. “Come and play with us!” But the Rainbow Fish would just glide past, proud and silent, letting her scales shimmer.

One day, a little blue fish followed after her. “Rainbow Fish,” he called, “wait for me! Please give me one of your shiny scales. They are so wonderful, and you have so many.”

“You want me to give you one of my special scales? Who do you think you are?” cried the Rainbow Fish. “Get away from me!” Shocked, the little blue fish swam

away.

He was so upset, he told all his friends what had happened. From then on, no one would have anything to do with the Rainbow Fish. They turned away when she swam by. What good are dazzling, shimmering scales with no one to admire them? Now she was the loneliest fish in the entire ocean.

One day she poured out her troubles to the starfish. "I really am beautiful. Why doesn't anybody like me?"

"I can't answer that for you," said the starfish. "But if you go beyond the coral reef to a deep cave you will find the wise octopus. Maybe he can help you."

The Rainbow Fish found the cave. It was very dark inside and she couldn't see anything. Then suddenly two eyes caught her in their glare and the octopus emerged from the darkness. "I have been waiting for you," said the octopus with a deep voice. "The waves have told me your story. This is my advice. Give a glittering scale to each of the other fish. You will no longer be the most beautiful fish in the sea, but you will discover how to be happy."

"I can't....." the Rainbow Fish started to say, but the octopus has already disappeared into a dark cloud of ink.

Give away my scales? My beautiful shining scales? Never. How could I ever be happy without them?

Suddenly she felt the light touch of a fin. The little blue fish was back! "Rainbow Fish, please don't be angry. I just want one little scale." The Rainbow fish wavered. Only one very very small shimmering scale, she thought. Well, maybe I wouldn't miss just one.

Carefully, the Rainbow Fish pulled out the smallest scale and gave it to the little blue fish. "Thank you! Thank you very much!" The little blue fish bubbled playfully, as he tucked the shiny scale among his blue ones.

A rather peculiar feeling came over the Rainbow Fish. For a long time she watched the little blue fish swim back and forth with this new scale glittering in the water.

The little blue fish whizzed through the ocean with his scale flashing, so it didn't take long before the Rainbow Fish was surrounded by the other fish. Everyone wanted a glittering scale. The Rainbow Fish shared her scales left and right, and the more she gave away, the more delighted she became. When the water around her filled with glimmering scales, she at last felt at home among the other fish.

Finally the Rainbow Fish had only one shining scale left. Her most prized possessions had been given away, and yet she was very happy.

“Come on, Rainbow Fish,” they called. “Come and play with us!”

“Here I come,” said the Rainbow Fish, and happy as a splash, she swam off to join her friends.

Conclusion: There’s a lot of ways to express our faith, and one of those ways is being charitable. Giving the things we value to others is trusting God that He has a better plan through those things and the act of giving those things than we could ever have. When Rainbow fish was selfish it was hard to make friends and he was lonely. When we are mean to others it is hard for us to have friends also. God wants us to look for ways to be kind to other people. He asks us to think about the interests of others and to not be selfish. When we think about others and are kind to them we are following the “I’m Third Motto”, putting God first and others above ourselves.

Diving Deeper: Being charitable with your possessions is just one expression of faith. What are some other ways we can express this type of trust in God? Also, see Mark 12:41-44, which reiterates charity as faith.

## 29 – Sagamore Squad

Message: Following the I'm Third motto takes many forms and yields, among other things, the various traits of the Sagamore Creed.

Setting: RV; Friday

Scripture: Matthew 22:34-37 "Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your god with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'" This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Characters: 6 Players (Hopeless/Faith, Lazy/Responsibility, Selfish/Initiative, Bully/Friendship, Doubt/Trust, Anger/Joy), Coach, Narrator

Props: Soccer ball, shirts of each color bead (yellow, green, white, red, blue, purple)

Narration:

Once upon a time, there were six mighty soccer players. They were called the soccer squad; the best, most valuable, meanest, and toughest players in all the

league. They scared away any team that dared to challenge them and they crushed anything in their path; including each other. They all had different talents, but had no coach to depend on. They kept each other in line and focused only on winning.

*(characters scatter across stage, stretching, acting as their character when being described)*

Hopeless was the team's mascot. Hopeless motivated the team by telling them they would never win and that no one cared about them.

Lazy made all of his teammates do the work while he laid down on the field. He did not use defensive skills because doing so would require too much energy. Lazy took credit for the team's success, even though lazy put forth no effort.

Selfish was the MVP. Selfish was the only player allowed to shoot goals because she made every shot. Selfish made the pack look impressive, but failed to put other pack members before herself.

Anger scared the other teams and yelled at his teammates when they forgot to play their positions. Anger kept everyone in formation. He focused on the shortcomings of the soccer squad and failed to find joy in even the simplest of accomplishments. When a team member made a good pass or scored, Anger reflected on the failures of the team.

Bully kept the team focused by not allowing friendships on or off the soccer field. Friends were a distraction. The only way a team could be successful was if each member practiced independently to become the strongest soccer player they could be. The team needed to focus on winning.

Doubt was last. Doubt kept the team strong by reminding each member that they could not trust anyone. Doubt had little trust in his teammates and in others.

This was the soccer squad! They were rotten to the core. Teams dreaded the days they had to play this team, and many even forfeit! The team had no coach to direct them because no one wanted to work with these athletes... except for one.

He had been at every game and practice since the beginning of the season. He watched them wound every player on the opposing teams and he watched them wound each other as well. He watched them make teams cry and make each other cry. He saw all that the team was lacking and wanted to coach them. The team ignored him, but the coach continued to ask each day if he could be their coach. (*huddle*)

One day after practice, Hopeless stuck around to imagine losing the next game. That way, she could motivate herself to win the game. The coach approached Hopeless and told her how excited he was for the game. He said that he would be there for the entire game and that he believed in hopeless and wanted her to believe in herself and in her teammates too. He assured her that everything would turn out alright in the end and he wanted her to have faith. Hopeless began to imagine what it might feel like to have faith. She was annoyed at first, but Hopeless eventually began to like the feeling. She was excited to have faith. The coach encouraged hopeless to say that she had faith in everyone and everything, and that everything would turn out okay. Hopeless finally agreed, knowing that she would always have faith with the guidance of this coach. Hopeless joined the coaches team and was given a new yellow Faith jersey. Faith was so happy and began to tell the others of her new outlook. The rest of the pack was reluctant to join the team, and some even ignored Faith, their once-Hopeless teammate. However, Faith never gave up. Words of love and encouragement filled the air.

Then, slowly, a miracle happened: Lazy stood up. Lazy was tired of playing no role on the team. Lazy wanted to do something and to be an active member. He wanted to be responsible for some part of the team. Lazy approached the coach and he gave him a new green Responsibility jersey, water bottles, and soccer equipment. Responsibility followed the team around, making sure they drank plenty of water, wore their shin guards, and that everything was taken care of.

Selfish loved being taken care of and feeling special. Selfish wanted to do something nice in return. She spoke to the coach about wanting to make others feel special instead of always putting herself first. He told Selfish to give her teammates a chance to score goals and to look out for the needs of others. He wanted Selfish to learn to Be Third. Selfish took off her MVP sticker and gave it to Anger. Then, Selfish took off her jersey and let the coach present her with a new white Initiative jersey.

Anger wanted to be upset with Selfish for leaving the team, but he found joy in the MVP patch he had just received. Anger wore the patch with pride and finally felt joyful. With every mistake, his smile grew because he found joy in simply playing the game. Anger no longer wanted to wear his jersey. He skipped over to the coach, who happily placed a purple Joy jersey on him. Joy took a giant leap and hugged the coach. He placed the MVP sticker on the coach and went off to play. Joy didn't seem to care that his team wasn't as good as before or that they didn't win every game. Joy found happiness in the little things.

Bully recognized her frustration with having no real teammates. She wanted to feel the love that the coach's team had. She decided to join the new team and play soccer with her new teammates: Joy, Initiative, Responsibility, and Faith. Bully didn't want to be alone anymore. She walked up to the coach who immediately gave her a new red Friendship jersey. Friendship gave everyone hugs and made fun cheers to support her teammates and friends. She took time to wave to new friends even if it took up her soccer time.

**Option 1: Doubt was excited watching all of this. Too excited. He was excited to let them build up all of their trust in each other and in the coach so that he could later knock it all down. But as he snuck over to spread his doubt by falling and no one being there to catch him, he was surprised to find that someone did catch him, the coach. Doubt was shocked and upset because everyone had seen. Doubt started to do more and more trust falls and all of his former teammates were there to catch him. He slowly started to like falling, and was happy to be caught every time. Doubt trust fell into the coach one final time and let him put on his new blue Trust jersey.**

**Option 2: Doubt was the last of the remaining soccer squad. He saw the friendships being made on the coach's new team and wanted to have that. He wanted to rely on people and to trust that he would always have teammates to fall back on. While practicing his shots, he slipped! But doubt didn't fall. The coach had caught Doubt as he was falling. It was at this moment that Doubt knew he would have teammates and coach to rely on. Doubt could trust that his teammates would not let him fall. He received his new blue Trust jersey from the coach.**

Faith, Responsibility, Initiative, Joy, Friendship, and Trust formed the new Sagamore Soccer Squad. They had a coach who had gathered them together and would always be there to guide them. The coach helped the soccer squad recognize their failures and guided the players towards finding new identities.

With the coaches guidance, they all together gained faith, responsibility, initiative, joy, friendship, and trust.

Conclusion: If you've been around camp for a while, you may have heard about the Sagamore Creed, which is a fundamental way we try to take everything we learned at camp out into the real world. All of these qualities in the creed--trust, responsibility, initiative, friendship, joy, faith--follow naturally after the way Jesus told us to live our lives. These words are reflected in the I'm Third motto. While the motto is a great general go-to in terms of living out God's love, these traits in the Sagamore Creed are tangible ways that we can do that.

Diving Deeper: Where do these characteristics show up in the Bible?

## 30 - The Sneetches

Message: Don't judge others by the way they're made.

Setting: RV; early-week

Scripture: Matthew 7:1-2 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Characters: Narrator, 3 Star-bellied Sneetches, 3 Plain-bellied Sneetches, Sylvester McMonkey McBean

Now the Star-bellied Sneetches had bellies with stars.

The Plain-bellied Sneetches had none upon thars.  
The stars weren't so big; they were really quite small.  
You would think such a thing wouldn't matter at all.  
But because they had stars, all the Star-bellied Sneetches  
would brag, "We're the best kind of Sneetch on the beaches."  
With their snoots in the air, they would sniff and they'd snort, "  
We'll have nothing to do with the plain-bellied sort."  
And whenever they met some, when they were out walking,  
they'd hike right on past them without even talking.

When the Star-bellied children went out to play ball,  
could the Plain-bellies join in their game? Not at all!  
You could only play ball if your bellies had stars,  
and the Plain-bellied children had none upon thars.

When the Star-bellied Sneetches had frankfurter roasts,  
or picnics or parties or marshmallow toasts,  
they never invited the Plain-bellied Sneetches.  
Left them out cold in the dark of the beaches.  
Kept them away; never let them come near,  
and that's how they treated them year after year.

Then one day, it seems, while the Plain-bellied Sneetches  
were moping, just moping alone on the beaches,  
sitting there, wishing their bellies had stars,  
up zipped a stranger in the strangest of cars.

"My friends, " he announced in a voice clear and keen,  
"My name is Sylvester McMonkey McBean.  
I've heard of your troubles; I've heard you're unhappy.  
But I can fix that; I'm the fix-it-up chappie.  
I've come here to help you; I have what you need.  
My prices are low, and I work with great speed,  
and my work is one hundred percent guaranteed."

Then quickly, Sylvester McMonkey McBean  
put together a very peculiar machine.  
Then he said, "You want stars like a Star-bellied Sneetch?  
My friends, you can have them . . . for three dollars each.  
Just hand me your money and climb on aboard."

They clambered inside and the big machine roared.  
It bonked. It clonked. It jerked. It berked.  
It bopped them around, but the thing really worked.  
When the Plain-bellied Sneetches popped out, they had stars!  
They actually did, they had stars upon thars!

Then they yelled at the ones who had stars from the start,

"We're exactly like you; you can't tell us apart.  
We're all just the same now, you snooty old smarties.  
Now we can come to your frankfurter parties!"

"Good grief!" groaned the one who had stars from the first.  
"We're still the best Sneetches, and they are the worst.  
But how in the world will we know," they all frowned,  
"if which kind is what or the other way 'round?"

Then up stepped McBean with a very sly wink, and he said,  
"Things are not quite as bad as you think.  
You don't know who's who, that is perfectly true.  
But come with me, friends, do you know what I'll do?  
I'll make you again the best Sneetches on beaches,  
and all it will cost you is ten dollars eaches.

Belly stars are no longer in style, " said McBean.  
"What you need is a trip through my stars-off machine.  
This wondrous contraption will take off your stars,  
so you won't look like Sneetches who have them on thars."

That handy machine, working very precisely,  
removed all the stars from their bellies quite nicely.  
Then, with snoots in the air, they paraded about.  
They opened their beaks and proceeded to shout,  
"We now know who's who, and there isn't a doubt,  
the best kind of Sneetches are Sneetches without."

Then, of course those with stars all got frightfully mad.  
To be wearing a star now was frightfully bad.  
Then, of course old Sylvester McMonkey McBean  
invited them into his stars-off machine.  
Then, of course from then on, you can probably guess,  
things really got into a horrible mess.

All the rest of the day on those wild screaming beaches,  
the Fix-it-up-Chappie was fixing up Sneetches.

Off again, on again, in again, out again,  
through the machine and back round about again,  
still paying money, still running through,  
changing their stars every minute or two,  
until neither the Plain- nor the Star-bellies knew  
whether this one was that one or that one was this one  
or which one was what one or what one was who!

Then, when every last cent of their money was spent,  
the Fix-It-Up-Chappie packed up and he went.  
And he laughed as he drove in his car up the beach,  
"They never will learn; no, you can't teach a Sneetch!"

But McBean was quite wrong, I'm quite happy to say,  
the Sneetches got quite a bit smarter that day.  
That day, they decided that Sneetches are Sneetches,  
and no kind of Sneetch is the BEST on the beaches.  
That day, all the Sneetches forgot about stars,  
and whether they had one or not upon thars.

Conclusion: We can learn a valuable lesson from these sneetches. At first the sneetches were mean to each other and treated each other differently. The ones without the stars weren't treated as well as those with the stars. That seems kind of silly to us, but sometimes we also judge people by their outward appearance. We may not judge them by whether or not they have stars on their bellies, but by the clothes they wear, or the way they look. Other times, we may judge people by their personalities or their interests. You saw how silly it was when the star bellied sneetches were unfriendly to the ones without stars...and that is how God sees us when we judge others. The great part about this story is that the sneetches learned the error of their ways, when they decided that sneetches are sneetches, they forgot about stars and realized they were really all the same. Let's be like the sneetches, let's be respectful and kind to each other. God has created each and every one of us, and we are ALL different, and that makes us special and unique. So I challenge all of us to be respectful and kind to everyone, because no one is better than anyone else because we are all God's creation. In God's eyes we all look the same.

Diving Deeper: How does this come into play with personality profiles? (I/E, N/S, T/F, J/P)

## **31 – Stuck in Sin**

Message: Sometimes we make choices that are not good and we end up stuck in sin. This doesn't please God and isn't good for us! Only Jesus can get us out of sin. Living in the sin, staying put right where we are, is NOT what God wants us to do.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: Psalm 32:5 “Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’ - and you forgave the guilt of my sin.”  
1 John 1:9 “But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Characters: 3 people stuck in sin, 1 normal person, 1 strongman, 1 musician/singer, 1 person of prayer (Post 2 signs labeled “sin” above the chapel bench.)

Two people come walking onto the stage talking with each other when they notice how cozy the benches labeled ‘sin’ appear. They debate whether or not they should take a seat in the sin as they are on their way to a destination (can be symbolic such as heaven). They decide after a short debate that the sin does look tempting as it looks like a good time [can say something such as, “I know that it would be wrong to get into sin, but it does look like fun and if we only do it once it will be ok”]. The two sit on the bench and get into the sin. When they are sitting a dialog should take place with one character feeling guilty and uncomfortable and wanting to leave while the other agrees, he expresses that they should stay for just a few more moments. When they decide to get up and leave, they seem to be stuck to the benches (‘sin’) and can’t get out. They quickly become distressed as they are stuck somewhere they shouldn’t be and they aren’t enjoying it. NOTE: Be sure that those who are stuck in sin do not make it look like fun and that they are enjoying it. That will defeat the entire purpose of this message.

One by one, the different characters come onto stage realize that there are two people stuck in sin and attempt to get them out.

Normal Person: tries to pull and comes to the conclusion that they need someone very strong to pull them out

Strongman: Comes across cocky saying it will be easy for him to pull them out of sin but no matter how hard he tries, he can’t pull them out.

Musician / Singer: Sings ‘church songs’ in attempt to get them out, but that doesn’t work either.

Person of Prayer: when realizes that they are stuck in sin, he/she tells them that the only way out of sin is through faith in Jesus and repentance – asking him to forgive them for their sins. They go ahead and ask God to forgive them for getting into sin and decide to live for Him. After their prayer they easily hop out of sin and thank God!

Conclusion: There are times in all of our lives when we have done things we know we shouldn't have and have gotten 'stuck in sin.' We can try many different things to get out of it, or even pretend that we aren't in it, but there is only one person who can save us from our sin. That person is Jesus Christ, God's son! If we confess our sins to Him and ask his forgiveness, he will forgive us and free us from that sin. Now we must do our best to stay away from sin in the first place!

Diving Deeper: How can we reconcile this message with our ongoing sinful nature? (Romans 7:14-25)

## 32 - Talking to God

Message: Prayer is our hotline to God and a tool to build a relationship with Him.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Adaptations: One person trying to get ahold of God, change ways that people are trying to contact God with

Scripture: 1 John 5:14 “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”

Psalm 17:6 “God, I call out to you because you will answer me. Listen to me. Hear my prayer.”

Characters: four people

Three people are trying to talk to God in three different ways, but they are not getting through. A fourth person prays to God. At the end, the other three realize the way to get in contact with God is through prayer.

First Person: (getting up from bed) What a great morning, the sun is shining, birds are singing, and I’m...not sweating yet! I should begin the day talking to God, telling Him how wonderful His creation is. I will quickly email God. What is God’s email address? Wonder if any of my friends on Myspace have God as a friend? (couple of minutes pass) No one knows God’s email address. Now, what do I do?

Second Person: (outside next to their car) I can’t believe it, I locked my keys in my car, I can’t find my sunglasses, and I have a flat tire. The tow truck is caught in traffic. What else can go wrong? I need help. I know, I will quickly call God with my cell phone. I think the number is 1-800-call-God. There is no response! I think it’s the wrong number. How can I talk to God?

Third Person: (at airport) I am so excited; this is my first time flying a plane with a banner. It reads “Hey God can you hear me? We need to talk.” Here I go (act as if flying around with banner tied behind). Well, I don’t think God is working? What can I do?

Fourth Person: (at camp) Here at camp I have learned how to talk to God. God always hears us. There are several times I can pray to God. In the morning after I shower, I pray to God. We sing our graces for meals. I pray before I climb Mt. Wood. During cabin devotions I pray silently as well as pray together with my cabin mates. All I have to do to talk with God is pray.

Close off the skit with the three realizing they only have to pray to talk to God

Conclusion: The way that each individual can communicate with God is through prayer. God is there any time at any place to listen and talk to you. Through prayer you can thank God, lift up your struggles to Him, tell Him your needs, or just simply talk to Him like you would a friend.

Diving Deeper: Where/how does listening come into play?

## **33 – Ten Lepers**

Message: We must remember to thank Jesus for all He does for us.

Setting: RV/LV; late-week

Adaptations: Lepers walk slowly to the stage, with a



G Em  
 But I want to be like the one who returned.  
 C Em7 Am D  
 I can see him now as he pressed his way to the crowd to get to you.  
 Em C G D  
 With tears of joy in his eyes he cried, "Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord."

## CHORUS

## BRIDGE

G Em C Em7  
 I just want to take, take a little time right now and thank you, Lord,  
 Am D  
 For all you've done for me.  
 G Em C Em7  
 I just want to take, take a little time right now and thank you, Lord,  
 Am D  
 For all you've done for me.

Conclusion: Why do you think Jesus healed the sick men in this story? Why do you think 9 of the men did not stop to thank Jesus for what He did? Why do you think the one man returned to thank Jesus? Think for a moment about the wonderful things in your life. Did you know that all good things come from God? Have you thanked Him for the good things He has given you? Has God ever answered any of your prayers? Have you thanked Him for that? Sometimes we can think about ourselves so much that when good things happen, we are just happy and forget to remember who it was that gave the good things to us – it is God that gives them to us! Today let us pause for a moment and thank God for all of the good things he gives to us!

Diving Deeper: In Mark 8:22-26, Jesus cured blindness in two stages. Have you had an answer to prayer that seemed half-baked? Why would something like this happen?

# 34 – The Day the Crayons Quit

Message: You are valuable and God has a purpose for you

Setting: RV/LV; early/mid-week

Scripture: Psalm 139:13-16 “You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.”

Characters: main boy, narrator, red crayon, purple crayon, green crayon, yellow crayon, orange crayon, blue crayon, pink crayon, teacher

*\*Recommended that you print out each crayon’s letter for them to hold and read on stage\**

Narrator: One day in class, [insert main kid’s name] went to take out his crayons and found a stack of letters with his name on them.

Main Kid: Hmm? I wonder who wrote me these?

*When each crayon reads their angry letter, they pop up from behind the wall and then go back down behind the wall after they’re done reading their letter.*

Red crayon: Hey [insert kid’s name], it’s me, RED crayon. WE NEED to talk. You make me work harder than any of your other crayons. All year long I wear myself out coloring FIRE ENGINES, apples, strawberries and EVERYTHING ELSE THAT’S RED. I even work on Holidays! I have to color all the santas at Christmas and all the hearts on valentines day! I NEED A REST! Your overworked friend, Red Crayon.

Main Kid: react to the letter

Purple crayon: Dear [insert name], All right, LISTEN. I love that I’m your favorite crayon for grapes, dragons, and wizard’s hats, but it makes me crazy that so much of my gorgeous color goes outside the lines. If you DON’T START

COLORING INSIDE the lines soon.... I'm going to COMPLETELY LOSE IT. Your very neat friend, Purple Crayon.

Main Kid: react to letter

Green crayon: Dear [insert name], as green crayon, I am writing for two reasons. One is to say that I like my work loads of crocodiles, trees, dinosaurs, and frogs. I have no problems and wish to congratulate you on a very successful "coloring things green" career so far. The second reason I write is for my friends, yellow crayon and orange crayon, who are no longer speaking to each other. Both crayons feel they should be the color of the sun. Please settle this soon because they're driving the rest of us CRAZY! Your happy friend, Green Crayon.

Yellow crayon: Dear [insert name], Yellow crayon here. I need you to tell orange crayon that I am the color of the sun. I would tell him but we are no longer speaking. And I can PROVE I'm the color of the sun too! Last Tuesday, you used me to color in the sun on your "HAPPY FARM" coloring book. In case you've forgotten, it's on page 7. You CAN'T miss me. I'm shining down brilliantly on a field of YELLOW corn! Your pal (and the true color of the sun), Yellow Crayon.

Orange crayon: I see yellow crayon already talked to you, the BIG WHINER. Anyway, could you please tell mr. tattletale that he IS NOT the color of the sun? I would, but we're no longer speaking. We both know I am clearly the color of the sun because on Thursday you used me to color the sun on BOTH the "monkey island" and the "meet the zookeeper" pages in your "Day at the zoo" coloring book. Orange you glad I'm here? Ha! Your pal (and the real color of the sun), Orange crayon.

Main Kid: react

Blue crayon: Dear [insert name], it has been great being your FAVORITE color this past year. And the year before. And the year before THAT! I have really enjoyed all those oceans, lakes, rivers, raindrops, rain clouds and clear skies. But the BAD NEWS is that I am so short, I can't even see over the railing in the crayon box anymore! I need a break! Your very tiny friend, Blue Crayon

Pink crayon: Okay LISTEN HERE, KID! You have not used me ONCE in the past year. It's because you think I am a GIRLS color, isn't it? Speaking of which, please tell your little sister I said thank you for using me to color in her

“MONSTER TRUCK” coloring book. I think she did a fabulous job of staying inside the lines! Now, back to us. Could you PLEASE use me sometime to color the occasional PINK DINOSAUR or MONSTER or COWBOY? Pink can be for everyone. Your unused friend, Pink Crayon.

Narrator: Well poor [insert main kid name] just wanted to color... and of course he wanted his crayons to be happy. And that gave him an idea.

Main Kid: I have an idea! \*furiously drawing\* ..... Done!

*Teacher pops up on the other side of stage, kid walks over to her and shows her and the audience his picture.*

Narrator: When [insert name] gave his teacher his new picture, she gave him an A for coloring, and an A+ for creativity! All of the colors felt loved and valued.

*All the colors pop up and hug.*

Conclusion: Sometimes it can feel like we don't have a purpose, but God has a bigger plan for our lives.

## 35 – The Journey

**Message:** There are a billion things in this world that try to compete for our attention by advertising themselves as the way you should live your life. To know the true path God wants us to walk, we need to focus our understanding on Jesus, who points us towards the Father.

**Setting:** RV/LV; mid-week

**Scripture:** John 10:27-28 “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

**Characters:** Narrator, Prince, King, Intelligence, Strength, Ariana, Bella, Cassia, 3 Deceptors

**Narrator:** (*enters holding a storybook*) Who like fairy tales? Well I’ve got a new one for you today, are you ready? Get comfy. Ok here we go. (*sitting down and reading from the book*) Once in a far-off land there was a great kingdom ruled by a prince. (*prince and three warriors walk on stage*) This land was known for its many great warriors. On this particular day, the three greatest warriors in the kingdom were gathered for a meeting with the prince. (*step out from the line when named*) Ariana was the prince’s strongest warrior and she had won many battles using her brute strength. Bella was the fastest warrior in all the land and she could outrun almost any obstacle. The final warrior, Cassia, was wise. She defeated many enemies with her quick thinking and vast knowledge. They listened intently as the prince delivered their assignment.

**Prince:** My father, the king, has a reward prepared for the one who can successfully complete the dangerous mission before you. He has charged the three of you with the task of clearing a path from this kingdom to his.

**Ariana:** It seems to me that the only direct way to get from this outpost to the castle would be to go through the Hemlock

Forest. Is that what you meant by a “dangerous” mission?

Prince: That’s exactly right.

Narrator: The Hemlock Forest was filled with treacherous obstacles. The trees were so large and dense in some parts that the sunlight couldn’t even reach the ground, and you’d have to keep a vigilant watch for sinkholes and sharp outcroppings of rock. But their greatest danger would be the Deceptors.

Bella: I’ve run into Deceptors on other missions, but only at the very edge of the forest. There aren’t many of them, but they’re extremely clever and sinister.

Prince: If you choose to accept this mission, the one who is able to complete it will be rewarded, for this kingdom is great but my father’s is even greater.

*Ariana, Bella, and Cassia exchange a look of surprise.*

Ariana: Will we each be traveling alone?

Prince: No one is strong enough to take on such a journey alone. You will each choose one companion to stay with you and assist you all the way to the castle.

Bella: Can you give us any advice on how to find our way to the castle?

Prince: I know my way through the forest and into the castle. I have made the journey many times before. If you choose the right companion this will be easy. Wisely choose the helper you want to have with you on your journey.

*Exit the Prince. The three warriors lie down to sleep.*

Narrator: The three great warriors laid down that night to rest and each thought long and hard about whom they wanted to accompany them on their mission. The next morning, the rest of the soldiers stationed at the outpost gathered to send off Ariana, Bella, and Cassia on their journey.

*Re-enter the Prince with the Traveling Companions. The warriors get up.*

Ariana: I know that clearing this path through the forest is going to be hard work. I've decided to capitalize on what I'm good at and choose a partner who is strong like me. Strength, will you help me on my journey?

Strength: It would be an honor. Let's go!

Narrator: Ariana and Strength headed off into the forest, hoping that their combined toughness would power them through the obstacles ahead. *(Ariana and Strength exit through triangle and hide behind the wall)* When they could no longer be seen, Bella spoke up.

Bella: I know that with my speed, I can make it through the forest and reach the kingdom first. What I need is someone smart. Intelligence, will you come with me on the journey?

Intelligence: Of course. We'd better get moving!

Narrator: As Bella and Intelligence disappeared into the forest *(Bella and Intelligence exit through triangle and hide behind the wall)*, Cassia approached the Prince.

Cassia: Your Highness, would you travel with me through the forest?

Prince: This is an interesting choice, Cassia. Are you sure? Your friends had excellent reasons for choosing other soldiers with assets that could help them along the way.

Cassia: I'm sure. You have exactly what I need, and I'm pretty sure I wouldn't be able to make it to the castle without you by my side.

Prince: *(with a smile)* Very well, then – let's begin.

*Cassia and Prince exit through the triangle and hide behind wall. Cassia and Prince re-enter through triangle, Arianna and Strength come out from the left side of wall, and Bella and Intelligence come out from right side of wall. Everyone mime fighting through the forest on their respective area of the stage.*

*Enter the King to the side.*

Narrator: For the king and his kingdom, the days of waiting passed slowly. Everyone knew about the challenge, and everyone wondered which warrior would win the prize. (*this is being acted out on stage as the narrator reads it*) Bella and Ariana were confident in their abilities and the abilities of their companions. However, the Deceptors attacked them viciously (*Enter Deceptors 1 and 2, Deceptor 1 confusing Ariana and Deceptor 2 confusing Bella*). They confused the two warriors and eventually they got lost in the forest. (*exit Ariana, Strength, Deceptor 1 behind left side of wall, exit Bella, Intelligence, Deceptor 2 behind right side of wall, exit King*) Meanwhile, Cassia and the Prince had been quite lucky. They hadn't come across a single Deceptor, but as their journey progressed, the two couldn't shake the rising tension of an inevitable attack. Suddenly, a figure stumbled out of the underbrush. (*Enter Deceptor 3*).

Deceptor 3: Prince! Cassia! Thank goodness you're here. The kingdom has been attacked!

Cassia: Oh no! *\*to Prince\** We need to get back to the castle right away!

Deceptor 3: There's a river right over here *\*points in wrong direction\**. We have a canoe that can take you straight there!

Cassia: Ok *\*starts to leave, but Prince catches her arm\**. Wait, what?

Prince: Cassia... *\*brings her to the side\** The only river that goes through the Hemlock Forest flows away from the castle.

*Enter Deceptor 2*

Deceptor 2: Cassia, don't you realize you're going the wrong way? You got turned around a couple hours ago, and now you're just going in circles.

Cassia: I... I don't...

*Deceptors continue to try and confuse Cassia. Enter Deceptor 1.*

Deceptor 1: The Prince is leading you astray! He doesn't want you to win! He wants to keep the reward all for himself!

Cassia: *\*yelling\** Prince! Where do I go?!

Prince: *\*pointing in right direction\** This way!

Cassia: But they're all saying that you're wrong!

Prince: Do you trust me?

*Cassia pauses, clearly unsure. Eventually, she grabs the Prince and takes him to the side. The Deceptors stop and disappear behind the wall.*

Cassia: Prince, it's so hard to ignore all of the others telling me that you're wrong, but I want to follow what you say.

Prince: It can be difficult to trust me when there are so many others telling you I am wrong, but I have your best interest in mind. Now let's go find my father.

*Enter King*

Narrator: After many days and countless trips to the castle wall to await the return of the warriors, the king rose early one morning and looked out to the Hemlock Forest wondering if one of the warriors would be arriving soon. When he reached the top of the wall on this day, he spotted two figures far off in the distance, stumbling out of the forest.

*Cassia and the Prince stumble toward the king, exhausted but happy to have made it.*

King: Welcome, welcome! Come in and rest! You have made it to my kingdom with the help of my son. You have chosen the correct companion and because you followed him, I know you deserve a place in my kingdom.

Narrator: So Cassia rejoiced as she knew she now had a place in the great kingdom. With the prince as her guide she had earned a spot of honor next to the king as the greatest warrior in all the land. In this kingdom, she lived happily ever after.

Conclusion: With so many other things competing for our

attention, it's easy to take the easy way out. It's also easy to deceive yourself on what is the right way to live. In order for us to be prepared for the challenge of life, we need to make a habit of looking to God for the answers, not out of any sort of obligation to follow rules or a fear that He will turn our back on us otherwise but out of a genuine desire to fall into the grace and love that our God has for us. It is with this grace and love that, as said in Psalm 16, He makes known to us the path of life. We can look for these answers through prayer, through pouring over Scripture, through constructive community, and through the multitude of blessings He has lavished upon us.

Diving Deeper: Stepping outside of yourself, can you find anything with which you are currently being deceived? Is there something competing for your attention in the here and now? Is there something that has been shifting you off-course?

## 36 – The King, the Kingdom and the Enemy

Message: Our Identity comes from the King who loves us.

Setting: RV/LV; late-week

Scripture: II Thessalonians 2:16-17 “May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.”

Matthew 10:29-31 “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

Characters: Narrator, King, Prince, Princess, Friend, Enemy (7)

Narrator: A long time ago there was a great King named Francis who had two children: Prince Fredrick and Princess Fiona. The King adored his two children and always let them know how much he loved them and how important they were to him. He told his son, Prince Fredrick, that he was noble, loyal and humble. He told his daughter, Princess

Fiona, that she was beautiful, kind, and compassionate. The Prince and the Princess believed their father and were confident about themselves.

The King often encouraged his children to spend time outside of the castle and to make friends with the others in the kingdom. Prince Fredrick and Princess Fiona developed many friendships with the people of the kingdom.

Now in this great kingdom, there was an Enemy of the King. This Enemy wanted to destroy the King and take over his kingdom. The Enemy knew how much the King loved his children and so he decided the easiest way to dethrone the King was to deceive his children. And so he worked out his plan to bring down Fredrick and Fiona.

\*\*\*PAUSE\*\*\*

One day as Fiona was chillaxin with her friend, the Enemy came up to her and whispered in her ear “You know, your friend is more beautiful than you. She only hangs out with you because you are the Princess and your father is the King. You are not beautiful, or kind or compassionate. In fact, you are spoiled, selfish and self-centered.” As the Princess heard this, she started to believe the Enemy. She began to doubt herself and stopped spending time with her friends.

\*\*\*PAUSE\*\*\*

The next day as Fredrick was playing cricket with a friend, the Enemy came up to him and whispered in his ear “You are a sorry excuse for a cricket player. Your friends don’t really want you to play, but they are afraid if they kick you off the team your father, the King, will be upset with them. You are just embarrassing yourself. You should probably quit now.” As the Prince heard this, he started to believe the Enemy. He became self-conscience and stopped spending time with his friends.

The next day, as the Prince and Princess were sitting by themselves in the castle, the Enemy snuck in and sat down with them. He reminded Fiona how spoiled, selfish and self-centered she was. He reminded Fredrick how

uncoordinated, awkward and scared he was. Then he told the Prince and Princess that their father, the King, was ashamed of them. He said that the King only wanted a son who was noble, loyal and humble. And he only wanted a daughter who was beautiful and kind and compassionate. The Prince and the Princess believed the Enemy and were sad. The Enemy told them that they were unworthy and should leave the kingdom immediately. The Prince and the Princess believed the Enemy and so they went to pack their things and run away.

As they were packing, the King found his son and daughter and asked what they were doing. Fredrick and Fiona explained that they were leaving because they were no longer good enough to be in the kingdom. Fredrick told the King that he was not fit to be the Prince. Fiona expressed her feelings of inadequacy about serving as Princess. The King placed a loving hand on each of his children's shoulders, looked them in the eyes and told them that he would always love them because they were his children and he was their father. The King lead them away telling his children that he could help them with their challenges and struggles.

**Conclusion:** In this story, the King is God and we are His sons and daughters, the Prince and Princess. In the Bible God reminds us how much He cherishes us, but the Enemy, Satan, lies to us and tries to convince us that God does not love us. When Satan tries to pull us away from God, we need only look to God and His Word to see that we are His children and He loves us so much.

**Diving Deeper:** What are some places in the Bible that express God's love for us? How can we talk about the Devil practically without freaking people out?

## 37 – The Lord’s Prayer

**Message:** When we pray, we are talking to God. He would like us to be sincere in our prayers; he is sincere in listening and answering.

**Setting:** RV/LV; late-week

**Scripture:** Luke 11:14, 9-10 “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us how to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’ He said to them, ‘When you pray say, Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation . . . So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.’”

**Characters:** Person, God

This skit starts out with someone praying. You may want to start by reading a portion of the above scripture reading, “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us how to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’ He said to them, ‘When you pray say...’”

Person: “Our Father, which art in heaven.....”

God: Yes?

Person: Don’t interrupt me. I’m praying.

God: But you called me.

Person: Called you? I didn’t call you. I’m praying. “Our Father which art in heaven...”

God: There you go again.

Person: What?

God: You called me. You said, “Our Father which art in heaven...” here I AM. What’s on your mind?

Person: But I didn’t mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord’s prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like getting a duty done.

God: All right, go on.

Person: “Hallowed be Thy name.....”

God: Hold it! What do you mean by that?

Person: By what?

God: By “Hallowed be Thy name?”

Person: It means....it means.... Good grief! I don’t know what it means. How should I know? It’s just a part of the prayer.....By the way, what does it mean?

God: It means honored, holy, and wonderful.

Person: Hey! That makes sense. I never thought about what “hallowed” meant before.

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

God: Do you really mean that?

Person: Sure, I just think it would be kind of neat if you got control of everything down here like you have up there.

God: Have I got control of you?

Person: Well, I go to church.

God: That isn’t what I asked you. What about your bad temper? You’ve really got a problem there, you know. Then there’s the way that

you spend your money, all on yourself. And what about the way you've been treating your brother?

Person: Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of the people at my Church.

God: Excuse me! I thought you were praying for My Will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying it. Like you, for example.

Person: Oh, all right. I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it. I could probably name some others.

God: So could I.

Person: I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I would like to, you know, be really free.

God: Good. Now we're getting somewhere! We'll work together, you and I. Some victories can truly be won. I'm proud of you.

Person: Look, Lord, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

God: Why would you want bread if you're allergic to gluten?

Person: Hey, wait a minute! What is this, "Criticize me day?" Here I was doing my religious duty and all of a sudden You break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.

God: Praying is a dangerous thing. You could wind up changed, you know. That's what I'm trying to get across to you. You called Me and here I AM. It's too late to stop now. Keep praying. I'm interested in the next part of your prayer.....(pause).....Well, go on.

Person; I'm scared to.

God: Scared? Of what?

Person: I know what You'll say.

God: Try Me and see.

Person: "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."

God: What about Ann?

Person: See? I knew it! I knew You would bring her up! Why Lord, she's told lies about me, spread stories about my family. She never paid back the debt she owes me. I've sworn to get even with her!

God: But your prayer? What about your prayer?

Person: I didn't mean it.

God: Well, at least you're honest. But it's not much fun carrying that load of bitterness around inside, is it?

Person: No. But I'll feel better as soon as I get even. Boy, have I got some plans for that neighbor! She'll wish she had never moved into this neighborhood.

God: You won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. Think of how unhappy you already are. But I can change all that.

Person: You can? How?

God: Forgive Ann. Then I'll forgive you. Then the hate and sin will be Ann's problem and not yours. You will have settled your heart.

Person: Oh, You're right. You always are. And more than I want revenge on Ann, I want to be right with You....(pause) ...(sigh). All right, I forgive her. Help her to find the right road in life, Lord. She's bound to be awfully miserable, now that I think about it. Anybody who goes around doing the things that she does to others, has to be out of it. Someday, somehow, show her the right way.

God: There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?

Person: Hmmm, well, not bad. Not bad at all. In fact, I feel pretty great! You know, I don't think I'll have to go to bed uptight tonight for the first time since I can remember. Maybe I won't be so tired from now on, because I'm not getting enough rest.

God: You're not through with your prayer. Go on.

Person: "Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil."

God: Good! Good! I'll do that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

Person: What do you mean by that?

God: Don't turn on the TV when you know the laundry needs to be done and the house needs to be picked up. Also, about that time you spend chatting with your friends; if you can't influence the conversation to positive things, perhaps you should rethink the value of those friendships. And another thing; your neighbors and friends shouldn't be your standard for "keeping up". And please don't use Me just for an escape hatch.

Person: I don't understand the last part.

God: Sure you do. You've done it a lot of times. I don't hear from you for

a long time and then you get caught in a bad situation. You get into trouble and then you come running to me saying, “Lord, help me out of this mess and I promise You that I’ll never do it again.” You remember some of those bargains you tried to make with Me?

Person: Yes and I’m ashamed, Lord. I really am.

God: Which bargain are you remembering?

Person: Well, there was the night that my mom and dad were gone and I was home alone. The wind was blowing so hard I thought the roof would go any minute, and tornado warnings were out. I remember praying, “Oh God, if you spare me, I’ll never skip my devotions again.”

God: I protected you, but you didn’t keep your promise, did you?

Person: I’m sorry Lord, I really am. Up until now I thought that if I just prayed the Lord’s prayer every day, I could do what I liked. I didn’t expect anything to happen like it did.

God: Go ahead and finish your prayer.

Person: “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”

God: Do you know what would bring Me glory? What would really make Me happy?

Person: No, but I’d like to know. I want now to please You. I can see what a mess I’ve made of my life. And I can see how great it would be to really be one of your followers.

God: You’ve just answered the question.

Person: I did?

God: Yes. The thing that would bring Me glory is to have people like you truly love Me. And I see that happening between us. Now that these old sins are exposed and out of the way, well, there is no telling what we can do together.

Person: Lord, let’s see what you can make of me, O.K.?

God: Yes, let’s see.

Person: Amen

Conclusion: When we talk to God, he listens! Through prayer we can build up our relationship with God and learn how to live a life that pleases him.

Diving Deeper: What are some other areas in your faith that may have become more ritualistic than relational? How can someone use the Lord's Prayer and it not be ritualistic?

## 38 – The Lost Teddy

Message: No matter where you are in life, you can always come to God because He is also pursuing you.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: Luke 15:1-10 (parables of the lost sheep and lost coin)

Romans 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Characters: Lily, brother, sister, dog (also need: lots of stuffed animals, decorations to distinguish bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, basement, and laundry room, and stuffed teddy)

Narration:

*Scene opens, Lily is in her room surrounded by stuffed animals.*

There once was a little girl named Lily who loved her stuffed animals so dearly. Every day she went through and checked on each of her beloved treasures.

*Lily ad-libs checking on each one of them, mentioning traits or “new” qualities about them that she noticed to show how deeply she knows her stuffed animals.*

One night, as she was going around to each of the animals to say goodnight, she realized that something wasn't quite right.

*Lily goes through each animal and suddenly realizes that her bear, Teddy, is missing and starts going into “major freakout mode.”*

Lily immediately stopped what she was doing to look for her dear bear. She tore apart her room searching for him, but, alas, she could not find him anywhere. She looked in every nook and cranny within her room, but there was no sign of Teddy anywhere. Lily then decided to try a different approach. She turned on every single light in her room, opened up the curtains, and started cleaning. She went through every pocket of every pair of pants and folded up every article of clothing. She dusted the drawers and swept the floor, and eventually, her room was spotless. It had never been this clean before in her entire life! But alas, even after cleaning every possible place in her room, Lily was not able to find so much as a lint ball from Teddy's fur coat.

Lily then decided it was time to step up her efforts. She started thinking through every part of her day to see where she could've lost Teddy. Lily remembered that she started off the day by eating breakfast in the kitchen. So, she put on her favorite slippers and left her other stuffed animals behind to search the kitchen. Lily made such a mighty racket as she looked through the pots and pans and tea kettles and cabinets. To Lily, the most important thing wasn't to be as cordial as possible but to find her beloved Teddy.

Unbeknownst to Lily, the racket had awoken her younger sister, who came downstairs to inspect the clatter.

Sister: \*sleepy, yawning\* What's the matter, Lily? Why are you making so much noise?

Lily: I've lost Teddy, and I need to find him. Have you seen him anywhere?

Sister: Teddy? Is that one of your stuffed animals? Don't you have, like, twenty of those? You should just play with one of the other ones.

Lily: But I really do care about Teddy! I can't just give up!

It was true that Lily couldn't give up. While she dearly loved each and every one of her stuffed animals, Lily couldn't bear the thought of so much as one of her beloved animals being lost. She knew where the others were, but the thought of losing any of her stuffed animals was frightening.

When Lily had turned over every tin and tupperware in the kitchen, she decided to search through the bathroom where she had washed her hair that very morning. As she tumbled through tubes of toothpaste, Lily started to think about how much she missed her dear friend, Teddy. She remembered the laughs and the adventures that they had shared. Lily had an immense love for Teddy. And out of this immense love--the same immense love that she had for all of her stuffed animals, she had made many sacrifices for the sake of her beloved animals. She would throw them tea parties instead of watching TV, and often she would spend hours making sure that their fur was nice and clean. Out of the love and sacrifices Lily had for her stuffed animals, she did not see the ripping stitches and the matted fur and the other flaws that her animals had. Rather, she saw them as her beloved animals, and that was all that mattered to her.

As the bathroom was just down the hall from the bedrooms, her older brother soon emerged from his room to see what was the matter. As Lily's brother wiped the gunk out of his eyes, he entered the bathroom.

Brother: Lily, why are you up so late? Shouldn't you be in bed?

Lily: \*holding back tears\* I was saying goodnight to my stuffed animals, and I realized that Teddy is missing. I've been searching everywhere through the house, but I just can't find him.

Brother: Oh, bummer, man... Did you check your room?

Lily: Yeahhhh I checked my room...

Brother: Did you check the kitchen?

Lily: Yeahhhh I checked the kitchen...

Brother: Shoot... Well, if you want, I can take you to the toy store tomorrow to get another bear.

Lily: It wouldn't be the same! I have to find MY Teddy! I know he's out there waiting for me!

At this point, Lily had gone through every part of her day and found herself at the stairway leading down into the basement. Although the basement was dark and scary, Lily was determined that nothing--absolutely nothing--not even a dark, scary basement--was going to keep her from Teddy. With her trusty flashlight, she ran down the stairs and looked through every part of the basement for Teddy, even the especially scary boiler room. Once she had searched every part of the basement, she bolted up the stairs and locked the door.

As the staircase was right next to her dog Clifford's bed, Clifford jumped awake.

Lily: Oh! I'm so sorry Clifford! I didn't mean to wake you! Hey, have you seen Teddy?

Clifford: \*Bark\* \*Bark\*

Lily: Yeahhhh I checked my room...

Clifford: \*Bark\* \*Bark\*

Lily: Yeahhhh I checked the kitchen...

Clifford:     \*Bark\* \*Bark\*

Lily:   Well, thank you Clifford, that means a lot to me. I knew I could always count on you.

Lily then concluded that Clifford wouldn't be able to tell her where her beloved Teddy was, not only because Clifford had been running around outside all day but also because he is a dog. So, Lily continued searching the house.

For what seemed like hours she searched through every room of the house, sometimes even searching rooms that she had already searched before just in case! Finally, Lily opened up the laundry room door, and she saw her beloved Teddy sitting next to the washing machine! She promptly tackled her wonderful Teddy with a giant bear hug, happy to be reunited with her lost bear. Next to Teddy was a note from Lily's father which informed her that he had borrowed Teddy for a wash and left him out to dry off. Relieved, Lily returned to her room, Teddy in hand. After saying goodnight to each and every one of her animals, Lily slowly drifted off to sleep.

Conclusion: God has an immense love for us, and out of the immense love and sacrifices that He has made for us, He is willing to go to the most extreme measures to pursue us so that no matter where we are in life, no matter where we've been, no matter where we're going, we can always turn to God. I hope and I pray that you will feel the magnitude of God's pursuit for you and out of that feel compelled to do the same in your relationship with God.

Diving Deeper: What about the other 99, the sheep/coins/stuffed animals that were never lost in the first place?

## 39 – The Potter's Shop

Message: The Lord has uniquely made us all and he loves us.

Setting: RV/LV; early-week

Adaptations: Cell Phones

Scripture: Psalm 139:13-14 “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Isaiah 64:8 “Yet, oh Lord, you are our father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are the work of your hand.”

Characters: 3 clay pots, 1 Potter, 1 customer

A potter walks into his shop and decides he’s going to make some pots. He takes one slab of clay (a person) and “forms” that person into a pot with two handles. Then, the potter takes a second and third piece of clay (person) and forms that “clay” into pots with one handle and a spout.

The potter then decides to take a break from his hard work and leaves the shop, the pots start to talk among themselves. The two pots with spouts make fun of the pot with two handles and no spout saying things like, “who wants a pot with no spout? What good is that?” The pot without a spout says things like, “why did the potter make me this way, anyway?” and “I wish I had a spout like those other two...”

When the potter comes back into his shop, the pots stop talking and resume an inanimate posture. Just then, a customer walks into the store and is interested in buying a pot. The customer carefully inspects the three pots and rules out buying the pots with a spout before deciding to buy the pot with two handles. The customer purchases the pot with the two handles and leaves the shop with his/her new pot.

***NOTE: Make sure the Potter doesn’t make fun of any of the pots! That will ruin the point. He made them all and is pleased with their uniqueness.***

Conclusion: God made us all unique and special. We all have

different talents, abilities, and gifts and the Lord uses us for his glory in different ways. We all have a very special purpose for our life that the good Lord has made us especially for. Be thankful for the gifts the Lord has given you!

Diving Deeper: There are so many passages in the Bible that talk about deeply God knows you. Are there any that are really impactful to you? Why?  
Psalm 139:13-14, Psalm 119:73-74, Matthew 10:29-31, etc.

# 40 – The Room

Message: Jesus loves us intensely, fiercely, and sacrificially. It is out of this sacrificial love and grace that Jesus signs over our mistakes in our place, and as we live out God’s love on earth, we are Jesus’ hands and feet.

Setting: LV; Friday only

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5 “He was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed.”

Romans 5:1-2 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.”

Hebrews 4:15-16 “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin. Let us then approach god’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Characters: Narrator, main character, Jesus

In that place between wakefulness and dreams, I found myself in a room. There were no distinguishing features except for the one wall covered with small index-card files. They were like the ones in libraries that list titles by author or subject in alphabetical order. But these files, which stretched from floor to ceiling and seemingly endless in either direction, had very different headings. As I drew near the wall of files, the first to catch my attention was one that read “The People I Have Liked.” I opened it and began flipping through the cards. I quickly shut it, shocked to realize that I recognized the names written on each one.

And then without being told, I knew exactly where I was. This lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalog system for my life. Here were written the actions of my every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory couldn’t match.

A sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as I began randomly opening files and exploring their contents. Some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that I would

look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching. A file named “Friends” was next to one marked “Friends I Have Betrayed.”

The titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird. “Books I Have Read,” “Lies I Have Told,” “Comfort I Have Given,” “Jokes I Have Laughed At.” Some were almost hilarious in their exactness: “Things I Have Yelled at My Brothers.” Others I couldn’t laugh at: “Things I Have Done in Anger,” “Things I Have Muttered Under My Breath at My Parents.” I never ceased to be surprised by the contents. Often there were many more cards than I expected. Sometimes there were fewer than I hoped.

I was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the life I had lived. Could it be possible that I had the time in my twenty years to write each of these thousands, possibly millions, of cards? But each card confirmed this truth. Each was written in my own handwriting. Each signed with my signature.

When I pulled out the file marked “Songs I Have Listened To,” I realized the files grew to contain their contents. The cards were packed tightly, and yet after two or three yards, I hadn’t found the end of the file. I shut it, shamed, not so much by the quality of music, but more by the vast amount of time I knew that file represented.

When I came to a file marked “People I have Mistreated,” I felt a chill run through my body. I pulled the file out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. I shuddered at its detailed contents. I felt sick to think that these moments had been recorded.

Suddenly I felt overcome with emotions. One thought dominated my mind: “No one must ever see these cards! No one must ever see this room! I have to destroy them!” In a frenzy I yanked the file out. Its size didn’t matter now. I had to empty it. But as I took the file at one end and began pounding it on the floor, I could not dislodge a single card. I became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it.

Defeated and utterly helpless, I returned the file to its slot. Leaning my forehead against the wall, I let out a long, self-pitying sigh. And then I saw it. The title bore “People I Have Shared God’s love with.” The handle was brighter than those around it, newer, almost unused. I pulled on its handle and a small box not more than three inches long fell into my hands. I could count the cards it contained on one hand.

And then the tears came. I began to weep. I fell on my knees and cried. I cried out of shame, from the overwhelming shame of it all. The rows of file shelves swirled in my tear-filled eyes. No one must ever, ever know of this room. I must lock it up and hide the key.

But then as I pushed away the tears, I saw Him. No, please not Him. Anyone but Jesus.

I watched helplessly as He began to open the files and read the cards. I couldn't bear to watch him. I couldn't bear to watch His response. And in the moments I could bring myself to look at His face, I saw a sorrow deeper than my own. He seemed to intuitively go to the worst boxes. Why did He have to read every one?

Finally He turned and looked at me from across the room. He looked at me with pity in His eyes. But this was a pity that didn't anger me. I dropped my head, covered my face with my hands and began to cry again. He walked over and put His arm around me. He could have said so many things. But He didn't say a word. He just cried with me.

Then He got up and walked back to the wall of files. Starting at one end of the room, He took out a file and, one by one, began to sign His name over mine on each card.

"No!" I shouted, rushing to Him. All I could find to say was "No, no," as I pulled the card from Him. His name shouldn't be on these cards. But there it was, written in red so rich, so dark, so alive. The name of Jesus covered mine. It was written with His blood.

He gently took the card back. He smiled a sad smile and continued to sign the cards. I don't think I'll ever understand how He did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed I heard Him close the last file and walk back to my side. He placed His hand on my shoulder and said, "It is finished."

I stood up, and He led me out of the room. There was no lock on its door. There were still cards to be written.

Conclusion: How does it feel knowing that no matter what you've been through--what you've done--where you've been--God still passionately pursues you with sacrificial love and grace? We still have many cards to write, and whether they're good or bad, Jesus signs his name over ours. What shall we do then? Shall we not live out God's love in response to God's love? Shall we not live life with bold confidence in Christ as Christ's hands and feet? Shall we ignore the doorway to relationship with God that has been so swiftly and widely flung open? By no means!

Diving Deeper: How can we pass on this sacrificial love to others?

# 41 – The Three Trees

Message: God has a plan for us, it is to glorify him. There is no higher calling than to glorify the Lord.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:20-21 “In a wealthy home some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. If you keep yourself pure, you will be a utensil God can use for his purpose. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.”

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!”

Characters: Narrator, 3 trees, 3 lumberjacks, craftsmen to make the boat, manger and cross

Once upon a mountaintop, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up. The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: “I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!” The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. A “I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world! The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world.

Years, passed. The rain came, the sun shone and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain. The first wood cutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining ax, the first tree fell. "Now I shall make a beautiful chest, I shall hold

wonderful treasure!" the first tree said.

The second wood cutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It's perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining ax, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters!" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last wood cutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the wood cutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me." He muttered. With a swoop of his shining ax, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feed box for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, or treasure. She was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the wood cutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail to an ocean, or even a river, instead she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. "What happened?" The once tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God..."

Many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feed box. "I wish I could make a cradle for him." Her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful." She said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and a thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and the rain. The tired man awoke. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten wood pile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hand to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God's love had

changed everything. It had made the third tree strong. And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

Conclusion: God has a plan for you life. It may not line up with the plans that we have made for ourselves, but when we realize that God is in control and see what he is doing, we realize that he is using us in ways that are much greater than we could have ever dreamed. Therefore, it is important that we give God control of our lives and do as He asks us instead of living our lives as we want to. It is best when he is the one in control!

Diving Deeper: What is the painting that is hung across from the Mona Lisa in the Louvre? How on earth is that relevant to this skit?

## 42 – The Wemmicks

Message: People sometimes look at the outward appearance, but God looks at your heart. What God thinks of us is more important than what others think of us.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Adaptations: Punchinella (main character played by a girl instead of a boy)

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7 “...The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

Characters: Narrator, 2-3 Wemmicks, Punchinello, Lulia, Eli

Props: yellow star cutouts (some sticky and some not), grey dot cutouts (some sticky and some not)

The Wemmicks were small wooden people. Each of the wooden people was carved by a woodworker named Eli. His workshop sat on a hill overlooking their village. Every Wemmick was different. Some had big noses, others had large eyes. Some were tall and others were short. Some wore hats, others wore coats. But all were made by the same carver and all lived in the village.

And all day, every day, the Wemmicks did the same thing: They gave each other stickers. Each Wemmick had golden star stickers and gray dot stickers. Up and down the streets all over the city, people could be seen sticking stars or dots on one another.

The pretty ones, those with smooth wood and fine paint, always got stars. But if the wood was rough or the paint chipped, the Wemmicks gave dots. The talented ones got stars, too. Some could lift big sticks high above their heads or jump over tall boxes. Still others knew big words or could sing very pretty songs. Everyone gave them stars.

Some Wemmicks had stars all over them! Every time they got a star it made them feel so good that they did something else and got another star. Others, though, could do little. They got dots.

Punchinello was one of these. He tried to jump high like the others, but he always fell. And when he fell, the others would gather around and give him dots. Sometimes when he fell, it would scar his wood, so the people would give him more dots. He would try to explain why he fell and then say something silly, and the Wemmicks would give him more dots.

After a while he had so many dots that he didn't want to go outside. He was afraid he would do something dumb and then people would give him more dots. In fact, he had so many gray dots that some people would come up and give him one without reason.

"He deserves lots of dots," the wooden people would agree with one another.

"He's not a good wooden person."

After a while Punchinello believed them. "I'm not a good wemmick," he would say. The few times he went outside, he hung around other Wemmicks who had a lot of dots. He felt better around them.

One day he met a Wemmick who was unlike any he'd ever met. She had no dots or stars. She was just wooden. Her name was Lulia.

It wasn't that people didn't try to give her stickers; it's just that the stickers didn't stick. Some admired Lulia for having no dots, so they would run up and give her a star. But it would fall off. Some would look down on her for having no stars, so they would give her a dot. But it wouldn't stay either.

"That's the way I want to be," thought Punchinello. "I don't want anyone's marks." So he asked the stickerless Wemmick how she did it.

"It's easy," Lulia replied. "every day I go see Eli."

"Eli?"

"Yes, Eli. The woodcarver. I sit in the workshop with him."

"Why?"

"Why don't you find out for yourself? Go up the hill. He's there. "

And with that the Wemmick with no marks turned and skipped away.

"But he won't want to see me!" Punchinello cried out.

Lulia didn't hear. So Punchinello went home. He sat near a window and watched the wooden people as they scurried around giving each other stars and dots.

"It's not right," he muttered to himself. And he resolved to go see Eli.

He walked up the narrow path to the top of the hill and stepped into the big shop. His wooden eyes widened at the size of everything. The stool was as tall as he was. He had to stretch on his tiptoes to see the top of the workbench. Punchinello swallowed hard.

"I'm not staying here!" and he turned to leave. Then he heard his name.

"Punchinello?" The voice was deep and strong.

Punchinello stopped.

"Punchinello! How good to see you. Come and let me have a look at you."

Punchinello turned slowly and looked at the large bearded craftsman.

"You know my name?" the little Wemmick asked.

"Of course I do. I made you."

Eli stooped down and picked him up and set him on the bench. "Hmm, " he spoke thoughtfully as he inspected the gray circles. "Looks like you've been given some bad marks."

"I didn't mean to, Eli. I really tried hard."

"Oh, you don't have to defend yourself to me. I don't care what the other Wemmicks think."

"You don't?"

"No, and you shouldn't either. Who are they to give stars or dots? They're Wemmicks just like you. What they think doesn't matter, Punchinello. All that matters is what I think. And I think you are pretty special."

Punchinello laughed. "Me, special? Why? I can't walk fast. I can't jump. My paint is peeling. Why do I matter to you?"

Eli looked at Punchinello, put his hands on those small wooden shoulders, and spoke very slowly. "Because you're mine. That's why you matter to me."

Punchinello had never had anyone look at him like this--much less his maker. He didn't know what to say.

"Every day I've been hoping you'd come," Eli explained.

"I came because I met someone who had no marks."

"I know. She told me about you."

"Why don't the stickers stay on her?"

"Because she has decided that what I think is more important than what they think. The stickers only stick if you let them."

"What?"

"The stickers only stick if they matter to you. The more you trust my love, the less you care about the stickers."

"I'm not sure I understand."

"You will, but it will take time. You've got a lot of marks. For now, just come to see me every day and let me remind you how much I care."

Eli lifted Punchinello off the bench and set him on the ground.

"Remember," Eli said as the Wemmick walked out the door. "You ARE special because I made you. And I don't make mistakes."

Punchinello didn't stop, but in his heart he thought, "I think he really means it."

And when he did, a dot fell to the ground.

And each time he remembered what Eli told him and each time he went to visit and talk with Eli one of Punchinello's dots would fall off.

Conclusion: In the story Eli is representing God and when Lulia trusted in Him the dots (representing the mean things people said) wouldn't stick to her. When we trust in God and understand that he created each of us and made us unique and special, "dots" don't stick to us. Trust in God and know that He created you and loves you just the way you are.

Diving Deeper: Can positive labels that others give us also affect us negatively?

## 43 – The Wise and Foolish Builders

Message: Jesus is the only firm foundation for our lives, so we should always be seeking relationship with Him and putting His commands into practice.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27 "So then, everyone who hears my words and put them into practice is like a wise man. He builds his house on the rock. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. But it does not fall. It is built on the rock. But everyone who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man. He builds his house on sand. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. And it falls with a loud crash."

Characters: Wise builder, foolish builder, person as rain and wind, narrator

Narrator: One sunny summer day, there were two builders who planned to build homes for themselves.

The first builder was very confident in his construction skills. When choosing what foundation to build his house on, he decided to go with sand.

Foolish Builder: Hmmmm.... what to choose? I think I'll go with sand. I know what I'm doing.

Narrator: It briefly crossed his mind that maybe sand wouldn't be the strongest foundation for his home, but decided it would be good enough anyway. Once he was done with the foundation, it was time to choose bricks to build the house with. The bricks he chose to use were power, wealth, selfishness, dishonesty, and unfaithfulness. He quickly built his home and called it a day.

The second builder thought long and hard about what to build her house on. She prayed for God to show her what the wisest choice would be.

Wise Builder: \*say a prayer\*

Narrator: Eventually she decided to build her house on rock. She felt that it would be the strongest foundation for her home.

Wise Builder: I'll think I'll go with rock. That feels right.

Narrator: When choosing which bricks to use, she chose generosity, kindness, humility, faithfulness, and honesty. The second builder took her time building her house and acknowledged the importance of a firm foundation.

Wise Builder: I really want to take my time and build something strong.

Narrator: With the completion of each house, the builders admired their work. As they stood they noticed some storm clouds start to roll in. The builder who used a rock foundation looked on peacefully while the builder who used sand as the foundation of his home started to become more and more anxious as the storm got closer.

Foolish Builder: This storm doesn't look good. I hope my house will be okay.

Narrator: The wind and rain washed away the sand from underneath the first builder's house and all of the bricks collapsed, while the other builder's house was left still standing tall.

Foolish Builder: I can't believe this! My house is gone and all of my possessions! What am I going to do?

Narrator: After watching his home fall down, the first builder decided to walk over to the second builders house.

Foolish Builder: I was hoping you could offer me a place to stay since the storm blew my house down? My foundation wasn't strong enough for the storm.

Wise Builder: You are always welcome in my home, come in and I will show you

how to build a house on a strong foundation.

Narrator: She explained to him that the foundation was not built on her own strength, but on the strongest rock of all. That rock is God, as He is the only foundation that will hold up in any storm. The other builder was still confused. The second builder then explained that the foundation was the most important part, but the bricks you use to build your house with are also important. Living in generosity, kindness, humility, faithfulness, and honesty helped keep her house standing strong. By practicing these things everyday with the support of God, her house would always stand strong and firm.

Conclusion: Jesus is the firm foundation. We should build our lives around Him and make sure He is our foundation. When He is our foundation He will always be with us and keep us strong.

Diving Deeper: How does the firm foundation come into play in real life?

# 44 – These Hands

Message: God meets us where we are in sacrifice and has a desire to bring us into what He has in store.

Setting: LV; late-week

Adaptations: Character Monologues can continually change; every time it's done it's a little different. Core Character are gossip, anger, too busy, materialistic.

Scripture: John 14:12 “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”

Characters: 8 people

(These hands monologues are cut out, and given to counselors who are playing the part ahead of time so ideally, their part is memorized by the chapel and hopefully by the chapel practice!)

Woman #1: These hands. From the time I wake up to the time I go to bed, these hands are moving. Between the pressure of staying on top of academics and maintaining my GPA for my scholarship and the demands of my work hours to pay for what my scholarship doesn't cover, these hands never stop. These hands don't know how to say “no” to great volunteer opportunities, regardless of how little time and energy they have left. How did I reach this point? I feel like I am in a race...only I'm the only runner...and the end is nowhere in sight. These hands feel so overwhelmed and exhausted. When will I ever get a rest for these hands?

Student: These hands are hard to control. I know God wants me to guard my heart, but some things that are wrong feel so right. My boyfriend/girlfriend and I talk about boundaries in our relationship, but these hands fly right past them. I really wanted to be different and to be careful, but I am not strong enough. Is it too late to make things right now? I think I love him/her. How do you really show someone that you love them? What do I do with these feelings? How can I stop these hands?

Man #1: These hands have led me to places I never should have gone. They've flipped through magazines I never should have looked at. In fact, that's where it started all the way back in high school. Now, I can't seem to keep these fingers from typing in the same old web addresses. I don't want anyone to know. I mean, I'm a good person. Really! Except for this one thing. I've been visiting these sites off and on for years. But now? Now, it feels like it's all I think about! How did it get here? How do I erase all this from my mind? How do I restrain these hands . .

.?

Woman #2: These hands have written things I never thought I would write. So mean! I didn't even know I could say such things! First, it was email. Then, Facebook. Now, I'm even texting this stuff. Judgment, lies, slander . . . it's like I forget that when I write them, there's a real person reading it. I wish it wasn't even my heart. I've hurt so many people. Am I just a gossip? Is it possible to change my heart with these hands . . .

Man #2: These hands. I remember the first time they picked up a drink. I remember thinking how it was just part of having fun. What I don't remember is when exactly it stopped being fun. When did opening a bottle become my way of life? I know I used to live for more than the next drink. I don't even know who my friends are anymore. My family gave up on me a long time ago. I can't say that I blame them, though it still makes me so mad. How can I stop these hands...?

Woman #3: These hands have accumulated so much stuff. Closets full of clothes and a storage locker full of things I can't get rid of. I can never get enough. I wish my already big house was bigger and newer. I love shoes. Every color. Every season. You can never have enough shoes . . . And big payments. Credit card debt. I don't even know how much I actually spend and would probably be embarrassed if others saw my bank account. But it is still never enough. I see advertisements and try to be satisfied, but there is always something better that someone else has and I want it. If only I won the lottery or made more money. Seriously . . . now there is an iPad 3. Every time I buy something else I think it will make me happy, but it doesn't. So empty . . . my heart, these hands . . .

Man #3: These hands . . . (punch fist into hand) I get so angry, I just want to punch someone! Or at least, something. One minute I'm perfectly fine and then the next I'm out of control. It's like anything can set me off! My dad asks me to do something I don't want to do, someone bumps into me at the store, or some guy talks to my girlfriend in a way I don't like. Is something wrong with me? I just can't control these hands . . .

Jesus: These hands? These hands were nailed to a cross for you. For your every sin, these hands bled . . . for every wrong word, every bad thought, and every selfish action. For every burden you carry, I gave up my hands for you.

You see, I carried your pains, your disfigurements, all the things you struggle with. I was ripped, torn, and crushed on a cross for you. God piled on me all of your sins, everything you've done wrong. I was beaten and tortured for you, and I died. But your brokenness was upon me when I died and it died too. You don't have to live broken any more.

My hands can bring you healing. These hands can bring forgiveness. These hands can bring victory over every thing that enslaves you. In these hands, you can have life, freedom, . . . closeness with the God who created you.

You're just like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. You have done your

own thing and gone your own way. But it doesn't have to be this way. Come back!  
Your sin was not the end for me. Death could not stop me. The grave could not hold me. And your mistakes are not the end of you either. I'm alive and you can be too!

I am offering you a place in my Story. I am offering you a spot in my Kingdom. I offer you a new life. A full life! Call on Me! Follow Me! Take My Hand!

Conclusion:

I want everyone to put their hands palms facing up in front of them (demonstrate). These hands in front of you have a choice. A choice to receive the grace and forgiveness offered to us by Jesus through His sacrifice. A choice to return to Him. A choice to take His hand and let Him guide you through life.

These hands in front of you have great opportunity. The opportunity to impact hundreds of lives this summer through giving of yourself. The opportunity to lead by example. The opportunity to put love into action and lead others to receive the same grace you received.

These hands in front of you have great potential. Great potential to rise above. Great potential to be the very hands of Jesus. Great potential that can be realized only through these hands.

"Christ has no body on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion for the world is to look out; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now." ~Saint Teresa of Avila

Diving Deeper: Romans 7:14-25; where does the ongoing quest to follow Jesus fit in with our sinful nature?

## 45 – Trader Jim

Message: God wants us to consistently live for Him, even when it's hard.

Setting: RV/LV; mid-week

Scripture: Proverbs 10:9 “He who walks in integrity walks securely...”

Characters: Narrator, Trader Jim, Native American trader, Other Native Americans

Go back with me in time to the year 1810. During this time Indiana was part of the frontier, and life here was wild. But this story is about a young man named Jim, who travels west to find his fortune as a trapper. Jim had been trapping on the Pennsylvania farm all his life, he decided to travel to the Indiana territory and try his luck.

After many days of travel, Jim found himself camped on a small rise overlooking a creek that flowed into the Tippe. He built a small cabin with just a blanket across the doorway. As he looked around the next morning he saw signs of many animals. And soon he set up his trap lines, up and down the creek and along the river.

But as the months passed, Jim was very disappointed. He was having almost no luck with his trapping and he missed his family greatly. To his great dissatisfaction, it also appeared that many of his traps had been sprung on purpose and he often found moccasin prints nearby. Jim prayed often that God would change his luck, but it seemed to do no good.

Well just a few days later, shortly after dawn, Jim was awakened by the sound of horses' hooves outside his cabin. He quietly rolled to the door and gently pulled back just a bit of the blanket and peeked outside. There sitting on his horse was a Shawnee brave. Jim's first inclination was to grab his rifle. But he figured if the Native American meant him any harm, he would have tried to kill him in his sleep. So Jim pulled on his boots and calmly stepped out of the cabin, going first to where he had set his campfire the night before. He blew on the coals as he dropped some dry tinder on them and the fire leapt to flame. He set the coffee pot on and only then did he turn and acknowledge the Native American's

presence. He motioned for the Native American to come forward to the fire.

The Native American dismounted and went to his second horse, which was laden with furs. He untied a large bundle of beaver pelts and brought them forward, laying them by the fire and speaking to Jim. Jim couldn't understand the Shawnee tongue, but he got the impression that he should count the beaver pelts. So he knelt down and counted the stack of prime beaver pelts: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 pelts. So using his hands he indicated to the Native American that there were 12 pelts. But the Native American shook his head no and indicated that there were only 11 pelts. So Jim counted again and sure enough there were 12 pelts. But again the Native American said no, only 11. Well Jim couldn't argue so he decided to bring out his trade goods.

Jim brought out a wooden box with a hinged lid. When he opened the top, the trade beads inside glittered in the morning sun. Jim indicated to the Native American that the beads were worth 1 pelt per handful.

Then Jim sat down by the fire and motioned for the Native American to inspect the goods. In just a short time the Native American made his choices. He picked 11 handfuls of beads and placed them in a bag. He walked to his packhorse and began to tie the bag of beads to where the pelts had been before. All the while thoughts were racing through Jim's mind. "I'm sure he had 12 pelts, but he only thought he had 11, so I guess he got what he expected. But he really did have 12 pelts." So just as quick as a squirrel, Jim stood up, reached into the box of Trade Beads and took up a handful. He walked quickly to the Native American who had now mounted his horse and was about to ride away. Jim held out the beads to him and the Native American looked at him for a moment, then nodded and opened his bag that was tied to the horse. Jim placed the beads inside.

Once he had done so, the Native American dismounted and went back to his packhorse. He had been testing Jim, and Jim passed. The Native American now knew Jim would be an honest trader. He untied his other furs and brought them forward to trade. Jim traded for all the pelts. Soon other Native Americans showed up with furs and Jim traded with them.

Jim continued to trade with the Native Americans, many of whom became his friends. He also used his tools to build a much better cabin. This one was larger and had a fireplace. On the bottom floor he set up his trading post, and he lived in the loft above. And for many years the Native Americans knew him as Trader Jim. The cabin that he lived in is now known as ghost cabin.

Conclusion: The course of your life can be changed with choices you make in just an instant. Why did Jim make that choice? It was an easy and quick choice because Jim had made honesty a habit.

However, it's not just about being honest all the time; it's about living the way God wants us to live--Being Third--even when it's hard. We do this because we want all of our choices to be pleasing in God's sight. Your choices determine the direction of your life. Always make choices that would please God and make it a habit of doing so. If you do you will find that you have a wonderful life and you will be blessed by God in many ways.

Diving Deeper: How can we have integrity in other ways?

## 46 – Train Car Named Adventure

**Message:** God gave us an adventurous soul and wants us to explore life to the fullest, and that can mean stepping away from what we're comfortable with to release that adventurous soul.

**Setting:** RV/LV; early-week

**Adaptations:** Narration, physical places instead of synonyms for adventure (RV)

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 1:7 “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

**Characters:** Main character, train conductor, intercom person/narrator, custodian, people on train

*Note: This script is bare-bones to allow for a lot of creativity and elaboration on the actors' parts.*

**Story:**

*Mel is at home.*

**Mel:** I've been thinking a lot recently, and I think that I need to go seek Adventure. I guess all that's left to do is to pack my bags and actually go!

*Mel packs a suitcase, leaves home, walks for a while, and reaches a train station. Feel free to add a voice on the intercom, saying things with various levels of seriousness throughout the skit. Just make sure everybody knows when they're talking.*

**Intercom:** Welcome to Bradshaw Station. The time is... 8... 45... AM.

*Mel can talk about what she wants in Adventure or what she think it'll be like (pirates, explosions, etc.)*

Mel: Oh, I think the next train is due any minute now!

*Conductor pulls up in a train with his/her wonderful train impression, say "All aboard!", etc.*

Mel: Excuse me, is this the train to Adventure?

Conductor: Ma'am, this is a one-stop trip to Journey!

Mel: Ah ok gotcha, my bad. I'm waiting for the train to Adventure.

Conductor: Actually, miss--

Mel: It's okay, I'll wait for the next one!

Conductor: Uh, alright I guess...

*Train pulls away. Mel seems to shrug it off. The same general sequence repeats for Questing, which ends with Mel seeming a tad more bothered.*

Intercom: \*Narrating\* And Mel waited at the station all day long, turning down train after train.

*DURING ABOVE NARRATION: At this point, the conductor is just running through the station over and over, Mel saying "Adventure" and the conductor saying one of the following words each time: Trip, Trek, Escapade, Jaunt. Each time, Mel gets more and more demoralized to help suggest the passing of time. To help, the intercom can also say later and later times within the same day, quickly.*

*The train to Jaunt leaves (passage of time goes back to normal), Mel is (figuratively and/or physically) facedown on the ground. A custodian eventually comes on stage and begins to start cleaning up.*

Mel: Excuse me, do you know when the next train will arrive?

Custodian: \*Chuckles warmly\* Actually, there's no more trains for today. The last one was the train to Jaunt.

Mel: *\*Absolutely dejected\** Oh... Well... I guess I'll just... Go home then...

Custodian: *\*Warmly\** Have a safe trip home.

*Mel leaves, the custodian still is cleaning and starts talking to the audience, starting the wrap-up and soon thereafter finishing cleaning.*

Conclusion: Missing out the opportunities that God has presented to us to build the kingdom, spread love, and grow yourself is a tough thing to chew on. Sometimes we have our hearts set on serving God in a very specific way, and that passion can be great for driving our efforts forward. The point that it starts becoming problematic is when we start to put more focus on our personal vision as opposed to what God provides us with and where God calls us. God has given each and every one of you an adventurous soul, and He wants you to explore life to the fullest. However, that can mean stepping outside of what we're comfortable with or what we envision for ourselves in order to release that adventurous soul.

Diving Deeper: Try to explore the calling of Isaiah, Peter (and Andrew), and Samuel.

# 47 - Yay-Yuck

Message: God sees us and loves us for who we are as opposed to how we try to get others to see us.

Setting: RV/LV; early/mid/late-week

Scripture: Colossians 2:10 "and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority."

Characters: Bob, mother, boss, sporty people, No-Hat guy, narrator

Story:

Bob loved to make people happy. Bob lived to make people happy. If people weren't happy, Bob wasn't happy. So every day Bob set out to make people happy. Not an easy task, for what makes some people happy makes other people angry.

Bob lived in a land where everyone wore hats. The people never removed their hats. Bob never asked "Why?", he only asked "Which?" - "Which hat should I wear?"

Bob's mother loved yellow. So to please her he wore a yellow sparkly hat. When she would see him wearing the yellow hat and she would say, "Yay, Bob! I love it when you wear yellow." So he wore the yellow hat all the time. And since he never left his house and since he saw no one but his mother, he was happy, for she was happy and she said "Yay, Bob" over and over.

Bob grew up and got a job. The first day of his new job he got up early and put on his best yellow hat and walked down the street. Down the street, there was a group of people playing sports. Bob walked up to them and showed them his sparkly yellow hat. Bob expected them to say "Yay", but once they saw Bob with his yellow hat, they said "Yuck, we only like sporty hats."

Yuck! Was a hard word for Bob to hear. He felt guilty that he had caused a "yuck" to come out of a person's mouth. He loved to hear "yay!" He hated to hear "yuck!"

When the people saw his hat and said "yuck," Bob dashed to the sideline and grabbed a football helmet. He took off his yellow hat, put it in his bag, and put on the helmet. "Yay!" The people shouted as he walked past. He felt better because he had made them feel better.

When he arrived at his workplace, he walked into his boss's office wearing the helmet. "Yuck!" Said his boss.

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Bob, quickly removing the helmet and replacing it with the sparkly yellow hat. "You must be like my mother."

"Double yuck!" Responded the boss. He got up from his chair, walked to the closet, and produced a worker hat. "We like worker hats here," he instructed.

"Whatever you say, sir," Bob answered, relieved to know he wouldn't have to hear his boss say "yuck" anymore. He put on the worker helmet, and went to work.

When it was time for him to go home, he replaced the worker helmet with the sports helmet and walked through the streets. Just before he got to his house, he replaced the sports helmet with his sparkly yellow hat and went inside.

Bob learned that life with three hats was hard. His helmets were uncomfortable and heavy. There were also times when others would see hats in his bag, and before they could say "Yuck," Bob would close up his hat bag.

One day he forgot to change his hat before he went home, and when his mother saw a sports helmet she turned purple with disgust and started to say, "Yuck." But before she could, Bob ran and put his hand on her mouth and held the word in while he traded hats and then removed his hand so she said, "Yay!"

It was at this moment that Bob realized he had a special gift. He could change his colors with ease. With a little practice, he was able to take off one hat and replace it with another in a matter of seconds. Even Bob didn't understand his versatility, but he was pleased with it. For now he could be any color anytime and please every person.

His skill at changing hats quickly elevated him to high positions. Everyone liked him because everyone thought he was just like them. With time he was elected

mayor over the entire city. His acceptance speech was brilliant. Those who loved work thought he was wearing his work helmet. Those who loved sports thought he was wearing sports helmet, and his mother just knew he was wearing that special yellow hat. Only he knew that he was constantly changing from one to the other. It wasn't easy, but it was worth it, because at the end everyone said, "Yay!"

Bob's life continued until one day some sporty hatted people stormed into his office. "We have found a criminal who needs to be punished," they announced, shoving a man towards Bob's desk. Bob was shocked at what he saw. The man wasn't wearing a hat at all.

"Leave him with me", Bob instructed, and the sports helmets left.

"Where is your hat?" Asked Mayor Bob.

"I don't wear one." The hat-less man replied.

Bob was confused. "You don't have one?" He asked.

The man shook his head. "I don't want one" He replied.

At this point, Bob didn't know what to say. "You don't want a hat? But everyone wears a hat. It.. it.. it's the way things are here."

The man smiled. "I'm not from here."

Bob's head was flooded with more and more questions. "What hat do they wear where you are from?"

"No hat."

"None?"

"None."

Bob looked at the man with amazement. "But what if people don't approve?"

The man smiled again. "It's not their approval I seek."

Bob had never heard such words. He didn't know what to say. He'd never met a person without a hat, and he thought about the man's lifestyle. It must have been great living without the discomfort and weight of the hats. He must've never become exhausted from switching hats, and Bob only wondered why the man was fine without the approval of others. The man with no hat spoke again.

"I am here to show people they don't have to please people. I am here to tell the truth."

"What's the truth?" Bob interjected.

"God loves us for who we are," the man with no hat said, "and we don't have to change to experience his love. We can wear a yellow hat, a sports helmet, a worker's helmet or no hat at all, and He still loves us."

Bob had never heard this before, and now he had a choice. He took off the helmet, looked at his hats and then back at the man. Finally, he made his decision and dropped the hats.

Conclusion: The pressure to be someone we're not is everywhere in the outside world. We're told to act a certain way, wear certain things, or laugh at certain jokes, and when we do those things, that outside world validates us. The problem with falling into this way of life, however, is that we begin to lose sight of who we really are and what we're designed to be. Hopefully while you've been here at camp, you've felt like you've been able to be your true self. That's not only what living in a Christ-centered community looks like, but that's also what living in God's love looks like. We are rooted and established in love--finding our identity in Christ--and when that becomes what we keep coming back to--what drives us--what satisfies us--we get to a point where we always have that camp feeling. I hope that you fall into who God wants you to be by finding your identity in Him.

Diving Deeper: What IS our identity in Christ? What does that even mean? What ARE we in terms of our identity in Christ?

## 48 – Your Heart

**Message:** People may fail you, but Jesus never will. He loves you and therefore will protect and heal your heart.

**Setting:** RV/LV; late-week

**Scripture:** Philippians 4:7 “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

**Characters:** Main girl, mom, dad, sister, 2 friends, Jesus, (depending on what version you do: boyfriend, other girl)

**Props:** cardboard heart

The main character happily walks on stage holding a cardboard heart. She talks about how excited she is about the day/the week at camp she just had/whatever fits the day of the week you’re doing it.

The girl walks into a room/gets into car where her mom and dad are having an argument. The girl hands her heart to her mom, but her mom ignores her and drops the heart on the ground. She picks up her heart and dusts it off and tries to hand it to her dad. She begins to speak to him, but shortly realizes that she is being ignored. He drops her heart on the ground. (Parents leave the stage). The girl has difficulty picking up her heart and but is able to do it on her own.

She walks up to her sister who is busy on her phone. The girl tries talking to her sister but she acts like she doesn’t have time to talk and drops her heart on the ground and the sister walks away. The girl picks it up.

Two cool peers walk on stage and are displaying a cool arrogant attitude. She goes over to talk to them and gives her heart to them. They act like they're too cool for her. They drop her heart on the ground and she can't pick it up again (if you add on the boyfriend scenario below wait for her to leave her heart on the ground until after that one).

*IF THIS IS A LAKE VILLAGE CHAPEL* you can add this scenario on if you want: Finally, she walks up to a boy and they talk and she hands him her heart. Another girl walks by and the guy decides to go follow that girl and drops the heart on the ground. She leaves her heart on the ground.

She begins to cry/is defeated and sad. She hears a voice (Jesus/off stage).

Jesus: (Insert name of girl), what's wrong?

Girl: She explains that her heart has been dropped so many times and it hurts, that it can't possibly be picked up again.

Jesus: (Insert name of girl), you don't have to carry your heart all by yourself. I know that other people haven't taken the best care of it at times but you can always trust me to keep it safe. Your heart means so much to me. I will always be here for you no matter what to help you carry it.

Girl: Are you sure?

Jesus: Yes I am sure. I want you to try and pick up your heart again. I'll be right here with you.

Girl: Ok I could try again. (picks up the heart)

Girl: Thank you so much God. I know I can always count on you.

**Conclusion:** Sometimes you may feel as if there is no one you can trust. You may have given your heart to someone, a friend, someone in your family or maybe a teacher, and they have either ignored it maybe even hurt it. Often times they don't even know they are hurting you! The good news is, there is someone who you can trust with your heart, that is Jesus. Jesus loves you. He will never leave you and he will never hurt you. In fact, he can take your heart that has been neglected, hurt and hardened and change it into a beautiful new heart.

Diving Deeper: But how does this happen? What roles do relationship, community, and even counselors have? How else?