

Second Miles by Carol Duerksen

MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 A pen
- 2 Bibles for every student

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS

Play the following game with students:

- 1 Contact one student prior to the game and tell them that when you hand them a pen and say “Show me how,” they should take it and say “Be happy to.” They take the pen and point it into the air and draw an imaginary squiggly line in the air. The point of this game is that students are told to imitate what happens, and that they will try to imitate the drawing of the line in the air, but won’t notice the words “Be happy to.”
- 2 Play the game. Students pass the pen around a circle, trying to imitate the correct procedure. If a student catches on and says “Be happy to,” say, “Yes you did it!” but don’t say what’s right. Those who “get it” can do all kinds of crazy squiggly lines in the air—it doesn’t matter—as they continue to play until everyone has caught on to the game.

After the game is over, say:

Imagine this: Jesus and his disciples are sitting around a campfire one evening, just chilling out, talking, telling stories, eating s’mores. (Well, maybe not eating s’mores.) Jesus jumps up and says he has a game he wants them to play, and he proceeds to play this game with his disciples. When the game is over, he says, “So, what’s the point?”

Imagine you are the disciples. What do you say? What point is Jesus trying to make?

(The point is that it’s not about the squiggly line, it’s about the words “Be happy to.”)

CONNECT WITH THE BIBLE STORY

Read Matthew 5:38-41

Share this mini lecture:

When Jesus was on earth, he and his fellow citizens lived under the oppressive rule of the Romans. Roman soldiers put high taxes and oppressive laws on the Jews. This oppressive government had been going on since the Babylonians destroyed the temple in 586 BC and carried the Judeans into captivity.

Jews in the day of Jesus were sick and tired of living under this kind of bad government. Some of them responded by selling out—working the system to their own advantage whenever they could. Some of them chose to get out of it by withdrawing from the world—the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls were examples of people who did that. Another group tried to fight back—these were the Zealots. And into this mix, Jesus gives another option: to turn the other cheek. Go the second mile. Serve the ones who hate you.

Roman soldiers could legally force Jewish citizens into carrying their load for a mile. They could pull people off the street, out of the fields, or from whatever they were doing to force them to do this. And in such cases, Jesus said that they should do more than requested. Go two miles instead of one. And do it with joy!

(Pause.)

Is there anybody else here who's thinking, "Give me a break! You've gotta be kidding, Jesus!"

(Pause)

But Jesus wasn't kidding. He said what he meant, and he meant what he said. He wants us to be second milers.

What does it mean to be a second miler? Here's an example: Suppose your parents are going to be gone for the day, but you get to stay home. They've requested that you clean your room while they are gone. You don't want to, but you know you'd better. And then a crazy idea comes to mind—what if you surprise your parents and clean the whole house! Can you imagine the look on their faces?

And that's just what you do. You dust, vacuum, clean the bathrooms, organize the DVDs—you even bake some brownies to welcome the family home.

And when it's all done—how do you feel?

Great! You've gone the second mile and it feels great!

REFLECT

Discuss:

- Tell about a time you went the second mile. Why did you do it? How did it feel?
- How about a time when somebody went a second mile for you? How did that feel?

Share this story:

Imagine that you have trained for years to climb Mt. Everest, and you are now within 2 hours of the summit. You are about to reach the goal that very few make, and everything is coming together. The weather is good, sun shining—you are excited and psyched. Then, as you are climbing, you notice a spot of yellow on the ridgetop. A tent, perhaps?

No. It's a man. A man named Lincoln Hall. You heard his name yesterday on the radio. He had been left for dead the day before by his teammates. But he's not dead—he's alive. He lived through the very cold night in air that's extremely short on oxygen, but if he's going to have a chance to live, he will have to be taken down the mountain immediately.

And now you get to choose. Will you give up your dream to risk taking him down, knowing he might die anyway? Transporting his dead weight will be dangerous for you and your teammates. Other people have left him to die. You get to choose too—whether or not to give up your own ambition and dreams to attempt a rescue.

In all honesty, what would you do?

Discuss, then relate the rest of this true story:

The team decided to rescue Lincoln. They all survived the trip down Mount Everest. And Lincoln's wife, when asked what she thought of the rescuers, said, "The world needs more people like that."

RESPOND

Spend the remainder of the session brainstorming what it would mean to go the second mile, spread acts of kindness, and go "above and beyond the call of duty" for your students as individuals and as a class. Come up with at least one activity the class will do together, and one for each student.

Some examples for individuals:

Breakfast in bed for parents

A "I love you Mom/Dad" letter

Babysitting younger siblings

Eating lunch with the neglected kids rather than the cool kids.

Class examples:

Spending time with residents in a nursing home

Offering to clean or paint the church

Babysitting in the church nursery

Mowing the church lawn

Spending Christmas Day working in a soup kitchen

The possibilities are endless!