

Following Jesus in Real Tough Situations

by Carol Duerksen

MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- Contact students prior to class. If possible, text them on their cell phones and ask them to check out the text for this session: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10. Ask them to spend some time every day this week with this text, thinking about what it might have to do with their lives, and to be prepared to share that with the class. Keeping a journal would be a good idea, or checking in with each other on Facebook. Tell them to bring their Bibles to class.
- Bibles for those who didn't bring theirs.
- Locate the video "The Radicals" and have it cued to the execution of Michael Sattler near the end. Note: This is a somewhat graphic and realistic portrayal of his torture and death.
- The book "Rachel's Tears." You can order it used (and very cheap) from Amazon, or new from Amazon or the website www.racheljoyscott.com
- Suggestion: Order one for every student, or at least every student that you think would read it. This is a powerful story—one that every teenager who wants to follow Jesus should read.
- A candle

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS:

Welcome students and spend some time checking in with them about their week. Then ask: *Did any of you go through anything at all for your faith that could be called "tough"?* Wait for responses. Then ask: *How about anything just a little bit hard?*

Wait for answers. Finally, ask: *Did anybody experience anything difficult at all in relationship to you being a follower of Jesus?* Wait for answers.

EXPLORE THE FAITH STORIES:

- 1 Give students the following background information to the video clip they are about to see:

Michael Sattler was one of the first people known as Anabaptists. Born in approximately 1490, Michael Sattler was a monk who left the Roman Catholic Church during the Protestant Reformation to become one of the early leaders of the Anabaptist movement. He was particularly influential for his role in developing the Schleitheim Confession.

In 1525, Sattler traveled to Zurich, Switzerland, which was then embroiled in controversy over

infant baptism. He became associated with the Anabaptists and was probably rebaptized in the summer of 1526. He was involved in missionary activity around Horb and Rottenburg, and eventually traveled to Strasbourg. In February of 1527 he chaired a meeting of the Swiss Brethren at Schleithem, at which time the Schleithem Confession was adopted.

In May, 1527, Sattler was arrested by Roman Catholic authorities, along with his wife Margaretha, and several other Anabaptists. He was tried and sentenced to be executed as a heretic. As part of his execution, his tongue was cut out, and red hot tongs were used to tear two pieces of flesh from his body. He was then taken outside the city by wagon, and the tongs were used on him five more times. After that, he was burned at the stake. The other men in the group were executed by sword, and the women, including Margaretha, were executed by drowning.

- 2 Show the video clip.
- 3 Discuss the life and death of Michael Sattler in relationship to the 2 Corinthians passage. What connections do you see?
- 4 Ask youth to share their reflections on the passage. Here are some leading questions:
 - Which part could you identify with?
 - Which part do you think might change your life if you repeated it every day?
 - Did different parts of this passage resonate more or less with you on different days? Explain.
- 5 Rachel Scott's story: Share the following background:

Rachel Scott was a typical teenage girl who was incredibly dedicated to following and serving Jesus. Though she was mocked for her beliefs, at times doubted her faith, and constantly struggled with personal issues that teenagers face, she remained faithful to God. On April 20, 1999, she was killed at Columbine High School by two of her schoolmates, along with eleven other students and a teacher. The boys who did the shooting also killed themselves.

- 6 Share the following excerpts from Rachel's book. If you bought books for everyone, hand them out and read the excerpts together.

Chapter 2, pages 29 and 30—her journal entries

Chapter 6, pages 96-97—the letter to Sam

Chapter 7, page 111—her journal entry to God

Chapter 10, page 154, her poem

- 7 Discuss the life and death of Rachel Scott in relationship to the 2 Corinthians passage. What connections do you see?

APPLY / RESPOND:

Darken the room and light the candle. Gather the group around the candle for a time of reflection, prayer, silence, and sharing. Invite students to be in prayer about their lives and the lives of other Christians who are going through tough times right now. Invite them to share the names of people that need prayer. Invite students to pray not only for what they may be experiencing now, but also what the future may hold for them. Invite them to pray for the strength to be faithful when the tough times come. Close with the Lord's Prayer.