



S2.Lesson 8: God & Conflict – Garden of Gethsemane

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies Needed: Journals; Handout; tv or laptop to show movie clip (movie clip link is available at rfour.org/curriculum.html); four to six old-fashioned (wood-based with a spring and a metal trap) mousetraps (hopefully never before used); a preferably empty trashcan; at least 4 half-sheets of paper per student; writing utensils; a rope at least 5 feet long to use as a boundary.

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- We're going to watch a clip that has some violent conflict in it. But as you'll see, it is not as bad as it first appears.
- The main character's name is Ben.

WATCH Movie Clip from Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story

ASK

- What was the original conflict between Ben and his friend (disagreement about music).
- And how did the conflict keep getting worse and worse? (the friend changed the music without asking; Ben called him ignorant; the friend tried to leave with the last word; Ben pulls friend's shirt; friend pushes Ben; Ben tries to stab friend)
- What caused this escalation in the conflict? (anger; fear)
- When did Ben pray? (after the conflict)

TELL

- We're going to read a scripture story, now, that has some of the same themes that we just saw in the movie.
- Jesus and his disciples just finished what is now called "The Last Supper" and Jesus knows that he will be arrested soon.
- The disciples don't seem to understand this.
- Let's read the story and find out what happens.

READ Luke 22:39-42; 45-54

39 Jesus came out from the Passover meal and went, as was his custom during this week, to the Mount of Olives (outside of Jerusalem); and the disciples followed him. 40 When he reached the place, Jesus said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

41 Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." 45 When he got

up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, 46 and Jesus said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

47 While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; 48 but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?" 49 When those who were around Jesus saw what was coming, they asked, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" 50 Then one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched the servant's ear and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? 53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!" 54 Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house.

ASK

- In verse 40 what does Jesus tell the disciples to do? (to pray)
- In verse 41, what does Jesus do? (prays)
- In verse 45, what does Jesus discover the disciples doing? (sleeping)
- Last week, we talked about the Israelites being successful in their attack against the obstacle of Jericho because they were obedient to God. How obedient were the disciples to the command Jesus gave them? (not very)
- In verse 49, what do the disciples ask Jesus? (should we strike with the sword?)
- What is Jesus' response? (trick question! He doesn't get a chance to respond)
- What is the result, then, of the disciples not praying and not waiting for Jesus to respond? (a servant gets his ear cut off)
- What does Jesus do with the servant? (heals his ear)
- What does Jesus let the chief priests, elders and officers do? (arrest him)
- Name the areas of conflict you see in this story? (1. Disciple cuts off servant ear 2. Judas betrays Jesus. 3. Pharisees are arresting Jesus. 4. Jesus wrestling in prayer with what to do)

TELL

- Last week, we talked about how God does not remove conflict from us, but that if we pay attention to God, then God will show us the best way to move through the conflict.
- Also, last week, as we talked about the Israelites defeating the city of Jericho, we talked about how God's way of leading us through conflict is much different than how we would probably do it. God's way is often strange or unorthodox, but if we are obedient, then there will be success.
- We see that same pattern at work with Jesus in today's story. In verse 42, when Jesus is

saying take this cup from me, he's telling God that he wants God to do it a different way. But then Jesus says, "Not my will, but yours be done."

- For comparison, we can look to how the disciples who are not listening to God (because they fell asleep instead of praying and then acted without listening to Jesus) handle conflict.
 - They are unprepared for what's happening and strike out randomly, not even hitting someone who'd be a threat (a priest's servant!).

TRANSITION to Activity

- So in this story, we have two examples of how to deal with conflict: Jesus is one example and his disciples are the other example.
- The example of the disciples illustrates the usual way in which people respond to stressful situations: They get angry, they try to protect themselves and others, they strike out, etc, and then maybe feel badly afterwards.
- We saw this same illustration in our movie clip, right? Ben gets angry and lashes out.
- In the movie clip, Ben prays after the conflict. It's good that he's praying, but his timing is a little off (we'll talk about that after our activity).
- The activity that we're going to do now will hopefully help us think about how anger and fear, when triggered within us, cause (or escalate) conflicts.

EXPLAIN "Anger Trap" ACTIVITY

- First thing we're going to do is write down some things that make us angry. Don't use names and write legibly because we'll be reading at least some of these out-loud.
- (write things down)
- Next, we're going to crumple those pieces of paper up.
- Now we're going to split into two teams.
- The goal of this activity is to get rid of our anger by throwing it away in this bucket here.
- Only we're going to throw it away from far away (create line that teams can't pass).
- **NO STUDENTS MAY GO PAST THIS LINE!** (safety issue due to the mouse traps)
- Teams alternate throwing; one person at a time per team throws.
- If you miss while trying to throw away the things that make you angry, your missing might very well trigger a reaction – as illustrated by the mouse traps (four to six traps surrounding the bucket) that I've set and are ready to snap at the slightest disturbance!
- Your team gets one point if you get a piece of paper in the bucket.
- Your team loses one point for every mouse trap you trigger.
- Every time a mouse trap goes off, we'll read one thing from the paper that made it snap.
- First team to 10 points wins.

DO "Anger Trap" Activity...When done...

ASK/TELL

- What were some of the things that caused the anger traps to “snap” in the activity?
- Conflict and things that make us angry can happen in a moment, a snap of the fingers.
- Ben from the movie does the right thing in asking for God's help with conflict and anger.
- But Jesus does it even better by praying and asking for God's help BEFORE the situation happens. The more we talk to God about the things that make us angry and the more we talk and listen to God about what God calls us to do, the less likely it is that we'll be participants in the conflict. **Instead, we'll be more like Jesus and bring healing to the situation.**
- And that's the Good News for today.

CLOSING PRAYER