



## Disciples, Crowd, Pharisees

1st Confirmation Class Lesson

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**Supplies Needed:** Notebooks; 1 Roll of Toilet paper; 1 pen per student; handout

### Explain Opening Activity: Xerox

- Most our classes will begin with an opening activity. Sometimes the activity is pretty involved, sometimes it's pretty simple.
- For today, it's pretty simple.
- First, we're going to stand up and walk around a little bit. Stretch a little bit. And now if you have tennis shoes on [note: pick an attribute that about half of the class has], sit down in your seat. Everyone stays standing.
- Now, our opening activity for today is that everyone needs to get in the EXACT same position.
- This means everyone must have the exact same posture, is standing or sitting the same way, has their hands and arms and legs and feet in the same position, has their head turned the same way, their faces expressing the same way.
- Let's make it happen.
- Go!

### ASK

- Whose body position was eventually copied by the rest of the group?
- How did the group decide to pick this person to copy?
- How comfortable was it to become exactly like everyone else or to go along with the group's decision?
- Did anyone actively resist? Did anyone feel internally resistant while still going along with the group?

### Tell

- In order to work together, sometimes we have to do things that don't feel comfortable.
- But then, if we sometimes stop worrying about the uncomfortableness, we can accomplish the task at hand.
- In order for us to best work together, there are some understandings we need to share as a group. Hopefully, they aren't uncomfortable for you. So we're going to share those understandings now, once we do the...

### Opening Prayer

**Expectations** to share:

**Class starts** at 8:45 a.m. We know its early. But its not as early as school is, so we expect you to be here on time.

**Communication** – The most important thing that will determine how well this class works is how we choose to communicate with each other. If all of us talk at the same time, the class will not go well. If one person, like me, is talking to the class, but two of you are whispering to each other, then that is disruptive to the class. If one person shares something and someone else makes fun of that person, then that is disruptive to the class. If a teacher is explaining something, and you interrupt with a question that has nothing to do with what s/he is saying, that is disruptive. These disruptive aspects of communication are not acceptable. We will have activities in class, like what we just did, as a way to move around, but we will also have conversations. You are expected to participate in both the activities and the conversations in ways that are considerate and respectful of those around you.

**Notebooks** – Each of you will have a 3 ring notebook. The notebooks will stay in the classroom. You have them to provide you a place to keep information that you will accumulate during the year, in forms of scripture, handouts and your own notes.

**Question Box** – Sometimes during a discussion we're having, you might have a question that comes up for you that's not really in-line with what we're talking about. We'd like to answer your question, but we can't just stop class every time to answer a question that is off-topic. So, we will have a question box. So let's say you ask a question. We might say, "That's a great question, but that's not really where we're at today, so go ahead and write it down and put it in the question box." Then if you do, then when we do get to that topic, on that Sunday in class, we'll introduce the topic with your question.

### **Explain Introduction Activity** (Can take a good 20/25 minutes)

- I'm coming around with a roll of toilet paper.
- Each of you must take what you need.
- And while you're doing so, ask the group, "do you fold or do you crumple?" [fun, but unverifiable fact: 80% of Americans are crumplers]
- [pass out toilet paper]
- [once everyone has taken their toilet paper amount...]: Now on each square that you took, write one thing about yourself.
- Then we'll go around the circle and each share with the group what we wrote.
- [Due to time constraints, for the students that took a whole bunch of t.p., limit their sharing to 5 to 7 things]

### **SNACK**

### **ASK**

- If you go to church, and you believe in God, what do you call yourself? (most likely answer: A Christian. If such an answer is not given, prompt it...)
- And what do you think a Christian does?
- Part of what confirmation class is is the realizing of what choices are before you.
- So we start today with defining some of what those choices are.
- We'll do that by defining the types of people who surrounded Jesus.

## READ Mark 2:1-12

1 When Jesus returned to Capernaum with his disciples after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. 3 Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes and Pharisees were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? 10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" —he said to the paralytic— 11 "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." 12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

## ASK

- What things in this story are interesting or strange to you?
- Are you surprised that Jesus has a home (v 1)?
- Are you surprised that Jesus isn't upset about the roof of his home being torn off?
- If so, are you then surprised by Jesus' directness toward the Pharisees and Scribes?
- In verse 1, who is with Jesus? (his disciples)
- In verse 4, who/what stopped the friends from getting to Jesus (the Crowd)
- In verse 6 & 7, who doubts what Jesus can do? (the Scribes and Pharisees)

## TELL

- Throughout the year, we're going to be paying attention to these three groups that surround Jesus and how Jesus responds to them:
  - The disciples
  - The crowd
  - The Pharisees
- Each group represents a way (or set of choices) of living.
  - The Pharisees represent the Establishment way of living: They seek to live according to tradition and try to make others live this way, too. Think of them as guardians - trying to keep a certain way of life safe.
  - The crowd represents pop culture: What ever is hot, hip and now gets their attention, and they seek to share it with others (example: You should so go see \_\_\_ movie! It was sooooo good!). But a week later, they've moved on to something else that's new and hot and hip ("you went to go see \_\_\_ movie? That was so yesterday"). Think of the crowd, just as you would think of any crowd: Unruly, excitable, easily distracted, fickle, full of love 1 minute and full of hate the next minute (just think of a sports crowd and how quickly it can turn on their team when the team is losing).

- The disciples represent those who seek to live the way Jesus does. They do this by following Jesus.
- One thing to note is that the Pharisees or the Crowd are really the two main life choices made available to us by the world. And so it is important to note that the disciples, who represent *any* disciple of Jesus, initially start life as a member of the Crowd or the Pharisees.
- Being a disciple of Jesus, then, means learning to seek and live God's way of life, a way of life that is different than the Pharisees' (tradition) and the Crowd's (pop-culture) way of life.

### **CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK:**

- The challenge of the week will be a "challenge" offered at the end of every class for you to ponder and participate in during the time that precedes the next Confirmation class.
- We will share our experiences, thoughts and reactions to the challenge the following week.
- For this week: During the week, observe something that people gather around (figuratively or literally – like a TV or a sports game or a subject at school or a problem at work or a political issue).
- Practice identifying who is exhibiting crowd-like behavior, and who is exhibiting Pharisee-like ways of thinking and acting.
- You are encouraged to NOT share your thoughts with others during the week (for example, don't point at someone and say, "Aha! You're thinking like a Pharisee!"). This is simply meant to be an exercise in awareness.
- We'll share our observations with each other next week in class.
- Any questions?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**