

OTHERS FIRST

by Jon Van Houwe

KEY VERSE:

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. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:3-5

FAITH STORY:

Philippians 2:1-11

FAITH FOCUS:

In this passage, Paul challenges Christians to be Christ-like. Paul describes what that means by telling us that Christ gave up his life in heaven, died on the cross for us, and became nothing. He humbled himself as a servant to others. He also says we should give up our selfish ambitions, pride, and give more attention to the lives of others.

SESSION GOAL:

To help students realize that we need to be Christ-like and put others first.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, the students will:

- Students will study the passage and learn the Christ-like attributes that Paul is calling Christians to have in their lives.
- Students will design a service day in their local communities.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Bibles for each student
- 2 Candy
- 3 Foot-washing supplies—basins, Clorox water, towels
- 4 A Christian CD to use during the foot-washing

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (5–7 minutes)

Have the candy displayed when students are arriving. After welcoming them, invite students to take as much candy as they want. After they grab the candy, ask these questions:

- 1 Were you thinking about the others while grabbing the candy?
- 2 When I said you could take as much as you wanted, what were you thinking?
- 3 Did anyone not get any candy?
- 4 Do you think your actions indicated whether or not you are selfish? In what way?

- 5 What do you think it means to be selfish?
- 6 What is the opposite of being selfish?

CONNECT: (5 minutes)

Say: *If any of you want to do a different distribution of the candy, I'd invite you to do that now.*

Discuss what happened. *Did students share the candy equally or did they remain selfish?*

Discuss: *Who is the most unselfish person you know?*

Transition statement: *Paul didn't have much to say about candy specifically, but he did have some thoughts related to what happened with our candy here.*

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (10 minutes)

Make sure that everyone has a Bible and read Phil. 2:1-11 together.

Divide into small groups and ask them to read and compare Phil. 2:1-11 with Genesis 3:1-7.

They need to answer these questions:

- 1 What did Adam and Eve try to obtain that Jesus had all along?
- 2 What happened when Adam and Eve tried to obtain this?
- 3 What did Jesus do with this?

If students need hints, direct them to Genesis 3:4 and Phil. 2:6. The answer to #1 is "equality with God." The answer to #2 is that they sinned and humanity has struggled in its relationship with God ever since. The answer to #3 is that Jesus didn't exploit his equality with God but humbled himself and died on the cross. In addition, the point should be made that Adam and Eve were not obedient to God, but Jesus was obedient, even when it meant death.

Bring the class together to discuss their answers. Share a mini lecture based on the Insights from Scripture. Emphasize that Jesus gave up his royalty status of being God and lowered himself to become a man. He adopted a life that fulfilled God's purpose here on earth by serving, giving, and dying for us so we could have fellowship with him. As Christians, we are to humble ourselves and also put others first before ourselves.

APPLY: (10 minutes)

Say: *If we as a class would take seriously the idea of putting others first, what would be some possible outcomes or actions we'd take?*

Brainstorm together. You may want to plan a service day, such as raking leaves, shoveling driveways, soup kitchen, etc.

RESPOND: (10 minutes)

Say:

We read in our passage about Jesus humbling himself and becoming a servant, and that we are to do the same for each other. One of the things Jesus did that demonstrated his humility was washing the feet of his disciples. Today, if you choose to participate, we are going to have a foot-washing

ceremony.

Invite youth to pair up to wash each other's feet. You and another adult leader may want to demonstrate first. Let students know this is optional and they do not have to participate, but if they don't, they need to respect those who are and remain quiet. Play the CD during this time.

Close with a prayer, asking God to give you all hearts of humility and servanthood toward others.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

In this passage, Paul is writing a letter from a prison in Rome to the people of Philippi. He points out that Jesus did not only come and save the world, but also showed us Christians how to be humble and serve others. Jesus gave up his royalty status of being God and lowered himself to become a man. He adopted a life that fulfilled God's purpose here on earth by serving, giving, and dying for us so we could have fellowship with him. As Christians, we are to do the same to others. The whole message Paul is trying to get across is that Christians have to adopt the life that Jesus modeled for us. Because of our love for others, we are to empty ourselves and become nothing. We are to serve, give, and honor others before ourselves.

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