



## **DONE MESSED UP (KENOSIS LESSON 1)**

This lesson will help youth to view confession as a way or reorienting their hearts towards God.

Duration: 60 minutes

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### ENHANCER OF JOY

Confession of Sins

### DURATION

60 minutes

### LESSON DEVELOPED BY

Christian Gonzalez

### GOAL

How Confession Opens Us to God by Emptying Us of Ourselves

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### TIPS TO PREPARE

This lesson refers to God's love and patience with us in the face of our sinfulness.

### MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- A large stack of magazines for collage images
  - Several pairs of scissors
  - Enough glue for the entire group
  - Large poster board to make the collage
  - Bibles
  - Journals
  - Pens
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### SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

The room can be set up however you'd like. Be sure to provide space for youth to look through magazines as they find their collage images and space to make the large group collage

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### SCRIPTURE FOCUS

John 4:1-26

*Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John" —although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— he left Judea and started back to Galilee.*

*But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with*

*his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."*

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## Purpose

This session aims to provide youth with the opportunity to look into their hearts and to see how their lives are directed away from God. By practicing confession, youth will own their failings as a way to both crucify the false self while also reorienting the heart toward God.

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## Objectives

Youth will examine their hearts to see what keeps them from God. They will see how confession to another harnesses the impulse for self-expression in a way that unites them to Christ. They will also explore the things that block an honest confession and practice confessing these blocks.

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## Gather

### **Gather (5 minutes)**

#### **Opening Prayer:**

- Begin with a brief introduction to "The Jesus Prayer." Inform youth that this is an ancient Christian prayer that is intended to open the heart to God and to contemplate God's presence and mercy. Tell them that the words are very simple so as to focus the heart and mind on the subject of

prayer: Christ. Teach them the words: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

- Inform the youth that you (the instructor/teacher) will begin the next few minutes of prayer by praying 3 Jesus Prayers aloud. After that, you will be silent to allow for youth to continue the Jesus Prayer on their own in the quiet of the hearts. Tell them that you will end the prayer time by saying 3 more Jesus Prayers to reverently bring the prayer time to a close.
- Invite the youth to find a sitting position that is comfortable without being tempting to fall asleep. Ask the youth to become silent or to simply focus on the natural rhythm of their breath. Once the group is silent, say the Jesus Prayer 3 times. After a few minutes, say 3 more Jesus Prayers to end the prayer.

### **Greeting One Another:**

Go around the circle and say their best and worst parts of the week. If the youth are not familiar with one another, use this time to repeat names and/or ages.

### **Introducing the Session:**

Christ desires to be the center of our lives, to be the one toward whom all our love is directed. Often, we put other things first. This makes sense, because we live in a world that encourages us to do so, promising that those other things will give our lives meaning and value. It could be being popular, or it could be getting the best grades, or it might even be needing to look really good. Whatever these things are, we may prize them as ultimate, as being what our lives really are about. When these things are central, Christ becomes displaced. We construct false selves that over-identify with these things, and the thought of putting those things aside is actually really painful. These things become idols to us, and in order to tune into Christ, we need to confess this idolatry to another person, but to do so is actually really hard. It involves a kind of death. It is a voluntary putting to death of this false self.

## Engage

### **Engage (30 minutes)**

#### **Activity 1: Selecting Images**

- Put out the magazines for the young people. Instruct them to begin looking through the magazines to find images that represent the things that they really love, things toward which they invest a lot of their time. It could be their appearance. It could be their belongings. Whatever it is, encourage them to be honest, reminding them that this is a safe place and each of us has things that pull us away from God. Encourage each of them to find 3-5 images that really represent these things.
- Consider playing some lighthearted music to help lower their defenses.  
*Tip: This activity should be relatively fun for the youth. It is as much an opportunity to explore idolatrous affectations as it is for youth to get to know one another and for you to get to know your young people. This activity allows youth to express and explore their interests and longings. Interests and longings, after all, aren't problems. They do, however, become problematic when they consume us and pull us away from God.*

## Activity 2: Creating the Collage

- After you have given the youth enough time to find their images, now move toward the large poster board.
- Have the youth begin constructing one large group collage. When they are finished constructing their group collage, hang the poster board in a place where it can be prominently displayed.

## Reflect

### Reflect (20 minutes)

## Activity 3: Reflecting on the Scripture

- Pass out the bibles and read John 4:1-26 aloud twice.
- After doing so, explain to the youth some of what is happening in this passage. Christ meets a woman at the well. This woman is coming to the well at noon, a time that no one would have come to the well because it was too hot. At this point it becomes clear that she is coming to the well to avoid interacting with others. Later, we learn of the woman's sinfulness in relation with men. Her shame keeps her from going to the well when she might be seen by others. Her shame keeps her from owning up to her sin.
- It is also important to explain that in the Scriptures, a well functioned as somewhat of a local hot spot, a place where people met spouses (Jacob and Rachel, Isaac and Rebekah, Moses and Zaphora). Here, the image is that Christ is waiting at the well as the lover of this woman's soul. He is her true lover. She, however, has spent her life with multiple lovers, as Christ points out. These lovers continue to leave her thirsty for love, but Christ Himself is here now, offering to satisfy her thirst. Christ doesn't shame the woman for having had multiple lovers, but rather expresses how these lovers could never satisfy her deepest desires. After her encounter with Christ, she joyfully runs back to her people and declares that she met a man who told her everything she has ever done. There is joy for her in the confession of her sin. She previously had avoided others on account of her sin, but now in having her sin confessed, she finds liberation to go back to others in the community.
- The Scriptures function for us as a mirror. The lesson here is not simply to think about whether or not we are like the woman at the well. The lesson here is to deeper into ourselves to see that we are, in fact, the woman at the well. We, too, have spent our time pursuing empty love affairs while Christ waits at the well of our hearts to meet us and to give us living water. Again, perhaps this is about trying to be super popular. Perhaps it's about getting the best grades. Each of us has something or multiple things that are vying for our hearts' affections.  
That being said, invite youth to reflect on a few questions as they journal about the passage:
  - What are the other lovers that have kept you from encountering Christ at the well of your heart?
  - What feelings come up for you as you think about Christ knowing the depth of your heart's desire for these other things? What feelings come up for you knowing that Christ still loves you and longs to meet you?
  - What keeps you from wanting to be seen by others? What makes it hard to own your sinful desires in the presence of others? Is it shame? Is it fear of rejection? Is it fear of judgment?
  - Who is someone in your life that you would feel comfortable telling "everything you've ever



done” to? What would it be like to share your heart with them?

#### **Activity 4: Confession of Sins**

- After they journal, have the youth each find a partner. If your youth group has the practice of accountability or confession in this scenario, you may invite them to share their answers from their journals with one another. If not, simply have them talk to one another about what makes it so hard to confess sins to others.

- Invite them to articulate their fears around such openness and vulnerability. Then invite them to share with each other who they feel comfortable confessing their sins to.

*Note: It may be tempting to invite youth simply to open their hearts and confess to the group. They are free to do so, of course, but often people find it hard to be honest like this for a reason. Thus even opening up conversation about the process of confession, about what makes it so hard to be vulnerable is like chipping away at some of the protective layers that get in the way of confessing sin. Here, we are still practicing confession, but it is much more in the form of confessing the fear of confessing.*

## Send Forth

### **Send Forth (5 minutes)**

#### **Sum-It-Up:**

- What would it be like to live in openness? To be able to admit our own sin to others and to experience the love of God even when we done messed up?
- Can you imagine how this experience of love would begin to displace some of these idols that each of us has and begin to reorient our hearts toward Christ?

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus Christ our God, we give thanks to you that you know the depths of our hearts, and that you are waiting to meet each of us at the well of our desires. We have shown you, Lord, what each of us loves and the ways that we have turned from you. And we ask for your forgiveness as we pursue alternate loves. O Lord, as you invited the woman at the well to receive living water, we now ask that you fill our souls with that same water, that you embolden us to continue to confess our sins and to turn to you, the only true lover of our souls, trusting that you will meet us in our shame and empower us to live in your light. Have mercy on us, O Lord, and save us, for you are a good God and the lover of all people. Amen.