

A SCRIPTURE-BASED YOUTH MINISTRY ACTIVITY ON FORGIVENESS

♦ SCRIPTURE STORY - Move into groups of four and listen to this story of the woman caught in adultery:

Everyone else went home, but Jesus walked out to the Mount of Olives. Then early the next morning he went to the temple. The people came to him, and he sat down and started teaching them.

The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses brought in a woman who had been caught in bed with a man who was not her husband. They made her stand in the middle of the crowd. Then they said, "Teacher, this woman was caught in bed with a man who is not her husband. The law of Moses teaches that a woman like this should be stoned to death! What do you say?"

They asked Jesus this question, because they wanted to test him and bring some charge against him. But Jesus simply bent over and started writing on the ground with his finger.

They kept on asking Jesus about this woman. Finally, he stood up and said, "If any of you have not sinned, then go ahead and throw the first stone at her!" Once again he bent over and began writing on the ground. The people left one by one, beginning with the oldest one in the crowd. Finally, Jesus and the woman were there alone.

Jesus stood up and asked her, "Where is everyone? Isn't there anyone left to accuse you?"

"No sir," the woman answered.

Then Jesus told her, "I am not going to accuse you either. You may go now, but don't sin anymore."

John 8:1-11, Contemporary English Version, Catholic Edition. American Bible Society

♦ LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE - Discuss these questions:

1. What to you is the grossest sin?
 - a. cheating on a regents exam
 - b. doing illegal drugs
 - c. mocking and making fun of someone
 - d. being disrespectful to a parent
2. Who would you have trouble forgiving?
 - a. a rapist
 - b. a drug dealer
 - c. a person with a huge ego
 - d. an adulterer
 - e. a Nazi war criminal
3. If you had been in the crowd when the woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus, what would you have done?
 - a. blushed
 - b. stood up for the woman
 - c. looked the other way
 - d. picked up a stone
 - e. prayed for the woman
4. Why do you think Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground?
 - a. to let the Pharisees & teachers think
 - b. to take the attention away from the woman
 - c. to collect his thoughts
 - d. to keep from getting so angry
5. What was Jesus really saying by these words, "If any one of you have never sinned, then go ahead and throw the first stone at her"?
 - a. deal with your own sin first
 - b. judgmentalism is a worse sin
 - c. everyone of you has committed adultery
 - d. you see in others your own sin
 - e. It's OK to sin
6. In the last thing Jesus said to the woman, what was the tone in his voice and what did it mean?
 - a. guilt trip: You've been bad, and I'm ashamed of you
 - b. warning: I'll let you off this time but don't do it again
 - c. affirmation: You're a beautiful person and you don't have to put yourself down
 - d. support: You may fail again and again, but let's go for it
 - e. understanding: You're free to live differently

♦ MY OWN STORY - Journal individually on these questions and then discuss.

- How do you deal with anger?
- What's the hardest thing about forgiving for you?
- What do you do when you blow it?
- Who are the people in your life that accept you no matter what you've done?