



Date: _____
Series: Fitting In and Finding Friends
Fall Year 1, Lesson 18

Coping with Cliques

Take Home Point: *Cliques draw circles that shut people out; Jesus draws circles that invite people in.

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Luke 7:36-50 A sinful woman receives forgiveness.

Key Verse: Galatians 3:28, "There are neither Jews nor Greeks, slaves nor free people, males nor females. You are all the same in Christ Jesus."

We will help kids know:

- A clique is a circle of friends who exclude others in hurtful ways.
- When Jesus died on the cross, he made a circle that invited us in with him.
- It's important for us to accept and love others so we can invite them to be in God's circle as well.
- It is okay, even healthy, to have a close circle of friends.




We will help kids feel:

- Empathy for those who have been left out or hurt by being excluded.
- Compassion for those who are left out of God's circle and need to know that he invites them in.
- Acceptance from God and acceptance from others in their small group.

We will help kids do:

- Simulate a game to experience cliques.
- Identify people at school or elsewhere who are often left out and need to be included.
- Commit to reaching out to others, inviting them into God's group.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids are picked as “chosen ones” to simulate a clique and what it feels like to be left out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one or two small bags of Skittles® or M&M's® for each group <i>(These should be given to the large group presenter to distribute.)</i>
Large Group 	4 8 11	Overview Mr(s). Thinkendo and the “Chosen Ones” —“Chosen ones” are chosen to represent a clique. Then another circle of kids are called forward to represent those chosen by Christ. Video: <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> produced by Bridgestone Group, 1995---Luke 7:36-50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stage set to look like a classroom <i>(see lesson 17)</i> unique clothes for an outlandish teacher look <i>(as in lesson 17)</i> cross video: <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> produced by Bridgestone Group, 1995 www.visionvideo.com
Small Group Application 	4	Kids will each make a prayer list of people they can bring or include into a group. They will discuss how they can do acts of kindness for others, just as Jesus was our example.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> index card for each kid pens or pencils basin of warm water and a towel for each group

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction! Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.*

As kids gather: *Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.*

The purpose of this small group experience is to simulate a clique without telling the kids what you are doing. Be aware that we will create an experience that leaves some children feeling left out. Later in the lesson, we will process how to cope with feeling left out.

Before they arrive, stop two or three kids and explain the game you are going to play during Warm-Up. Ask them not to tell anyone else that you have told them the secret beforehand. You might explain to them that you wanted them to know, since they are extra-special to you. *(This type of preferential treatment will be discussed later in the lesson.)*

We are going to play a game called “Guess What I Like.” In this riddle, I will name one object that I like and one object that I don’t like. Try and find the answer to the riddle and the reason I like one thing and not the other.

If you can guess what it is, then you can make a riddle by naming one thing you like and don’t like. I will know that you know the riddle by the words you pick. Shall we begin?

I like books, but I don’t like reading. I like rabbits, but I don’t like foxes. I like deer, but I don’t like cows. Can you guess why I like one of these things and not the other? *(I like words that have a double letter in them, such as two e’s together.)*

As soon as someone demonstrates he knows the riddle by naming what he likes and doesn’t like, make a big deal about his success. *(These will probably be the kids you told the secret to beforehand.)* Be sure to praise them so those who haven’t figured out the riddle feel left out.

Towards the end of your Warm-Up time, the Large Group presenter will come and choose *only* one or two kids from those in your Small Group who have figured out the riddle, intentionally leaving out some kids. These kids are chosen randomly, praised in front of the others, and given a small bag of M&M’s® or Skittles® as a reward. *(This might be any type of small candy that is easily shared with others in their Small Group later.)*

The Large Group presenter gathers the “chosen ones” to come with him while overtly snubbing the other kids. He might comment on the other kids’ aptitude, appearance, or anything that might make them feel left out.

After the Large Group presenter leaves with the “chosen ones,” continue with the following:

Wow! That seemed mean, didn't it? That doesn't seem fair. Does anyone else think that seems unfair?

Give time for the kids to respond. Then ask:

Does this happen at school or other places? Are kids left out like this? When have you felt excluded or left out?

Shepherd: For Large Group, be prepared to possibly share a story from your adolescent years about how a clique hurt you or someone you knew. Concentrate on the feelings of the excluded child.

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Mr(s). Thinkendo and the “Chosen Ones”—“Chosen ones” are chosen to represent a clique. Then another circle of kids are called forward to represent those chosen by Christ.

Video: *Jesus of Nazareth* produced by Bridgestone Group, 1995---Luke 7:36-50

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have students refer to Luke 7:36-50 in their Bibles for the following questions.

Who invited Jesus to his home to eat with him? (Luke 7:36. A Pharisee or religious leader.)

What kind of woman also showed up? (Luke 7:37. A woman who lived a sinful life in the city, probably a prostitute.)

How did she treat Jesus? *(Luke 7:37-38. She washed Jesus' feet with her tears and hair and then poured perfume on them.)*

Did Jesus include this woman in his circle of friends? Why? *(Luke 7:44-50. Yes. She understood that Jesus was the Messiah and could save her from the consequences of her sin. Jesus forgave her sins.)*

What did Jesus say to the woman to let her know she was included in his circle of friends? *(Luke 7:48 and 50. "Your sins have been forgiven... Your faith has saved you. Go in peace!")*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

How do you think she felt now, considering before she was such an outcast?

Were the Pharisees a clique? How? *(They looked down on others and did not "hang out" with them. They excluded others, and they did not care whether they were hurtful or not.)*

Why do you think the Pharisees did not want this woman (or other sinful people) at their gathering? *(They thought they were better than her and others.)*

Why did she pour perfume on Jesus' feet and wash them with her tears and dry them with her hair? *(This was an elaborate expression of her love for Jesus. The bottle of perfume was probably expensive and bought with much of the woman's wages.)*

Why do you think Jesus let the woman do this? Was it more because it felt good to him or because it felt good to her? Explain...

Jesus had hundreds of followers, but he chose twelve to be in his inner circle of disciples. Was this group a clique? Why or why not? *(No. A clique is a group of friends who exclude others in hurtful ways. The twelve were almost always seeking to bring others to Jesus.)*

Do you think the Pharisees were included in Jesus' circle of friends? What would they or anyone have to do to be included? *(Believe in Jesus as their Savior.)*

Do you think the woman will include or exclude others into her new circle of friends? Why?

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Have the “chosen ones” from the small group Warm-Up equally share the candy given to them with the others in their small group.

Was the woman more concerned about what the Pharisees thought of her or what Jesus thought of her? How about you? With whose thoughts are you most concerned?

Are there groups of kids in your world – at school or in your clubs or athletic teams – that act like the Pharisees? How?

Do you ever find yourself involved with that kind of behavior? In what way? What would Jesus do if he were a kid in those situations?

What group(s) are you a part of? What things happen in those groups to prove that it is – or is not – a clique?

Application Activity:

Give each student an index card and pencil or pen to make a prayer list of people they can bring or include into a group.

Especially think of kids who do not have churches or don't know Jesus. A wonderful way to show friendship is to bring and include them in your group here at church.

Today we have learned that **cliques draw circles that shut people out; Jesus draws circles that invite people in.* Just as it says in Galatians 3:28: “*There are neither Jews nor Greeks, slaves nor free people, males nor females. You are all the same in Christ Jesus.*”

Think of and write down the names of those who you can include into Jesus' circle of friends.

Let each child have a few minutes of quiet reflection to write names down. Explain that they will pray for these people during prayer time.

Right before closing, bring out a basin of warm water and a towel. Choose a child who will let you wash his feet. Continue with the following while you wash his feet:

Jesus washed his disciples' feet as a way to show he would serve them. Likewise, he served us by giving his whole life for us. We can then wash other people's feet as a way of showing our love to him.

Unlike the woman who washed Jesus' feet in today's Bible event, Jesus is not available for us to literally wash his feet. But he does say that when we do this for others, it's just as if we are doing it for

Jesus. He said in Matthew 25:40, “Whatever you did for one of my brothers or sisters, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did for me.”

If kids do not understand this concept, explain that they do not literally wash someone else’s feet, but they can do acts of kindness or service for others just as Jesus was our example.

What kind things can you do for another to show him/her you want to include them in Jesus’ circle of friends?

Closing Prayer:

Have kids each pray for those they want to include in their group of friends as listed on their prayer cards. You may have them begin with the words: **“Lord, help me be a friend to...” or “Lord, help me include.... And remember to pray for them daily.”**

Close by thanking Jesus for including us into his circle of friends.

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Large Group Presentation

Mr(s). Thinkendo and the “Chosen Ones”

In advance of the presentation, the Large Group presenter informs the “chosen ones” that they are a special group of kids chosen because they are better than the rest. Have them save their candy for Small Group Application. The “chosen ones” make up their own group name for example, “The Winners.” The presenter also informs this group that when they form their circle, another kid will try to enter. They are to do whatever they can to keep him away.

The stage should be prepared in advance to look like a classroom (see lesson 17). The presenter now becomes the teacher, Mr(s). Thinkendo. He does this by donning a few simple props such as an outlandish tie or coat, a pocket protector, pens, and a coach’s whistle.

additional prop needed: a small cross

1) Challenge someone to break into the group

Mr(s). Thinkendo instructs the “chosen ones” to form a circle, facing the center shoulder to shoulder, in front of the entire group. She describes them as the most special group among all the children—that is why they have received candy. The group can announce their name at this time. Mr(s). Thinkendo continues with:

This group is so special that not just *anyone* can get into it. Let me have a volunteer from the audience to prove this. Does anyone from the audience want their own bag of candy like the kids in this circle?

Say to the volunteer after he has come forward:

Okay, all you need to do is break inside the circle. Then you can be one of *them*. But there are two rules: 1) You can’t go down on all fours; and 2) You can’t hurt anyone trying to get in. Just try to squeeze in.

The volunteer tries to squeeze in but shouldn’t be able to. Even if he does, it will take quite a bit of effort and this illustrates the point.

2) Define clique

Mr(s). Thinkendo continues.

What we have witnessed is an example of a clique. A clique is by Webster’s definition, “a small exclusive group of people.” When we talk about “cliques” in this lesson, we are talking about a group of people who try to keep others out in hurtful ways. Sometimes people

form cliques to feel more special about themselves. They might put down those not in their exclusive group.

Just like our volunteer could have gotten hurt trying to force his way into the (insert name of “chosen ones” group), we could get hurt when excluded from a clique. This might remind us of certain groups or cliques at school or other places that won’t let people in.

3) How does it feel?

Now let’s find out from these people who were chosen how they felt.

Address the “chosen ones”:

How did you feel when you were chosen to be part of the special group? How did you feel when you were told to be your own group and not let anyone else in? Did you like it or not?

Have the clique group sit down so they can listen to the following brief interactive discussion. To the audience say:

When I came by your small groups and chose one or two people to be part of my special group, how many of you wanted to be chosen? When you *weren’t* chosen, how did you feel? Let’s have some responses. (*Left out, it wasn’t fair.*)

Summarize some of the feelings in the group.

4) Belonging to a group can be good—but cliques are not

Every person needs to be included or feel part of a group, so being included in or excluded from cliques can cause very strong feelings for us. We all need to feel valued and special. There’s nothing wrong with this. In fact, it’s a good thing. Groups are good things. A good circle of friends will support and encourage each other. And we all need that.

Groups can become bad things when they become cliques and try to keep others out; when they say or do damaging things to others, so they feel better about themselves.

Option:

Could I have someone come to the microphone and tell a story of how a clique was hurtful to him or someone he knows?

Take one or two responses. If no kids come forward, maybe a shepherd will volunteer.

Now I need to confess a secret to you. Actually, the answer to the riddle was given to certain kids beforehand. Then, I chose a chosen few just so we could let everyone experience what it feels like to be either left out of a group or to be included in a group. I think we all like being included.

5) Jesus has chosen a group called the church

Now let's talk about what Jesus has done. He has chosen a special group of people, too. That group is called the church, and they are connected to each other through the Holy Spirit who lives inside them. Each one of the "chosen" trusts Christ as his Savior and shows love to others just as we learned last week.

6) Jesus is the center of the church

Ask the "chosen ones" to each tag another person not previously chosen and have the new "chosen ones" come forward.

From the new group, choose one kid to hold the cross and stand in the center of the stage. Have the rest of the kids form a circle around him, facing the center and holding hands.

This group is now a picture of the church. Jesus is in the center. He has given his life as a payment for all of our sins so we can be friends with God forever. Any person who believes in Jesus Christ is God's child. It says that in Galatians 3:26: *"You are all God's children by believing in Christ Jesus."*

Refer to the kids in the circle:

Even though all of these kids are different, they are all the same because they trust Christ as their Savior. It says in Galatians 3:28: *"There are neither Jews nor Greeks, slaves nor free people, males nor females. You are all the same in Christ Jesus."*

7) The church also looks out to invite others

But the church doesn't simply stand looking at Jesus. The church does this. Everyone in the circle, drop your hands and turn around to face outside. Now make the motion of inviting others. Now each one can go and get another person and bring them back to include them in the circle facing the cross.

Let the kids in the circle go to the ones in the audience and bring back others to the circle.

The church says, "Come into our group and you can belong to Christ, as well." That's our job—to invite others in, not to keep others

out. That's why we don't want groups in the church to be cliques that keep people out. Rather, we want groups to invite people in.

Let's have a handclap for our demonstration. Everyone may be seated.

Video

We are going to show a video presentation from *Jesus of Nazareth*, illustrating Luke 7:36-50. When you watch it, ask yourself the question, "Who wanted to keep people out of the group? Who wanted to invite them in?" Then you can go back to your small group to discuss more about this story in the Bible.

Begin where Joseph of Arimathea asks, "Who is my neighbor?" And end when Jesus says to the woman who washed his feet, "Keep this for my burial. Go in peace." Clip Duration: Approximately 3 ½ minutes

After the video say:

Today we have demonstrated how **Cliques draw circles that shut people out; Jesus draws circles that invite people in.*

Let's pray before going back to small groups:

Dear Father, thank you for Jesus who made a way for us to be included in your circle of friends by paying our debt of sin. Help us remember that no matter who excludes us from a group, we can always feel special and belong to your circle of friends that will last forever. You promise you will never leave us or forget us. Please help us to include others, especially into your special circle of friends. We thank you in Jesus' name, Amen.

Dismiss kids to return to their small groups.