

for use as
STEP 1

**Lesson 6****Focus:**

Jesus accepts us;
we can accept
others.

Lesson 6**Bible Basis:**

Luke 7:37-50

Lesson 6**Memory Verse:**

Accept one another, then, just as
Christ accepted you, in order to
bring praise to God.
—Romans 15:7

Students will explore the idea of biases that cause us to exclude rather than accept others

Materials:

- Internet access

Our brains are amazing. Our brains do so much without us even realizing it. This helps us with learning and completing tasks every day. But sometimes our brains pick up on connections that aren't fair and affect how we think about other people without us realizing that we're thinking it. Let this video explain.

Play the following video [4:07]:

Implicit Bias

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kuzU0-emKo>

- **What do you think about the content of this video? Do you think the middle schoolers you know are affected by implicit biases? Why or why not?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Many students may not have ever thought about it before, but they may have formed some of the biases listed in the video. When this idea is called to our attention, we may be able to identify how it's played out personally. Others may not recognize it in themselves yet.)
- **How do you think media, news, conversation, and education impact your brain regarding biases against others?** (Accept all reasonable answers. When you are learning from and about people who mostly have similar backgrounds, or if people who fit a particular description are always being portrayed in the same way or with the same struggles, this paints a picture of what is normal, even if it is untrue or incomplete.)
- **Do you think middle schoolers are mostly unaware of their biases or do you see examples of overt biases, too?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Many middle schoolers may not recognize their own biases. In other cases, students will know of judgments that they or friends or family members hold or express, whether based on someone's gender, economic situation, race, ability/disability, etc.)

➤ **Have your biases ever caused you to fear, judge, or exclude somebody?** (Accept all reasonable answers. This could be a hard thing to admit to or perhaps think of a specific instance of, but most likely we've all done it, with or without thinking about it.)

Today you'll hear a story about a man who was biased against a woman because of her background or reputation. His thinking was that this type of person shouldn't be included, couldn't worship Jesus, and perhaps, wouldn't truly make a change in her life for the better. This is not unlike our thinking about certain people today. This man's bias presented itself more overtly, but so did Jesus' example of inclusion and acceptance.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

middle school



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Never Left Out

for use as
STEP 4 ▶

Lesson 6

Focus:

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Lesson 6

Bible Basis:

Luke 7:37-50

Lesson 6

Memory Verse:

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Materials:

- None

In the story today, the woman chose to enter this space and then everyone had the chance to actively accept or reject her presence there. However, sometimes people choose not to come into a space where they might not be accepted. Sometimes we think we *would* welcome someone in given the opportunity, but if we aren't *actively* welcoming others in, it doesn't help much.

- **In what ways does your friend group actively welcome others in? In what ways do you passively keep others out?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Some friend groups may be more social or more sensitive to others and invite people to sit with them at lunch or the game or ask them to go along to events together. Some groups may be so tight-knit that others think they'd be the outsider among them, or a group might think they have nothing in common with someone who actually does need a friend or would be a nice friend.)
- **In what ways does our Sunday school or youth group actively welcome others in? In what ways do we passively keep others out** (Accept all reasonable answers. Perhaps you have a welcome team or buddy or mentor system to help connect newcomers, or your students are always bringing along friends. Or perhaps your tight-knit group has been made up of the same people for a long time who share lots of inside jokes. Perhaps your group all comes from just one of the schools in town or are otherwise a bit homogenous.)
- **Do you think our space and our group is welcoming to those from different schools; races; cultural backgrounds; abilities or disabilities; income levels?** (Accept all reasonable answers. Your group may represent a diverse community or have an intentional plan for children with a variety of needs. Or perhaps you've never considered or reached out to who might be missing from your group.)

➤ **How do you think we could be better at actively welcoming others into our Sunday school, youth group, or church?** (Accept all reasonable answers, which may build off of the conversation around the previous questions. Help students think practically and creatively about what would be welcoming for a new person arriving, particularly if that person would likely stand out in our group for some reason.)

Continue this conversation with your students, helping them to organize for action toward one of their ideas. It could be as simple as inviting a friend who might not come on their own but would appreciate having a friend or group to go with or moving the meeting room to an accessible floor. Maybe it means asking leaders to continually think about their planning—are the students with sensory processing disorders overwhelmed by the activities? Do Spanish speakers ever get to sing praise songs in their first language? What could you do to make sure everyone has opportunities to grow closer to and worship Jesus?

Close in prayer.

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