

Extreme Youth Ministry

Theme: Jesus Wants Us to Be an Extreme Youth Ministry

Bible Passage: The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-31)

Supplies: One copy of “Two Tales of Giving” handout for each person (included)

Optional Videos (show after the group discusses their first set of questions):

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York City: http://www.ny1.com/content/news_beats_politics/95154/mayor-disapproves-of-food-stamps-for-single-unemployed-adults/Default.aspx

Extreme Makeover Home Edition: The Frisch Family: <http://beta.abc.go.com/watch/extreme-makeover-home-edition/92244/155722/frisch-family>

Get Started

Divide your group into small groups of 4-6. Distribute the “Two Tales” handout (one per person so everyone can follow along.) Have groups read the stories out loud and then discuss the following questions.

Discussion Questions:

- If you were the receiver in each of the stories, how would you feel? What would you say?
- Which scenario would you rather be a part of? Would you rather be the giver or the receiver?
- Why?
- How would you improve each story of giving?
- Which story does our youth ministry most look like?

Gather the groups’ attention and ask for feedback.

Now ask the group, Which story feels more like a God-story? The first or second? Take a brief raise-of-hands vote.

The Prodigal Son

Say, **Jesus didn’t just give people what they “needed.” He gives more than that. There’s always an extra surprise, something special and unexpected, and it’s more than the person needs or even deserves. Jesus summed up this desire to go the extra mile for people in the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. This kid asked for his inheritance money in advance and left home. That’s basically saying, “Hey Dad, I’m going to pretend you’re already dead. Can I have the money? I’m outta here.” And then, the kid squanders all his money and winds up with nothing. So he gets a job feeding pigs. His plan didn’t work out so well. So he decided to go back home to his father and see what would happen.**

In your groups, discuss:

Think about the first story you read – the one about the food stamp program. If the same principles of giving were applied to this kid, what would the dad do for him? Be specific.

After a few minutes, gather feedback.

Now, let's pick up the story of the Prodigal Son as he returns to his father.

Read Luke 15: 20-24.

Becoming An Extreme Youth Ministry

Say The Father's response was certainly more than the boy needed – even more than he could hope for – and certainly more than he deserved. That's the kind of giving and love that Jesus has for us, and the same kind that he wants us to show to each other and the world. I have one final question for you to discuss in your groups. Please take some notes so we remember what we discussed.

How could our youth ministry look more like the Prodigal Son story and the Extreme Makeover Home Edition story? Please be specific.

After groups have had adequate time to discuss, ask for a highlight idea from each group. Close in prayer.

Want to take this an extra step? Get 5 or 6 volunteers to form an "Extreme Task Force" to implement some of the ideas from today's discussion. Set your kids free to be extreme and extravagant, and you'll be pleasantly surprised at the results!

Two Tales of Giving

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York City

Back in March, New York City was scheduled to receive an additional \$155 million to expand food stamps and other food assistance programs through the economic stimulus plan. Mayor Michael Bloomberg agreed to extend the extra benefits to any family with dependents. In other words: a man or woman (or both) who had dependent children. However, any single person who found themselves out-of-work and unable to find a new job would not be eligible for food support at all. In the words of the mayor, "You know, if you want help, you got to help yourself first and there's nothing wrong with that." The bottom line: food help is available to families with children because it's necessary. Single people without dependent children are assumed to be able to find new work and pay for their own food.

Extreme Makeover Home Edition: The Frisch Family

Aaron and Jackie Frisch don't have a typical family. After having three children of their own, they adopted five orphaned children from Haiti, and then also adopted three additional boys who were without a family. With a family of 13 to support, Aaron (the dad) works hard as a fireman. Additionally, Jackie (the mom) was recently diagnosed with a rare tissue disorder and has had five major surgeries and three strokes. They were strained and unable to keep up with home repairs. So the Extreme Home Makeover people arrived. They sent the family to Disney World, and then completely knocked down their house and rebuilt it into a literal dream home. They partnered with Fisher Price to donate thousands of dollars of toys and school supplies to children in Haiti. And, the University of Toledo gave all of their children full-ride college scholarships.