

Inside Out Jesus - Rejected Jesus

Text: Luke 4:14-30

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Print off of Reader's Theater
- Paper and Pencils
- Prayer Labyrinth, one per student

Large Group

Introduction

Say: Let's play a game! Ask a question. The youth should call out their answer until they find someone else with the same answer. Questions could be like "What is your favorite fruit?" or "What is your favorite color?" or "Find someone who has a sister?" Give them a minute to find someone. They can have more than one person in their group.

Ask: Did you like to find people who had the same answer as you? Why or why not? If you were the only person with a particular answer, how did that make you feel? When you are at school or at a social event, do you like to feel like you are a member of a group? How do you think it feels to be rejected from a group? Has this ever happened to you? Let students respond.

What is the emotion in the world?

Ask: What does it mean to be rejected?

Say: Rejection is not always about the big stuff like not getting into your favorite class, not making the cheer squad or A Team, or not getting asked to a dance. Everyday situations can lead to feelings of rejection, too, like if you don't catch sarcasm or no one laughs at your joke, if no one remembered to save you a seat at the lunch table, or if you are left out of a text. ***"Feeling rejected is the opposite of feeling accepted. But being rejected (and we all will be at times) doesn't mean someone isn't liked, valued, or important. It just means that one time, in one situation, with one person, things didn't work out."***¹ Rejection is painful. But it's impossible to avoid it altogether. In fact, you don't want to: People who become too afraid of rejection might hold back from going after something they want. Sure, they avoid rejection, but they're also 100% guaranteed to miss out on what they want but won't try for.

¹ Check out this article for more:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/rejection.html#:~:text=Everyday%20situations%20can%20lead%20to,talks%20to%20everyone%20but%20you.>

Watch Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KO6bbZOc2B4>

Questions:

- Name one thing that you learned from the video.
- Name one way you have been rejected. How did it make you feel?
- Why do you think we reject each other?

Where is the emotion in Jesus?

Read Bible Story as a Reader's Theater. You will need a Jesus, Narrator, and crowd.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke:

Narrator: Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

Jesus: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Narrator: Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them,

Jesus: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Narrator: All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. They asked:

Crowd: "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

Narrator: Jesus said to them,

Jesus: "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum. Truly I tell you no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.'"

Narrator: All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Questions:

- Where was Jesus preaching and teaching? (Nazareth)
- Is this a place Jesus grew up? Did the crowd know his family? (yes)
- What did the crowd want Jesus to do? (heal their sick and care for them as he did in other places)
- Why would Jesus not do this? (the people did not accept him)
- What did the crowd want to do with Jesus? (throw him off a cliff)
- What did Jesus preach about? (The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.")
- Do you think we would accept Jesus today if he walked into our church? Why or why not?
- How do you think Jesus felt to be rejected?

Small Group

Reaction to how Jesus handled the emotions?

Have a Bible on hand or the Reader's Theater nearby in case you need to review the story.

Say: Jesus understands rejection, and there are three takeaways we can learn from Jesus: First, rejection is not a reflection of self-worth. Jesus who is God's son and full of wisdom was rejected, we can expect that we will be, too. Second, Jesus' reaction to rejection teaches us to be strong and resilient. Instead of being discouraged, Jesus kept moving forward. Third, by experiencing rejection, Jesus is incredibly human. Rejection is part of the human experience.

Ask: What can we learn from Jesus' example when we feel rejected or left out? How did He handle rejection, and what does that teach us?

Activity - Haiku Prayers

Say: When you feel rejected, one thing you can do is pray! Today we are going to write a Haiku Prayer. A Haiku is Japanese poetry, and most people know it as 17 "sounds" or syllables arranged in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables each. Here are some examples of Haiku Prayers:

Jesus, holy God.
Help us to follow you now.
Be with me always.

God, who accepts me.
Thank you for your daily bread.
Grant me peace today.

Students can work in pairs, and once they have written their Haiku Prayer, they can share them with the group.

Reaction to how we respond to the emotionsS in the world?

Say: What we learn from this Bible story is that rejection is part of life. Jesus experienced what is like not to have people accept you, so when we face rejection, we should follow the example of Jesus. Sometimes we get angry or hurt from rejection. But Jesus teaches us to love, forgive, move on, and focus on something else. Jesus teaches us to keep going and not let rejection stop us from doing good.J

Ask: What are the dangers of returning over and over to people who reject us? How can this affect our self-esteem and faith? Who are some people we can turn to when we feel isolated or lonely? Why is it important to have a support system? How can we make sure the people we encounter feel loved and included? What are some practical ways to show love and acceptance? Have you ever felt rejected by someone close to you? How did you handle it, and what did you learn from the experience?

Activity: How to Use a Prayer Labyrinth

Say: When you feel rejected, one thing you can do is pray! Check out the Printable Prayer Labyrinth and instructions here:

<https://bibleresources.americanbible.org/resource/how-to-use-a-printable-prayer-labyrinth>

Prayer

Read the prayer below and pause at the fill-in-the-blanks for students to respond:

Dear Jesus,
Thank you for _____.
Help me with _____.
Amen.