

## Aim of lesson

To appreciate our need of God's forgiveness and the reality of the forgiveness that he offers.

## Bible background

2 Samuel 11; 12:1-14; Psalm 32; 51

## Outline of lesson

### When I kept silent

Ask the class if they have ever felt cross or miserable but have not really been able to work out why. Perhaps they may have later realised that it was because they had done, or said, something rotten to someone else and had not wanted to admit that what they had done was wrong, not even to themselves. David once felt like that because he had done something wrong; he had taken someone else's wife and then had her husband killed. He did not want to admit it, not to himself, nor to God. But he had no peace of mind until God made him recognise his sin and confess it. Read Psalm 32:1-5.

### You are the man

To see how God made David recognise his sin, read together 2 Samuel 12:1-9, giving three members of the class the parts of David, Nathan and narrator. Go through the first page of the workbook together. In the first section, encourage the class to think of the selfish, thoughtless attitudes both of the rich man in the parable and of David himself. Consider also the sins of theft, murder and adultery.

In the next section of the workbook, encourage the class to discuss how they think David must have felt.

The final section is more difficult and more personal. You may find the following points helpful in sparking off discussion.

- Accepting that we have sinned. It is because we know that God says that something is wrong that we can realise that we have sinned. We need to know his teaching and his standards. God may use circumstances, our own conscience, or other people to make us face what we have done wrong.
- Repentance. Knowing that he cares about what we do makes the conviction of sin bitter. We don't like what we are or what we have done and we want to be reconciled to God; to be at peace with him again.
- Confessing our sins. We know that the only way out is to confess to God what we have done; not because he doesn't know, but because things must be honest and open before God for us to be at peace in his presence. A child that has done something wrong must confess it to his father for things to be right between them again.
- Asking for God's forgiveness. God does not want us to confess our sins so that we will simply be convicted of our own sinfulness and stay in that position. He wants to bring us back to himself and the next step is to ask for his forgiveness. He is only waiting for us to ask so that he can forgive. Psalm 51:1 & 2.
- Accepting his forgiveness. God promises to forgive our sins, 1 John 1:8-10. We need to believe his promise and to accept his forgiveness, as David did, when he could say 'Happy is the man whose sin is forgiven.' (Psalm 32:1-2). See also Psalm 103:8-12. There is no reluctance on God's part to forgive our sins if we go to him and confess them. He wants to forgive us because he loves us.

## Digging deeper

### Sin and its consequences

Although God forgave David for his sin, he had to suffer the consequences of his actions, as seen in the behaviour of his sons.

## Relevance to our lives

Jesus says that there is a condition about forgiveness. God will not forgive us if we do not forgive those who sin against us (Matthew 6:14). Ask the class to try really hard during the week to forgive others immediately and to let you know next week how easy or difficult they found it.

## Prayer

Merciful God, we accept that we have done things that are wrong; we like to have our own way and put ourselves first. Please forgive us and help us to forgive others. Thank you that we can be confident that you will forgive our sins when we ask you.

## Other suggestions for activities

A mature group may like to put Psalm 51 into their own words and summarise its content.

The class may like to write their own psalm about sin, repentance and forgiveness. You may like to help structure the psalm by asking them to think of one line for each of the following headings:

- God's character of mercy and forgiveness.
- Confession of sin.
- Asking for forgiveness.
- Thanking God for his forgiveness.