



Session 3: Redeemed

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

GOAL: The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *This small group lesson is designed to help you and your students go deeper into what Jesus' life, death, and resurrection accomplished. By now, students have learned that God created and loves them, sin entered the world when humans tried to replace God as Lord over their lives, and Jesus came to defeat sin and death. In this Small Group lesson, students will dive deeper into the effect Jesus can have on our relationship with the Father. Because Jesus took the penalty for sin that we deserved—even when we were still running away from God—we can have reconciliation with God, and we can become his adopted children.*
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students about the role faith plays in our salvation. That is why the Small Group Leader Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, time-frames, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.*

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A copy of the Facilitator's Guide for you and any other facilitators.
- A Student Book for each participant.
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare: *A rope or cones (anything to mark boundaries)*

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Don't forget to take a minute and watch the teacher prep video found in your DNow Studies account. It's a short video that will take you through some of the need-to-knows before you dive into this lesson with students.



The Small Group Leader Guide This table outlines the parts of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe that you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

Lesson Outline	Included in Facilitator's Guide	Included in Student Book	Approximate Timeframe
Large Talk Review with Opening Questions		Yes	3-5 minutes
A Second Look An example of the power of reconciliation—followed by discussion questions.	Yes	Yes	10–15 minutes
A Little Deeper Dig into Bible passages that were not in the Large Group Talk. See what else Scripture says about this topic.	Yes	Yes + Discussion Questions	15-20 minutes
Live it out An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson—followed by discussion questions.	Yes		10–15 minutes
Apply it A practical application for students to do this week.	Yes	Yes	2–3 minutes
Student Devotional A short devotional for students to do on their own.		Yes	

LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW

Take a minute to review what students just learned in the Large Group Talk. Have them pull out their notes, and ask them to share what their answers were for the two questions found on **page 20** of the Student Book. Consider having students share their answers with a partner, and then ask for two or three volunteers who might want to share with the whole group.



A SECOND LOOK

Read this story together as a group and answer the following questions, found on **page 22** of the Student Book.

In 1984 the lives of two people were forever changed. One was Jennifer Thompson, a victim of a home invasion and vicious attack. The other was Ronald Cotton, the man Jennifer Thompson identified as her attacker in a police lineup.

Based on Jennifer's identification, Cotton was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to prison. He stayed there through the 80s and into the mid-90s, when DNA testing became more common in America. Cotton, who had claimed to be innocent for more than a decade, requested a DNA test to prove his innocence. Everyone involved in the case (except for Ronald Cotton) was shocked when the DNA test results came back and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was innocent of the crime.

After 10 years of false imprisonment, Ronald Cotton was released on July 30, 1995. While this story is already shocking, what happened next makes it something we still remember today. After his release, Cotton met with his one-time accuser, Jennifer Thompson. The meeting could have been one of anger, tension, and pain.

Instead, when the two finally stood in the same room for the first time since their trial ended, they collapsed into one another's arms, crying. They worked toward forgiveness and restoration. Then they went on to work together to fight other cases of mistaken identity. Their story of pain became a story of hope and a catalyst of change for many!

Discuss

- Did Jennifer deserve to be forgiven?
- How did Ronald's forgiveness affect Jennifer's life?
- Do you deserve to be forgiven?
- What difference does Christ's forgiveness make in your life?



A LITTLE DEEPER

It's easy to imagine God's kingdom as an exclusive club with a bouncer at the entrance who says, "You can only get in if you act a certain way and meet a certain requirement." The problem is, the Bible tells us that if there were a standard like that for entrance into God's kingdom, none of us would meet it: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Thankfully, Jesus met those requirements for us. When we put our faith in him and make him Lord of our lives, he walks us to the entrance and says, "Don't worry; they're with me!" We aren't just forgiven—we are loved and embraced! Look at these passages from Scripture that describe what God did to be in relationship with you.

In this section, you'll take a look at several Bible passages, and students will answer questions. The Background Notes below will give you a little more insight into the confusing parts of these passages. As students share, remember to listen deeply. Don't be afraid to ask second-level questions.



Read each Bible passage and answer the questions found in the Student Book on pages 23 and 24:

Romans 5:1–2: Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Background Note: Because of who Jesus is and what he did, all charges which have been (rightfully) brought against us as rebels against God have been dropped. We are completely justified through Jesus' once-and-for-all act. This brings peace between God and us. But Paul isn't using the word "peace" the way we may think of it today: two parties that have agreed not to attack or offend each other. There are many countries "at peace" that are still highly suspicious of each other. Their alliance is uneasy at best. Paul is talking about the Hebrew concept of shalom, a state of well-being, prosperity, and eternal salvation. Think of this picture from Isaiah 11:6: "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together." Our peace with God is more than just an agreement to end hostilities. It's a state of true comfort and embrace in which we enjoy God's loving presence—God's shalom—forever.

Discussion questions found on page 23 of the Student Book.

Romans 5:6–8: You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Background Note: There are two main things we should take away from this passage. First, the sheer depth of God's love should astound us. The type of sacrifice Paul describes here couldn't be further from what we expect. Just think about what that type of love would look like in some of the biggest blockbuster movies: Gandalf sacrifices himself for Frodo, but would he do the same for the traitor wizard Saruman? Harry Potter is happy to give his life for his friends, but would he die for Malfoy? Han Solo lets himself get frozen in carbonite for Princess Leia and Chewbacca, but would he do that for Lando, the guy who sold them out? God's love for us is radical.

Second, our hope in Jesus is completely dependable. We shouldn't ever worry about doing something so bad that we accidentally lose Jesus' love and our new status as God's children. God will never get buyer's remorse after we've been reconciled with him. Jesus already died for us in our worst possible moment! The Holy Spirit indwells Christ-followers as a promise that God will bring to fruition what he has started in each of us (Eph. 1:13).

Discussion questions found on page 23 of the Student Book



1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Background Note: In 1 Corinthians 15:20, Jesus is called “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” When we look at Jesus’ resurrection, not only do we see the means of our salvation, but we also catch a glimpse of what our own future looks like if we follow Christ. He rose in a physical, flesh-and-blood body. His disciple Thomas literally touched Jesus’ hand wounds. Jesus cooked and ate breakfast with a few of his followers. When we think about eternity with God, we may think of a disembodied, ethereal state (or maybe puffy clouds, golden harps, and halos). But when we put our faith in Christ, we are promised a literal, physical resurrection and an eternity of living the life God made us for.

Discussion questions found on page 24 of the Student Book.



LIVE IT OUT

Magic Shoes

Say something like: *When we start following Jesus, we are completely changed. We are more than just forgiven; we are moved from one kind of life to another. We go from darkness to light, from death to life, from enemy with God to dearly loved friend. In this activity, you’ll have some fun working together to get everyone in the small group from one place to another place.*

What you will need: A rope or cones (anything to mark boundaries).

Setup: Set up an area (this works best in a large room, a hallway, or outside) according to the diagram. There should be about 15 large steps between the start line and finish line.



INSTRUCTIONS: Have the entire group stand behind the boundary line and say something like: Your team has been wandering through the desert for weeks. You are stranded at an oasis where the water has been completely used up. You can see an oasis across the way (behind the other boundary line) but the sand is too hot to walk on. Unfortunately, the hot sand melted all but one pair of shoes. These magic shoes (they are invisible) have some special properties (see Basic Rules).



Give the group about five minutes to come up with a plan before they start the journey across the hot sand. If they hit a point where they are not achieving anything, stop the action and ask questions to get them thinking again before releasing them again to the activity. If they touch the hot sand or don't make it all the way across, simply stop the action, ask what problem they were facing, and have them reset back at the starting line.

Debrief:

- How does the giant pit of lava represent our relationship with God because of sin?
- What did you need to get across?
- What do we need to cross the relational gap between God and us?
- What are some of the things Jesus saves us from?
- What are some of the things Jesus saves us for?

BASIC RULES:

1. Each person in the group can only wear them one time, going in one direction.
2. They can't be thrown or separated.
3. Your whole group must overcome and navigate the obstacles in order to get to fresh water.



APPLY IT

If you've already trusted in God and have let him forgive you, what's one way you can share that same forgiveness with someone else this week? If you haven't decided to follow Christ or accept his forgiveness, ask someone you trust to tell you their faith story and the difference his forgiveness made in their life.

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

Leader's Note: Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." Challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.

WHAT'S NEXT

Schedule: Be sure to let students know what's happening next in the schedule and what they need to do or bring with them.

Student Devotional: The Student Book contains a short devotional for students to do on their own. Make sure to point this out to students and let them know if and when this fits into the schedule of the weekend. The devotional that corresponds with this lesson is found on **page 39**.