

SEVENTH DAY
SLUMBER

Artist:

SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER
SEVENTHDAYSLUMBER.COM

Album Title & Record Company:

ONCE UPON A SHATTERED LIFE
BEC RECORDINGS

Video Title:

CAROLINE

Study by:

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Theme

God's Forgiveness

Objective

Students will wrestle with their failings and will be invited to partake in coming clean with God and others.

Warm Up

Ask your students to tell you the longest time they've ever gone without a shower or bath. Award the winner with a bar of soap or a stick of deodorant. Then ask random participants to share about the time when they were the dirtiest they'd ever been. Take a vote by having the audience cheer for who had the grossest story – loudest cheer wins. Again, award the winner with an appropriate prize. Finally, if you have the time and won't get fired for showing a clip from a PG-13 movie, play the scene in **Tommy Boy** (©1995 Paramount) where Tommy Callahan gets hosed down by his stepbrother after an evening of cow-tipping. Be careful to start and stop the DVD precisely to ensure you don't show anything that's inappropriate (17:55 – 18:18).

Then say, "Everyone knows what being dirty feels like. Sometimes we're forced to skip a shower and our skin feels oily, our armpits stink and our hair gets greasy. Getting dirty is not difficult.

The moment we step out of the shower in the morning, we begin to get dirty. Getting dirty is easy, but getting clean takes some work. We've each done things that have caused us to experience a type of dirtiness that no bath or shower can reverse. Every human being has felt guilty and wished they could somehow reverse a part of their past. Whether we brought the guilt upon ourselves or someone harmed us in some way, we have all wished that we could just start over."

Video

Explain that the group Seventh Day Slumber has a song that focuses on a girl who wants to break away from a past that somehow haunts her. Encourage students to watch the video intently and to apply the imagery to their own experience. Hand out the Student Guides and show the video.

Transition

Ask students to share anything about the song that really hit them. Some follow-up questions are included on the Thinking It Through section of the Student Guide. Briefly share about an issue of pain or guilt in your past that God has been able to free you from. You know your group, so be as transparent as you feel is appropriate.

Bible Study

Have the students take a look at **John 8:2-11**. Explain that Jesus was at a point in His ministry when many of the religious leaders were becoming jealous of His influence. They were trying to trap Jesus into doing or saying something that would incriminate Him according to their self-righteous interpretation of the law. On one occasion, these men brought a humiliated prostitute before Jesus. She had been caught in the act of committing sexual sin, and they put her on public display while they asked Jesus how they should respond to her sin.

Explain that the religious leaders had a very different remedy for dealing with this lady's past than Jesus did. They wanted to inflict the harshest judgment, but Jesus wanted to change her life. There is no doubt that she deserved the punishment of stoning, according to the Law of Moses. However, Jesus had come not to condemn the world, but to save it (**John 3:17**).

Walk the students through the By The Book section on their Student Guide, or have students break up into groups of 3 to 4 and discuss the section in their groups. Have adult leaders mingle around from group to group and help the students stay on track.

Conclusion

Say, "Like the prostitute, many of you are struggling with things from your past – things that make you feel guilty or that you'd feel embarrassed about if others found out. This stuff might be ten years old, or it might have happened last night. It may be the result of a bad decision you made, or you may be the victim of someone else's bad decision. Whatever the case, the conversation God wants to have with you is exactly what you heard and saw in the video 'Caroline.'" Take the discussion wherever it needs to go for your group. Pray that God would use the talk to open hearts and cause students who have been running from God to turn around and run in His direction. He wants to make them "feel beautiful again" as the song says.

Emphasize that students don't have to feel dirty – that Christ has already taken their guilt and shame upon Himself at the cross. The hard work of making us clean has already been done for us. Not only are we saved by this grace, but we must also live by it daily or we'll never experience the rich relationship God desires to have with us.

Close the meeting with an opportunity for students to respond to Christ's offer of restoration and/or new life.

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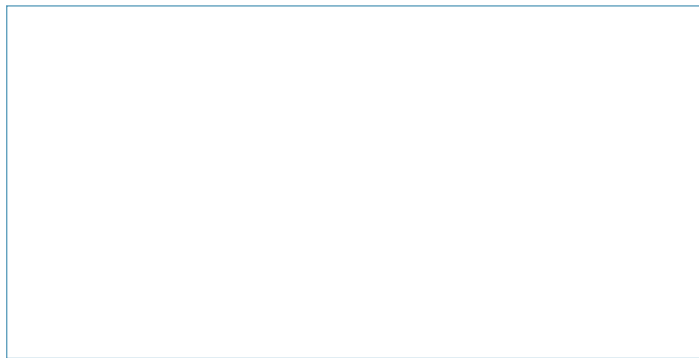
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The Video

As you watch the video "Caroline" by Seventh Day Slumber, jot down anything about the words or images that jump out at you.

By The Book

Having read **John 8:2-11**, discuss the following thoughts and questions as a group:

Imagine for a moment that you are in the shoes of the woman they were making a spectacle of. What kind of emotions would you be dealing with under those circumstances?

Nobody knows for sure what Jesus wrote on the ground; but it evidently made the Pharisees think twice about what they were doing, and they all fled the scene. Do you have a guess as to what Jesus might have been writing?

Romans 2:4 says that God's kindness leads a person to repentance from sin. Jesus showed kindness toward the adulterous woman before ever speaking a word about her need to change her lifestyle. Why do people so often live under the impression that God is angry with them rather than longing to show them His kindness?

Thinking It Through

What do you think the artists are trying to communicate through the song?

With what imagery in the video were you able to identify?

God's ultimate act of kindness was in taking your place on the cross and enduring the judgment for sin that you deserved. What does this tell you about how you should deal with any guilt or shame of your past?

Not only did Jesus die for your sins, but He also provided forgiveness for those who have sinned against you. How should this influence the way you respond to those who have hurt you in the past?

Conclusion

What is one issue or problem from your past that you need to be healed, forgiven or freed of?

Are you willing to risk reaching out to someone you trust (a parent, youth leader, Christian friend, etc.) who will help you walk through the healing process? Why or Why not?

Are you willing to accept the fact that if you know Christ as Savior, God is not angry with you?