

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: STATUES

All of the teens except one – who is “it” – strike poses as statues. They must be perfectly still. The teen who is “it” is not allowed to touch or tickle the statues, but has to try to make them laugh, smile, or otherwise break their pose. If a statue moves at all, then s/he is out for that round. The last statue still standing wins the round.

SMALL GROUPS WILL HAVE MORE ROUNDS, AND YOU MAY NEED TO TIME HOW LONG THE STATUES ARE ABLE TO KEEP FROM MOVING TO DETERMINE A WINNER IF YOU HAVE GROUPS OF LESS THAN THREE. FOR LARGER GROUPS, YOU MAY DESIGNATE MORE THAN ONE PERSON TO BE “IT” AT A TIME, AND STATUES THAT HAVE BEEN CAUGHT MOVING MAY HELP TO TRY TO CATCH THE OTHERS AS WELL.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: LIKE CALVES FROM THE STALL

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- **“You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.” – Malachi 4:2**
Have you ever seen an animal – maybe your own pet – let out of a stall or off of a leash? How does it behave? How do you think it feels?
- Invite your teens to share about a time when they felt trapped. What was making them feel that way? How did they get free? What did they do after they got free?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *When animals are released, they often display a burst of energy and a dazzling joy. When we witness their joy, we can even be caught up in it, laughing with the delight of seeing them enjoying their freedom.*
- *This is a good opportunity to set the tone by sharing a story of your own. Encourage all the teens to participate. The question allows them to choose a level of vulnerability that they’re comfortable with. If something of a serious and current nature arises during discussion, take a moment to pray for that need.*

THE LESSON: ROMANS 6

The first part of the lesson can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

The Apostle Paul's epistle to the Romans gives a wonderful summary of what Christians believe. Paul wanted his readers to understand clearly that salvation is 100% God's gift – received by faith, not through our own efforts; that Jesus' death on the cross has made us *free*. But what does that mean?

When we think about freedom in general, we see that there are actually two parts to it. The first aspect of freedom involves a release from something that was keeping us trapped. And the second aspect is a new ability to act in a way that we couldn't before. So when we talk about the *spiritual* freedom we have in Christ, what we mean is that we have been released from the power of sin, and are newly able to live a life that is oriented towards God in the power of his Spirit.

Does freedom mean that we should just keep living the same way as we did before? Or perhaps we should actually sin *more* so that God has the opportunity to show more grace and forgiveness? These may seem like odd questions to you, but they are real issues that Paul wanted to respond to fully and clearly. Take a look at how he tackles the topic in Romans 6.

Refer to Romans 6.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- How does Paul answer the questions he poses in verses 1 and 15?
- Is it possible for a Christian to continue to live in sin?
- What does "fruit" mean in the context of Romans 6:20-23? What does Paul say is the "fruit" of sin vs. the "fruit" of righteousness?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *Paul responds to the questions he poses with an emphatic "No!" Freedom from sin means freedom to give ourselves to a new master: Jesus, the one who loves us and died for us.*
- *All Christians struggle to leave sin behind and live in Christ. In fact, Romans 7 goes on to describe Paul's own struggle, saying "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (Romans 7: 24-25). In the sixth chapter, Paul is exhorting his readers not to allow sin to "reign" because it is possible for them to continue to live in this slavery. But we should also recognize that surrendering ourselves to sin is a dangerous state of affairs. Peter's second epistle tackles false teachers who have suggested such a surrender, in this way: "They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them" (2 Peter 2:19-21). Yikes.*

A NEW CREATION:

FREE

- *In this passage, when Paul refers to the “fruit”, he means the end-result or the inevitable outcome. There is a suggestion in verse 21 that sin produces a range of fruit, which in the light of truth is cause for shame. But ultimately, the fruit of sin is death. Conversely, the fruit of offering ourselves to God is our sanctification (being made free from sin, set apart for holiness) and eternal life. So when we exchange sin for Christ, we are exchanging a course of action that leads to death for one that leads to life. This is also emphasized in verse 5, where Paul writes, “For if we have been united with Christ in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn't make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families,” which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don't have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time quietly asking God to free you from any sin that may be keeping you from living in “newness of life”. End with this prayer from Psalm 116:16-17: **“O Lord, I am your servant... You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving...”**

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive: Receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chains of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us; for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen. (BCP PAGE 58)

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Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

ROMANS 6: **TRUE FREEDOM LEADS TO TRUE LIFE**

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.