

Lesson 1 / March 7, 2010

People Reject, God Accepts

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 1 Focus:

Jesus loves us even
though we sin.

Lesson 1 Bible Basis:

Luke 5:27-32

Students will view an example of bad sportsmanship and consider that God loves us even at our worst.

Supplies:





a computer with Internet access (optional)

Bad sportsmanship in athletics is nothing new, but soccer player Elizabeth Lambert of the University of New Mexico crossed the line in a recent game against BYU. During the game Lambert committed several rough offences including, punching, tripping, kicking, and yanking another player to the ground by pulling her pony tail. These offences were far from just being physical play on the field, they were very inappropriate. Lambert's consequence was to be suspended from the team. She apologized for her actions by saying, "I am deeply and wholeheartedly regretful. I let my emotions get the best of me in a heated situation. I take full responsibility for my actions and accept any punishment felt necessary. This is in no way indicative of my character or the soccer player that I am. I am sorry to my coaches and teammates for any and all damages I have brought upon them." Let's watch the video and see what happened.

If you have access to the Internet in your classroom, watch the following video, which shows the footage of the shocking offences. If you do not have Internet access, familiarize yourself with the video so you can describe the details.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHPWDQw3J4Y>

Discuss:

-  **How do you think the girl who got her ponytail pulled responded to Lambert after she recovered? How would you have responded?**
-  **If you were Lambert's coach, what discipline and consequences would you give her?**
-  **Do you think being suspended from playing was enough? Why?**
-  **Do you know anyone who did something regretful while playing a sport? What happened?**

Lesson 1
Memory Verse

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
—Romans 5:8

▶ How would you feel if someone on your team treated other players like Lambert did?

When we see someone display unsportsmanlike behavior, a common response is to be shocked and angry. We might even find satisfaction in them being punished and rejected based on their behavior. In contrast, God's response to a person who sinned or did something wrong is to love them unconditionally. It's hard to grasp that even when we are at our worst, God embraces us with His love and forgiveness. Our sins are no worse than the soccer player and luckily our sins aren't broadcast through the media. In our lesson today, we will see an example of how Jesus responded to sinners.

[Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Upper Elementary Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.]

For more information on the Lambert story, see:
twirlit.com/2009/11/10/elizabeth-lambert-interview-i-let-my-emotions-get-the-best-of-me/

For the complete ESPN video about Lambert, go to:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVDJq47UC2Y>

Lesson 1 / March 7, 2010

People Reject, God Accepts

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STEP 4

Lesson 1 Focus:

Jesus loves us even though we sin.

Lesson 1 Bible Basis:

Luke 5:27-32



Students will think about ways they show love to people who have been rejected by others.

Supplies:

- markers
- tape
- scissors
- red cards made out of construction paper (the size of index cards) – one for each student
- a paper cross big enough for students to tape their folded cards to (see below)

In many sports, penalty cards are used by referees or umpires to communicate a warning or punishment to a player, coach, or team official who has committed an offence. The first color is usually a yellow card, which is a warning. A red card represents a more serious offense which usually means the offending person is removed or suspended from a game.

Discuss:

-  **What kinds of behaviors in real life do you think would deserve a red card?** (*hurting others, stealing, disrespectful behavior, etc.*)
-  **What do you think the response of Jesus would be to Elizabeth Lambert for her negative actions on the field before her apology, and after her apology?**

Give each student a red card and a marker.

In real life we don't have cards for our behaviors or actions, but there might be things we are ashamed of or we feel guilty about. Let's take the opportunity to have some quiet time alone and think of things we have done wrong for which we would like forgiveness. Write the items on your red card and when you are finished fold your card. Encourage students to go anywhere in the room if they wish to have some privacy. Assure students that these items are private and they will not be asked to share with the class. Put a paper cross in front of the room that is large enough for students to tape their red cards to it. Once students are done writing, have them rejoin the group in front of the cross.

Lesson 1
**Memory
Verse**

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
—Romans 5:8

In our lesson today we learned that Jesus loves us even though we are sinners. When He died on the cross our sins were nailed to the cross with Him. So let's bring our folded red cards to the cross and tape them up as a symbol of our forgiveness. (Give students a few moments to respond.)

Discuss:

- ▶ **When you do something wrong, do you withdraw from God or draw near to God? Why?**
- ▶ **When people behave badly, do you withdraw from them or draw near to them? Why?**
- ▶ **Is there anyone you are avoiding because of their sinful behavior? If so, what can you do this week to show God's love to that person?**

We tend to want to keep our distance from people with shameful behavior. In contrast, Jesus wanted to help people with sinful or shameful behavior. This week let's remember how Jesus responded to sinners by showing kindness and reaching out to people that others rejected.

Close with prayer.

For more on sports penalty cards, go to:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penalty_card

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