

Garfield Week 3: Discussion Guide

September 15, 2024

Message Summary

After an unexpected reunion with his long-lost father, a scruffy street cat, Garfield is forced to leave his perfectly pampered life and take part in a high-stakes heist, leading to an incredible outdoor adventure. At one point, Garfield's father had abandoned him, and when you're rejected in any way, you have to work through that pain. Similarly, when Jesus experienced rejection, He didn't retreat or isolate Himself but saw it as an opportunity for God to work through Him. Whether we face rejection in relationships, at work, or with family, we are called not to give up or resign but to keep moving forward. Jesus also refused to retaliate, choosing love over lashing out, gossiping, or undermining others, teaching us to respond with grace instead of bitterness. Finally, Jesus turned rejection into an invitation, welcoming others into His spiritual family. Even when He felt like a doormat, He rolled out the welcome mat, offering inclusion and grace to all, demonstrating that rejection can lead to connection and growth (John 1:11-12)

Icebreaker Ideas

1. Would You Rather?

Go around the group and ask each person a series of fun "Would you rather?" questions. For example, "Would you rather travel to space or explore the deep ocean?" This encourages people to share their preferences and think creatively.

2. The Bucket List

Ask each person to share one thing from their bucket list—something they hope to do or experience in their lifetime. It's a great way to learn about their dreams and aspirations while sparking engaging discussions.

Introduction

Opening Question: Think of a time when you felt rejected. How did you respond in that moment?

Set the Stage: Today, we're going to explore overcoming rejection, using both a fun and meaningful story about Garfield's reunion with his long-lost father and how Jesus handled rejection in his life.

Story Reflection: Garfield's Adventure

- Summary: After reuniting with his father, Garfield is thrust into a high-stakes adventure, leaving his pampered life behind. His father had abandoned him in the past, which could have left Garfield feeling hurt, confused, and rejected.

Scripture: Jesus and Rejection (Mark 3:13-35)

- Key Verses:
- Read the passage and then discuss the following points:
 - Mark 3:13-15: Jesus calls the disciples, showing the importance of community.
 - Mark 3:20-21: Jesus' family tries to stop Him, thinking He's lost His mind.
 - Mark 3:22: Religious leaders falsely accuse Jesus of being demon-possessed.
 - Mark 3:31-35: Jesus redefines family as those who do God's will, showing that relationships go beyond blood ties.

Discussion Points:

1. Rejection from Family and Friends
 - Mark 3:20-21: Jesus' own family thought He was out of His mind and tried to take Him away. They might have wanted to protect their reputation or didn't fully understand His mission.
 - Application: Have you ever felt rejected by people close to you? How does this affect your sense of identity and belonging?

2. False Accusations and Rejection from Authority
 - Mark 3:22: Religious leaders accused Jesus of being demon-possessed, a serious and false charge intended to discredit Him.
 - Application: How do we respond when people in authority or influence falsely accuse us? Why is it tempting to retaliate, and what can we learn from Jesus' response?

3. Redefining Relationships
 - Mark 3:31-35: Jesus didn't reject His family, but He expanded the idea of family to include anyone who does God's will. His response to rejection was to offer an invitation to others to become part of His spiritual family.
 - Application: How can we redefine relationships when facing rejection? How do we maintain love and openness when others turn away?

Lessons from Jesus on Overcoming Rejection

1. Jesus Did Not Retreat
 - Mark 3:13-15: Jesus didn't isolate or hide when He faced rejection; instead, He built a community around Him.
 - Application: How can we follow Jesus' example by not retreating into isolation when rejected? Share ways we can lean on our community.

2. Jesus Did Not Retaliate

- Mark 3:22: Despite harsh accusations, Jesus didn't fight back or lash out.
- Application: Discuss the temptation to retaliate when rejected. Why is it important to respond with love, even when it's difficult?

3. Jesus Offered an Invitation

- Mark 3:33-35: Instead of closing off, Jesus extended an invitation to all who seek to do God's will.
- Application: How can we respond to rejection by offering others grace and inclusion, rather than shutting them out?

Real-Life Example: Have someone share a story of feeling rejected. This can be as simple as being picked last on the school kickball team.

Discussion:

- What does rejection do to someone's confidence and sense of belonging?
- How could Jesus' approach to rejection inspire a different response to such hurtful experiences?

Practical Takeaways

1. When rejected, don't retreat. Keep building community and connections.
2. Don't retaliate. Instead, respond with love, even when it feels like the hardest thing to do.
3. Turn rejection into an invitation. Open your heart and life to new opportunities and relationships that God brings your way.

Closing Scripture

- John 1:11-12: "He came to His own, and even they rejected Him. But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God."

Reflection: Even when we face rejection, God offers us a place in His family. How does this truth change the way we respond to rejection?

Prayer

- Prayer Focus: Ask God to give us the strength not to retreat, the grace not to retaliate, and the wisdom to turn rejection into an invitation to grow closer to Him and others.