

LearnING From Others' Mistakes! N.T. People

Intent of this Exercise

- ✓ *To learn by reflecting on others' mistakes*
- ✓ *To realize that in order to improve, mistakes are unavoidable*
- ✓ *Do not be too afraid of doing mistakes. Be rather afraid of doing nothing.*
- ✓ *To come to know the main characters of the New Testament narrative.*

Note for the Moderator:

- ✓ This exercise is suitable for all audiences, but especially for youngsters. It is simple, playful and enjoyable.
- ✓ It lends itself to tackle any imaginable topic from prayer to adultery! Virtues, vices, human relations, vocation, growth, etc.
- ✓ For this exercise, you do not need moderators. Even if you divide the participants into small groups they can manage alone by themselves.

Step 1. Starting Point

Singing hymns and/or bhajans.
Opening prayer.

Step 2. Introductory Mini-input. Suggested thoughts:

- In today's sessions we shall reflect on and learn from the mistakes of others, yes, on the mistakes of some people mentioned in the Gospel narrative.
- We can learn a lot from our mistakes and from the mistakes of others.
- The Bible tells us both the virtues and the vices of its heroes and heroines
- Their virtues that we may imitate them and their sins that we may avoid them. For instance the N.T. tells, both of Peter's love for Jesus and of his denial of Jesus.
- We are human, it is human to err.
- We are a mixture of good and bad, of strengths and of weaknesses.
- We all do mistakes, even sins; yet, God loves us all the same.
- God made aall of us lovable:
- However, we can and we have to strive to improve ourselves.

Step 3.. Working: in Groups of Twos Finding the Mistakes Others Made.

Note for the moderator:

1. First, choose the topic you wish to deal with in your sessions, for instance: loss of vocation, bad companies, greed, etc.
2. Next, choose a person or persons In the Gospel narrative that portray or symbolize the theme you have chosen; for instance,
 - ✓ Vocation: The Rich Young Man's mistake. Mk. 10:17-26.
 - ✓ Bad Companies: The Prodigal Son's mistake. Lk. 15:11-32

- ✓ Greed! Judas' mistake, The Rich Fool. Mt. 26:14-16; Lk. 12:13-21
- ✓ Cowardice Pilate condemning Jesus. Mt. 27:1-26.
- Etc.

3. Then after dividing the participants in groups of twos, give them the following instructions:
- ✓ Take passage or passages X, Y, Z of the New Testament.
 - ✓ Study A. B. C persons found in that or those passages and discuss the points mentioned below.
 - ✓ Take some notes of your discussions and prepare a mini-report of your discussion.
 - 1) What was the mistake or mistakes A, B, C persons made? Describe them.
 - 2) Why did they make such mistakes? What was the root cause of their misbehavior?
 - 3) Do people – even good people – make similar mistakes? Why? How can you explain their behavior"?
 - 4) Do we, do you make the same or similar mistakes? Give Instances of your life? Why did you act like that?
 - 5) What advice would you give to A. B, C? Explain.
 - 6) What advice would you give to yourself?

Step 4. General Group Session.

- (a) Sharing the notes taken in the groups of twos.
- (b) General Discussion.
- (c) Input

a) Sharing the Notes of the dyads.

Each group of two will read their notes..

The moderator or someone else will write on the blackboard the main thoughts coming from the groups , in the following way.

Mistakes the people of the Gospel did:

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Mistakes even good people do:

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Mistakes we also do:

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b) General Discussion.

The moderator will initiate a general discussion. He may put the following questions to the group

- 1) Of all the mistakes recorded on the board, which do you consider most serious? Why?
- 2) Which mistakes should we avoid first? Why? How?
- 3) Which mistakes do you find hard to correct? Why?
- 4) Which are our most common and frequent mistakes?
- 5) How to avoid falling in those mistakes?
- 6) All will be invited to agree or to disagree, discuss and express their views.

c) Input Suggested thoughts for an Input:

- Everybody has a right to make mistakes
- A child has to fall many times before he can walk straight.
- We learn from mistakes.
- The greatest mistake is not to learn from our mistakes.
- The best way to learn is by error and trial.
- A lost battle is not a lost war.
- Have faith and patience in your troubles and failure. You are greater than them!
- Many of the greatest saints have been great sinners.
- With God's help and perseverance, we can correct our mistakes if we really wish.
- Walk step by step to improve your life.
- Do not make peace with your shortcomings, yet live in peace with them.
- Do not rationalize your faults.. Be honest. Call a spade a spade.
- Mistakes should not be stumbling blocks on our path to goodness but stepping stones to climb higher!
- Mistakes do not make us bad, they only show what we are and how we can improve..
- Perfectionists will never reach perfection. They fear imperfection.
- Do not be afraid of falling; be afraid of not getting up.

Step 5. Personal Reflection and Prayer.

Instruction for the participants:

- ✓ Keeping in mind today's insights and ideas, reflect and pray on the points below:
Take some notes for your personal use only.
 - What are your main shortcomings, mistakes and faults? Enumerate.
 - Which of them do you want to correct or tackle first? Specify.
 - How shall you go about it?
- ✓ Draw your plan of action; your strategy.
- ✓ End by praying to God for light and help.

APPENDIX

A LIST OF USEFUL TOPICS.

Below you will find is a list of people in the New Testament, whose mistakes may help you to chose relevant topics for your sessions.

Crowds of People	Fickle-mindedness, Ungratefulness, Forgetfulness, Indifference Cruelty, Irresponsibility.
Disciples;	Fear, Timidity, Quarrelsomeness, Pettiness, Desertion of their Master, Discouragement.
Elder Brother	Unforgiveness, Anger, Jealousy. Self-righteousness.
Herod	Sensuality, Cowardice, Lust, Cruelty, Injustice. Abuse of power
Judas:	Dishonesty, Criticism, Greed, Betrayal,
Peter	Boasting, Little Faith, Fear, Neglect of Prayer, Denial of his Master
Pharisees	Hypocrisy, Prejudice, Duplicity, Greed, Pride, Injustice, Unkindness. Lust for Power. Jealousy. Formalism, Rigidity, Self- righteousness.
Pilate	Fear; Pretence; Self-deception, injustice to avoid trouble, Opportunism.
Prodigal Son	Craving for "Freedom", Pleasure-seeking, Disobedience. Bad company. Vices, Riotous living. Disrespect for parents.
Rich fool	Trust in money, False security, Worldliness. No trust in divine Providence, Wrong values.
Rich Man.	Unconcern for the poor, Indifference towards the sufferings of others, Self-centeredness. Gluttony.
Rich Young Man.	Stinginess, Lack of courage to follow Jesus, Loss of vocation, Attachment to money.
Soldiers	Subservience, Brutality, Callousness, Cowardice, Injustice
Thomas :	Unbelief. Obstinacy, Strong-headedness.
Unforgiving Servant.	Unkindness, Unforgiveness, Cruelty. No pity..
Would-be followers	Lack of readiness to follow Jesus, Laying down condition to follow their vocation. Lack of generosity, Attachments.