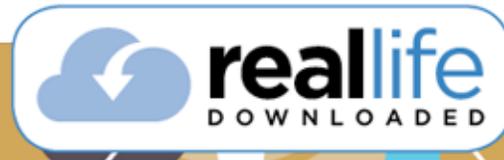


middle school



Lesson 5 / October 3, 2021

Miles to Stay Out of Jail

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 5

Focus:

God provides salvation.

Lesson 5

Bible Basis:

Genesis 3:1-19;
Romans 5:12, 19

Lesson 5

Memory Verse:

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.
—Romans 5:19

Students will consider how even “minor” violations of rules or laws can harm other people as they explore God’s provision for our disobedience.

Materials:

Internet access

When someone breaks the law, they often go to jail. But putting people behind bars isn’t always the best idea. Suppose you stole money—you’re not going to have a way to pay it back while you’re sitting in jail, right?

If it’s possible, earning money to pay back the person you robbed might make more sense than doing hard time. Call it “making the punishment fit the crime.”

Judge Michael Cicconetti (*CHICK-oh-NET-ee*)—a small-town judge near Cleveland, Ohio—takes that principle to a whole new level. When people come into his courtroom for the first time, he sometimes gives them a choice. They can either go to jail . . . *or* complete a weird punishment.

One time, he sentenced a woman to spend all night in the woods alone for abandoning a bunch of kittens in the forest. In a sense, she was abandoned like the kittens were—though actually, there were people looking out to make sure she stayed safe.

Read this article (two paragraphs) to your students. As time allows, share some of the examples and pictures of Judge Cicconetti’s creative sentencing:

Old School Judge Makes Offenders Think Twice With Creative Sentences

<https://orderisda.org/culture/old-school/judge-michael-cicconetti-making-offenders-think-twice-with-creative-sentences/>

One example of the judge’s creativity was sentencing Victoria Bascom, who refused to pay a cab driver for a 30-mile ride, to walk 30 miles in 48 hours. That’s longer than a marathon! Her alternative was to spend 30 days in jail.

➤ **Do you think a 30-mile walk—later shortened by the judge to 20 miles—was a reasonable punishment for Victoria’s crime? Or was it too harsh for such a minor offense?** (Let your students share their opinions freely, but don’t let things get out of hand.)

➤ **Imagine you’ve been arrested and brought to Judge Cicconetti’s courtroom. He offers you a choice between spending 30 days in jail and walking 30 miles. Which would you choose? Why?** (Accept all reasonable answers.)

Some people think Judge Cicconetti was too harsh. Some of think he was right on the money. But all of us would probably agree on one point: Victoria deserved punishment for what she did. It’s not okay to hire someone to do a job for you—like drive you thirty miles—and then refuse to pay them! That cab driver was probably upset, and he had every reason to be.

Most of the time, we only look at how things will affect *us*. Victoria was thinking, “Hey, I can get a free 30-mile ride!” She wasn’t thinking that the driver might be counting on her money to feed his kids. That cab fare seemed minor to her, but it probably had a big impact on the cabbie! (A cab ride for that many miles could run \$100.)

➤ **Have you ever received a punishment crafted to fit an offense? Tell us about it.** (Let your students share their stories—most will have tales to tell about not taking out the trash on their appointed day and being sentenced to take out the trash for the whole week as a result—or some similar household infractions. Be prepared to share your own experience.)

Today, we’re talking about sin—the Bible’s word for when we do wrong things. Sometimes, we think our “little” sins, like lying to a friend or yelling at our parents, aren’t a big deal. However, “little” things can make a big impact on our relationship with God and other people. Just ask the taxi driver how he felt about being the victim of Victoria Bascom’s “little” crime!

That’s why even “small” sins are a big deal to God. Let’s explore some of the Bible’s teachings about what happens when we do wrong.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher’s guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Miles to Stay Out of Jail

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 5**Focus:**

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Lesson 5**Bible Basis:**

Genesis 3:1-19;
Romans 5:12, 19

Lesson 5**Memory Verse:**

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

—Romans 5:19

Materials:

- Ruled paper
- Pens/pencils
- Optional: Whiteboard and markers (or screenshared document)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring ruled paper and pens/pencils with them to class.

Earlier, we heard about Victoria Bascom. She's the woman who refused to pay for her 30-mile cab ride. Victoria may have told herself that getting a free ride was no big deal. But it was a big deal to the cabbie—big enough that he pressed charges against her! That's why Victoria had to walk 20 miles to stay out of jail.

When we sin, we often respond like Victoria: we tell ourselves it's no big deal. But really, we're hurting our relationships with other people and with our Creator. That's why sin is a big deal to God.

If you add up all the sins you've ever committed, there's no way you could ever pay for them. That's why God made a way for us to be forgiven. But it was an expensive solution—it cost the blood of Jesus to make us right with the Lord. Jesus took our punishment for us.

Hand each student a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. If your class is meeting online, invite students to have supplies ready. Write this personalized paraphrase of Romans 5:19b on your whiteboard or screenshared document: "Through Jesus' death on the cross, I have been made right with God." **On this paper, I want you to list five "crimes"—in other words, sins—that God might charge you with if He was going to put you on trial. Nobody is going to see this paper but you, so you can be honest.**

Now, turn your paper over and write this paraphrase of our memory verse on it (be sure to read it slowly enough so students can copy as you read): "Through Jesus' death on the cross, I have been made right with God." In other words, God has forgiven your sins—and even better, He looks at you as though you never messed up in the first place!

Since Jesus has made you right with God, there's no point in keeping this paper around. Go ahead and tear it up! God looks at you as though the sins you wrote down never happened. Give students the freedom to shred their papers into the garbage can.

All of us have sinned. All of us deserve to be punished. But thank God that He sent Jesus to pay our penalty! Now, we've been made right with God. Let's thank Him for that amazing gift of salvation.

Close in prayer.

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