

A STUDY for CGIT'S 95th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

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CELEBRATING GOD'S GIFTS

Supplies Needed: 2 shoeboxes, marker, 8.5 x 11 in lined sheets of paper, pencils, bibles, rectangular cardboard labels about 2.5 x 3 in. (calling card size), white tissue paper.

WORSHIP ONE

The "I Can't's" in Our Lives

1. Scripture Time: God's Gifts – 1 Cor. 12 & 1 Cor 13: 1-3

Read the Scripture and list God's Gifts on an 8.5 x 11 in sheet.

2. Story Time

Burying Our "I Can't's"

This week's story is about an incredible learning experience of young people in a classroom taught by a teacher named Donna. In the fall she noticed that her students were lacking confidence when it came to their classroom tasks. In fact, Donna got very tired of hearing those two words "I can't".

To help solve the problem, Donna decided to give each student a sheet of paper on which they were to list all of their "I can't's". Most of them filled their page and some started another.

When their time was up, they were instructed to fold their papers in half and bring them to the front. When students reached the teacher's desk, they placed their "I Can't" statements into an empty shoebox.

When all of the student papers were collected, Donna added hers. She put the lid on the box, tucked it under her arm, grabbed a shovel, and headed out the door and down the hall. Students followed the teacher. She marched the students out of the school to the farthest corner of the playground. There they began to dig.

They were going to bury their "I Can't's". The digging took over ten minutes because most of the students wanted a turn. When the hole approached three feet deep, the digging ended. The box of "I Can't's" was placed in position at the bottom of the hole and quickly covered with dirt.

Thirty students stood around the freshly dug grave site. Each had at least one page full of "I Can't's" in the shoebox, four feet under. So did their teacher.

At this point Donna announced, "Please join hands and bow your heads". The students complied. They quickly formed a circle around the grave, creating a bond with their hands. They lowered their heads and waited. Donna delivered the eulogy.

"Friends, we gather today to honor the memory of 'I Can't'. While these two words were with us on earth, they touched the lives of everyone, some more than others. These two words, unfortunately, have been spoken in every public building – schools, city halls, provinces and yes, even the House of Commons."

“We have provided ‘I Can’t’ with a final resting place. ‘I Can’t’ is survived by brothers and sister, ‘I Can’, ‘I Will’ and ‘I’m Going to Right Away’. They are not as well known as their famous relative and are certainly not as strong and powerful yet. Perhaps some day, with your help, they will make an even bigger mark on the world.”

“May ‘I Can’t’ rest in peace and my everyone present pick up their lives and move forward in his absence. Amen”

The class then returned to the school and celebrated the passing of “I Can’t” with cookies, popcorn and fruit juices. As part of the celebration, Donna cut out a large tombstone from brown paper. She wrote the words “I Can’t” at the top and put RIP in the middle. The date was added at the bottom.

The paper tombstone hung in Donna’s classroom for the remainder of the year. On those rare occasions when a student forgot and said, “I Can’t,” Donna simply pointed to the RIP sign. The student then remembered that “I Can’t” was no longer with them and then they chose to rephrase the statement in a positive “**I can**” way.

(This story is adapted from a story by Chick Moorman in Chicken Soup for the Soul)

3. Worship Activity

As told in the story, fill a shoebox with 8.5 x 11 in sheets on which each girl has listed her “I Can’ts”. After this has been done the group can discuss and decide the ‘how’ of burying their shoebox.

4. An “I Can” Activity

A. Review again God’s Gifts from the scripture reading and then answer the following question: If you could wake up tomorrow with one new gift or ability, what would you want it to be?

Discuss this question thoroughly, and record the results on an 8.5 x 11 in. sheet.

B. Again give out the 8.5 x 11 in sheets to each girl and during the week their task is to identify their gifts and create their own ‘I Can’ list. The girls should be encouraged to keep the list, continue to add to it, and bring it back next week. At the top of their list they add their “one new gift or ability” from section A.

5. Final Prayer:

O God Of Us All, help us to understand the “I Can’s” in our lives. And please give us the courage to accept these things we can and cannot change. Grant us also God’s Wisdom to know the difference. AMEN

WORSHIP TWO

Celebrating the “I Can’s” in our lives

1. Repeat “Final Prayer” from last week and review last week’s story and sheets.

2. Sharing the “I Cans”: Each girl shares her “I Can” list.

3. On two 8.5 x 11 in sheets record the similarities and differences between the “I Cans” from the group.

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4. Scripture Time: The Story of the Woman Anointing Jesus John 12: 1-8

- A. Identify the “I Can” and “I Can’t” people in this story.
- B. Describe Mary’s gift.
- C. What did the disciple need to understand about Mary’s gift?

5. Celebrating Other People’s Gifts

A. What are some ways that might help us begin to understand and begin to identify other people’s gifts? Record on 8.5 x 11 in sheet.

B. What are some ways that might help us understand and respect the gifts of

- i) people we don’t like
- ii) people with whom we don’t agree?

Record on 8.5 x 11 in sheet. Give this discussion lots of time.

C. What have we learned about the meaning of what God’s community is all about?

- i) week one
- ii) week two

6. Final Prayer:

We thank you, O God of All Creation, for all the gifts you have shared so generously with us. We thank you for the many “I Can’s” in our lives.

And we are beginning to understand how Jesus’ healing and loving ways show us clearly how other people’s gifts do not threaten or diminish our gifts from you in any way. Teach us again the how of celebrating differences at home , school, CGIT, church and in the community that surrounds us. Thanks be to you. AMEN

7. Final Activity: The Dream Box

As a group decorate a second shoebox. Wrap it in white tissue paper. Glue on cardboard labels that have the names of God’s Gifts (from I Corinthians) on them. This will become your dream box of “I Can’s”. Inside the box place all of those 8.5 x 11 in group discussion sheets, folding them to fit in the box.

8. Follow Up Activity -- if you choose to do it.

About a month after the end of the study, unwrap the Dream Box, review it and us it as a resource for planning future CGIT activities. At that time the group can decide the future of the Dream Box. How can it help your group continue to celebrate God’s Gifts in their lives?

Is anyone interested in what other CGIT groups in Saskatchewan are doing with their Dream Boxes? Why not? The more that the Dream Boxes are shared, the more God’s Gifts are Celebrated.