



SMALL GROUP 1:

How Jesus Redeems an Awkward Moment

John 8:1-11

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

You do not need to read this word for word. We are giving you an example of how the conversation might go. Please study the passage for yourself and come with your own discussion questions. Print the two-sided handout for each SG member.

WELCOME

“Welcome to our series on Turning Awkward Moments into Opportunities for Bridge building. To our visitors, we are so grateful that you are here. The Bible has a ton to teach us about being peace makers when our world is in tension. Today we are in for a real treat. Jesus is going to teach us some amazing lessons about being bridge builders.”

INTRODUCTION

“Have you ever been caught in the middle of an argument between your parents? What was that like? Or you are out with a group of friends, and a boyfriend/girlfriend couple begin to argue and neither will back down. How does that feel?”

READ THE STORY

Read John 8:1-11 using four readers: Narrator. Jesus. Religious leaders. Woman.

GETTING INTO THEIR STORY

“Let’s try and Get in their Shoes”

Describe the past few hours of this woman’s life.

Where might she have been and why?

How did she get to the temple?

What is she thinking and feeling at this point?



Everything about this situation involves humiliation. It is said she was caught in the act of adultery. It is presumable she was dragged from a bedroom, without the courtesy of covering up, and held in custody until dawn when this event occurs. She is now a spectacle of the crowd. And where is the man? (Did he escape? Was he let go? Did this act even happen?) The law quoted here about stoning (Lev 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-24) would have applied to the man involved as well. It also called for a trial, in which the condemned are given a chance to confess. Obviously, that's not happening here. She is a pawn of the Pharisees, heaped with public embarrassment, in a shame-based patriarchal culture.

1. What is behind the actions of the teachers of the law? What is their agenda?

- What might they really want?
- Why might this be so important for them?

The passage clearly mentions they were trying to trap Jesus. If he defends her, he appears to be rejecting the law and is going soft on sin. Will he uphold the OT? Everyone knows Jesus as a friend of sinners and merciful on the weak and needy. Will Jesus be guilty of siding with the weak instead of upholding the law?

Imagine you were one of the people gathered around Jesus. Describe the scene when the teachers of the law show up. How does it feel to watch them drag this woman in and pose this question? Are you upset? Afraid?

2. What is the moral dilemma in this story?

There is nothing defensible about adultery. It is listed among the Ten Commandments as something that not only breaks the law of God, but also destroys relationships. Sexual sin always leaves a wound. However, there is also nothing defensible about the way this woman is being treated. And it is all happening in a public arena. This is a truly awkward situation.



3. What feeling does this stir in you?

(Share personally about your own natural reactions to both sides of this dilemma. This is a great opportunity for you to model self-awareness for the group. Ask your staff for help if this stumps you.)

4. What was Jesus' initial response to this commotion? What does this say about his posture during a tense argument?

Jesus stoops over and begins writing in the sand/dirt. He does this twice. It certainly would have heightened the tension of the moment. Commentators have many wild theories about this. Let's pay attention to the impact that this scribble in the sand has on the lynch mob. They want blood. Emotions are incredibly intense. But Jesus makes everyone look at his finger drawing in the dirt. It takes the focus away from the woman and everyone is looking his scribbling. The spotlight of intensity is now on him, away from her. He is calming down a super intense moment.

5. The religious leaders put the focus back on her. Where does Jesus put the focus in v. 7?

Back on them. How has he answered their trick question? Should they kill her or should they not. Jesus says, "Go ahead, kill her, if you are innocent." So he does answer their question, but they are on trial, not her.

6. Why does he return to drawing in the sand?

- What impact does act have on the mob?
- Why do they walk away?

Because they see their own sin. He has gently turned the spotlight from her, to him, to them. And they feel convicted. Amazing!

7. What is Jesus invitation to the teachers of the law?

His invitation is self-inspection. To honestly look at themselves, their sin, their brokenness first. Another time Jesus say look at the log in your own eye before the splinter in your neighbors. Invitation to humility. Right self-perspective.



7. Why does he ask if anyone has condemned her? Isn't it obvious?

But he does not end with the teachers. Now he focuses back on this woman. He is helping her realize she is safe. She can exhale. She will not be killed this day.

8. What is the impact of Jesus' two statements? I don't condemn you.

And you need to leave your life of sin. What is the invitation?

She has indeed lived in adultery. Jesus does not want that to define her anymore, and he gives her an opportunity to do a 180. Repent in the Bible means a U turn, from one direction toward Jesus. This woman has not been condemned by Jesus. He redeems this horrible day for good in her life.

9. How could Jesus redeem your worst day?

SUMMARY

The teachers of the law pose a binary question; one with answer A or answer B. But Jesus responds with a 'third way'. Yes, adultery destroys people and is an insult to God. But he invites this woman to repent and to live a new life. His mercy was counter-cultural.

APPLICATION

- How are you like the woman?
- How are you like the teachers?
- How can you be like Jesus?
-

CALL TO FAITH

Some of us have been living on our own, by our own rules, with ourselves at the center of the story. We may not have been sleeping around with married men, but we still have been living for ourselves.

On the cross, Jesus says to each of us, "I do not condemn you for living for yourself. I take your condemnation upon me. I pay the ultimate sentence. Someone had to pay for this woman. I love you. I will pay. Now you have a choice, to keep living for yourself, or to trust me to pay the price and bridge the gap between you and your Creator. Please don't keep living



with yourself at the center of world. Let me lead you and adopt you into God's family. I will take care of you."

Would you like to trust Jesus with your life and let him lead you? Would you like to be adopted into God's family?

PAUSE

Let me pray for you.

Others of us are good at looking down on other people. We walk through campus noticing how we better than others. We can't even help it. These thoughts just pop to mind. We need to repent and do a 180 on our constant stream of thoughts of how we are better than others.

Who do you look down on, who do you fear, and how can you learn from them?

PAUSE

Let me pray for you.

Let's turn awkward conversations into bridge building.

What can you learn from Jesus about responding to an awkward conversation?

- **Don't get drawn into a debate.** Keep your head. Focus on the bigger picture, the underlying issues.
- **Look for the 'third way'.** Sometimes it's a dead end to see awkward conversations as having only two options. What is the underlying principle that will help you find a third way?
- **Preserve the dignity of others.** Winning the argument is not always the most important objective. Try to communicate truth in a way that draws people toward God, rather than shutting them down.



Remember the question about your parents arguing and how awkward that feels. Well, all of us have had other less awkward moments in the past week or year. Awkward moments create binary choices. Speak and look like a fool. Or remain silent and confused. Jesus wants to enter these either/or tensions and teach us the 3rd way. We are going to practice now.

We are going to get really practical now, okay? **Flip over your handout to the Bridge Builder Tool.** There are two ways to fill this out. You can fill it out thinking an awkward moment this week or semester. Or if you cannot think of one for yourself, put the woman and the teacher's situation into the tool.



2 SIDED HANDOUT FOR SMALL GROUP

Hear the Word

John 8

1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Where do you see the three steps to being a bridge builder in this story?



Respond Actively

The Bridge Builder Tool

	Talk with Jesus	Your Thoughts
Name Your Tension	Why am I upset? What am I afraid of? What are my options for resolving this?	
Get in Their Shoes	What would make them feel safe to engage with me? What is going on in their world? How can I show them Jesus' love?	
Engage and Invite	How might Jesus bring good out of this situation? Is there an invitation I can extend to them? What would be the best-case scenario if I talked with them about this?	

DEBRIEF

1. What happened when I engaged the person in the awkward situation?
2. What am I learning about myself? About God?
3. How do I want to improve in handling the next awkward conversation?



SMALL GROUP 2:

Maneuvering Power Plays Into Servant Leadership

Matthew 20:20-28

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

OPTION 1:

Let me tell you about an awkward conversation I had lately. (*Leader tells a story of an awkward conversation*). Has anyone else had an awkward conversation?

OPTION 2:

How do you know when you are being manipulated? How does it feel? What is a manipulative thing that someone said to you that worked on you?

- “If you were brave, you would jump off this roof with me.”
- “If you were nice, you would let me copy your homework.”
- “If you like me, you won’t tell what we just did.”

BACKGROUND

Peter, James and John had special access to Jesus throughout his ministry. Only they were allowed to go up the mountain when Jesus was transfigured. Only they saw Jesus raise a 12 year-old girl from the dead. They alone received nicknames when all 12 disciples were called. They liked feeling special. Wouldn’t you?

Also, in the 4 verses just prior to this conversation, Jesus pulled the disciples aside to once again predict his imminent suffering and death.

Read Matthew 20:20-28 together.



1. Mom: Why is the mom involved at all? Why does she begin with kneeling?

2. Why does she ask for a favor? Why does she want Jesus to declare this?

She wants Jesus to commit before knowing what she will ask for. She is trying to manipulate Jesus. She is the elder, and she is using her age in a hierarchical culture. And she says “declare” (NRSV) meaning she wants the others to hear it loud and clear. They want the highest positions of power in heaven.

3. Sons: What are the sons doing while the mom is talking? How old are these guys? Let's get in their shoes-what's going on in their mind?

4. What is Jesus' cup?

The disciples don't know. In the Old Testament, the cup was used as a symbol of blessings or of God's judgment and suffering. Since the disciples' desire the cup, they interpret this as the cup of blessing. We know from hindsight that ultimately Jesus' cup is his death on the cross, inviting them to die to themselves. This is the opposite of what they are requesting.

5. James and John don't yet know the end of the story, and therefore do not likely understand what Jesus' cup is. Why do you think they say they can drink it without understanding the question?

The cup is an irony. They say they can drink it because they want a cup of blessing. Ironically, they do answer correctly. They will drink this cup, but it is not cup they want. Jesus knows they will drink his cup of suffering.

6. Imagine you are one of the other ten disciples. What makes James and John's request an awkward conversation? Why might they be upset?

The two of them want to rule with Jesus, in power and glory. This means no other disciples, like Peter, can have this place of honor. Their mother and they are trying to pull a quick power play, and secure their elevated status forever. Of course the 10 are offended. This conflict reveals what is in the hearts of the disciples, and their jockeying for position with Jesus.



7. How would you have responded upon hearing their request to Jesus? What triggered those thoughts or feelings?

8. What do you notice about Jesus' response and posture?

Jesus had a few options in response. He could have rebuked them for wanting to be great. He could have made fun of their ambitious spirit. Instead, he explains to them how to actually become great in his kingdom. Evidently, the desire to be first is not evil. To be first, you have to drink of the cup of suffering and become a servant. Jesus wants to bring good out of this situation by explaining how to get what they want.

9. Compare and contrast Gentile leadership with Jesus' leadership?

Gentiles lord it over others, exercise authority. Jesus advocates for being a servant, being a slave to all. He even repeats this 3 times. Jesus uses himself as an example. Even the Son of Man/God came to serve and not to be served and to give his life as a ransom for many. Even his choice of words – ransom (indirectly calling the lost “hostages”) – indicates compassion for the ones he is dying for rather than a focus on himself.

10. In the midst of this conversation, why does Jesus call them all together (v42)? (Or make a summary statement)

What started as a personal conversation with Jesus has turned into a teachable moment for the whole community. Jesus serves his community through drawing out the underlying conflict. He asked questions and listened to draw out their true feelings and opinions. He couldn't get reconciliation in community if they didn't have an honest discussion of the underlying power dynamics. His best-case scenario for handling this awkward conversation would be for the disciples to have a different view of power. He unifies their community when he said, “not so with you.” He invites us to serve each other to unify community rather than compete for power which separates and divides.



11. What is the invitation Jesus is (indirectly) giving?

Not only does Jesus paint a picture for servant attitude, but also calls it out of them (“But among you it will be different.” vs 43). It is as if he says, I see who you can be. This is a powerful and affirming way to make an invitation.

12. How is Jesus inviting you to be a servant leader?

13. If this were your guidebook to having awkward conversations wisely, what principles might you draw from Jesus’ example?

- **Don’t be defensive:** Let people say what they need to say. Try not to get hooked. Notice Jesus wasn’t defensive or prickly even when the mother’s request is a power play. Know when you are being manipulated, and don’t let them manipulate you.
- **Ask good questions:** Don’t give a knee-jerk response. Don’t just say yes or no. Keep a posture of “help me understand”.
- **Reframe the conversation:** Try to talk about the deeper issues underneath the topic at hand. Jesus answers their request, but instead redirects to a conversation about suffering and the Kingdom of God.
- **Debrief in community:** When there is conflict that affects a team, utilize it as a teachable moment for the whole team. When a conflict divides, call a “family meeting” to process together.
- **We are going to get practical now, okay?** Flip over your handout to the Bridge Builder Tool.



2 SIDED HANDOUT FOR SMALL GROUP 2:

Hear the Word

Matthew 20:20-28 (NSRV)

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. 21 And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." 22 But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." 23 He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." 24 When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 26 It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Where do you see the three steps to being a bridge builder in this story?

RESPOND ACTIVELY

Bridge Builder Tool



	Talk with Jesus
Name Your Tension	Why am I upset? What am I afraid of? What are my options for resolving this?
Get in Their Shoes	What would make them feel safe to engage with me? What is going on in their world? How can I show them Jesus' love?
Engage and Invite	How might Jesus bring good out of this situation? Is there an invitation I can extend to them? What would be the best-case scenario if I talked with them about this?

Today, we are going to practice the bridge-building skill of “**Get in their Shoes**”; a skill of empathy for someone else's perspective. One aspect of this that Jesus modeled was listening and asking good questions.

1. Read through the chart highlighting good/bad questions.
2. Take some time in pairs to work on asking good questions. One of you present a dilemma or issue about which you are seeking clarity, perhaps a decision you are really facing. Or else you could talk about a recent event regarding which you still have some unprocessed feelings (positive or negative).
3. The other will seek to draw out the one speaking by only asking good questions.
4. Take five minutes (or so) then switch roles.

Bad Questions	Good Questions
Yes/No: Could, would, should, do, did, will, can	What, where, when, who, how
Closed-ended	Open-ended
General	Directed toward specific categories of information
Content-oriented	Process-oriented
Leading	Stimulates thinking
Threatening	Non-threatening
Why are you ...?	What are the reasons you are...?
I think you . . .	Tell me more about . .

DEBRIEF

1. What did it feel like to be asked good questions?
2. What did I learn about being a good listener?
3. How can I use this skill in the next awkward conversation I have?



SMALL GROUP 3

Turning Intimidation Tactics Into Bold Invitations

Acts 4:7-23, 31

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RECAP AND WELCOME

This is our 3rd and final week on becoming bridge-builders. Thank you for digging into this series with us.

Any stories from how you put this into practice this week?

INTRODUCTION

Fear of public speaking is one of the biggest fears in life. 25% of Americans say this is their worst fear.

Anyone here afraid of public speaking? Any funny stories about this? (Have your own story or someone you know ready to go.)

This story from the book of Acts is an even more intense “worst case scenario” of being put on the spot publicly. Let’s check it out.

ACTS 3-4 RECAP

The book of Acts is the story of Jesus’ Spirit creating a brand new community of his people, a community full of his love and power, unlike anyone had ever seen. In chapter 3, Peter and John (2 of the top leaders of Jesus’ community) publicly heal a guy who has been crippled for 40 years. He runs all over the temple praising God with his new legs. The religious leaders freak out. This same group of leaders who had recently conspired to kill Jesus now arrest Peter and John and threaten them. We pick up the story in verse 7. Read Acts 4:7-24, 31 out loud together.



1. Let's get in the shoes of the religious leaders: by putting Peter and John on the spot, what do they hope to accomplish?

Maybe they hope to discredit the disciples, to shame them in front of the people. They are questioning Peter and John's authority by asking "by what power or name did you do this?"

2. How is Peter engaging and inviting these religious leaders in v. 10-12? What do you admire about how Peter addresses the leaders?

They are trying to put Peter on the spot and make him feel awkward for preaching and healing in the name of Jesus. It could not have backfired worse on the religious leaders. There is no other name under heaven by which humankind can be saved. Peter is clear and bold.

3. Why were they silenced in v13-14?

They saw the courage of Peter and John and know who they are-ordinary men without a seminary degree. But men who had been with Jesus. And they were astonished at the power in their presence and words. The very people who would like to kill Peter and John are now stumped by the power of God through them.

4. Why don't the religious leaders want this to spread? V15-17

They are trying to use their power to intimidate them. They warn Peter and John to not speak as a way to control them and control the spread of the good news about Jesus. They might have been afraid of an uprising from the Jesus followers which would take away power and influence from these religious leaders.

5. Why don't they listen to the religious leaders? V18-22

They are honest and have integrity before the religious leaders. Peter and John can't help but talk about what they have seen and heard. They put a challenging question back to the religious leaders-what do you think, should we obey God or you? Hard for religious leaders to argue with that! They find the third way! Instead of be silent or be punished, they invite the religious leaders to consider their own relationship with God. The best case scenario



would be for this awkward situation to lead to transformation in the religious leaders.

6. From verse 20, how would you describe what it means to be Jesus' witnesses?

Witnesses share about what they have seen and heard. Jesus promised this in Acts 1:8-that the disciples would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. To everyone everywhere, they should share about what they have seen and heard from Jesus.

7. When do you feel tempted to be ashamed of being a follower of Jesus? Where do you struggle with obeying elders/leaders and following Jesus?

8. What have you seen and heard from Jesus? What can't you deny about Jesus' work in your life?

9. The disciples return to Jesus' community who had been praying for them, and they join in prayer together. Describe the boldness in the community as a result of praying. V31

In their prayer, the believers reminded themselves of who God is and His promises in the Bible. They call God to be who He has been in the past, to heal and perform signs and to give them boldness to speak, thus boldness to disobey the religious leaders. And then the room shook! And they spoke the word of God boldly!!

10. How would our community look different if we prayed like this and experienced more boldness?

11. How do you feel about the name of Jesus being the only name by which we must be saved?



CALL TO FAITH

Some of us have been living on our own, by our own rules, believing we could save ourselves. On the cross, Jesus says to each of us, “I do not condemn you for living for yourself. I want to heal you. I pay the costs for your brokenness and selfishness. I love you. Now you have a choice, to keep living for yourself, or to trust me to bridge the gap between you and your Creator. Please don’t keep living with yourself at the center of world. Let me lead you and adopt you into God’s family. I will take care of you.”

Would you like to trust Jesus with your life and let him lead you? Would you like to be adopted into God’s family?

PAUSE

Let me pray for you.

Others of us are ashamed of standing up for Jesus. We don’t want to stick out in the crowd or speak out against those in authority. We don’t want to be witnesses and share about what we have seen and heard. We are missing out on being witnesses for Jesus, denying ourselves the opportunity to experience the power of God in our lives. We need to repent and do a 180 from the fears that hinder us from standing up for Jesus.

Would you like to be a witness and speak about God’s work in your life?

PAUSE

Let me pray for you.

Now, let’s practice turning awkward situations into bridges to the gospel. How can you follow Peter’s example? **Flip over your handout to the back side.**

Imagine an awkward situation in class where a professor says something negative about Christianity. Utilizing the bridge builder tool, map out how you could respond. Then, share in pairs.



LEADER NOTES ON THE CASE STUDY

Situation	Potential Response
<p>Professor: The Bible is a dangerous text if you take it too seriously - once we learn how to think critically, we begin to see how problematic and flawed it is.</p>	<p>Student raises her hand. "That is a great point. I would like to learn more about the Bible's flaws. Could you please point out a few to me? I might like to make that the topic of my next research project."</p> <p>Or, "That is a great point. Which of the flaws in the Bible bothers you the most? Why?"</p> <p>Or, "That is a great point. How do the flaws in the Bible compare to the flaws in other ancient texts, like the Koran, or the Baglavaghita"</p> <p>(This student was curious. She didn't just take the professor's statement as face value. She wanted to know more about the Bible's flaws. Picking up a key phrase in someone else's argument and asking follow-up questions enables us to open a conversation on faith without putting us on the defensive.)</p>
<p>Professor: Christianity is arguably the most oppressive force in history of the past 2,000 years. Women, LGBTQ, and Native peoples have been severely mistreated. Can you think of any other single system of thought that has been guilty of all manner of evil?</p>	<p>Student raises his hand: It really does bother me too the ways people have acted in the name of Jesus. Specifically, I am appalled the way woman have been oppressed in the past and even marginalized in today's world. Would you be interested in learning the ways Jesus interacted with woman/outcasts during his time on earth?</p> <p>Or: May I respond to your comment as someone coming from a Christian perspective? I don't disagree with you. Many things have been done in the name of Jesus that are evil, oppressive and wrong. And as a Christian, I am so sorry for these things and am deeply grieved by them. However, I don't think these things reflect who Jesus is at all. I'm part of a group that takes time on a regular basis to examine the life of Jesus and take his teachings seriously. If anyone wants to dive more deeply into these questions, I'd love for you to join us.</p> <p>(This student agreed with the professor as much as he was able in good conscience and then pointed the conversation to Jesus. He even invited the professor and students to investigate the truth about Jesus with him.)</p>

2 SIDED HANDOUT FOR SMALL GROUP 3:**Hear the Word**

Acts 4:7-24, 31



⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?” ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ Jesus is “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” ¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! ²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” ²¹ After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old. ²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. . . . ³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Where do you see the three steps to being a bridge builder in this story?



Respond Actively

The Bridge Builder Tool

Imagine an awkward situation in class where a professor says something negative about Christianity. Utilizing the bridge builder tool, map out how you could respond. Then, share in pairs. Pick one scenario:

Professor: The Bible is a dangerous text if you take it too seriously. Once we learn how to think critically, we begin to see how problematic and flawed it is.

Professor: Christianity is arguably the most oppressive force in history of the past 2,000 years. Women, LGBTQ, and Native peoples have been severely mistreated. Can you think of any other single system of thought that has been guilty of all manner of evil?

	Talk with Jesus	Your Thoughts
Name Your Tension	Why am I upset? What am I afraid of? What are my options for resolving this?	
Get in Their Shoes	What would make them feel safe to engage with me? What is going on in their world? How can I show them Jesus' love?	
Engage and Invite	How might Jesus bring good out of this situation? Is there an invitation I can extend to them? What would be the best-case scenario if I talked with them about this?	

DEBRIEF

1. What is challenging about speaking up in class?
2. What am I learning about being a witness?
3. How can I be a bridge builder in the next awkward classroom discussion?