

Session 56

Everybody Likes Parfait – Don't They?

The objectives of this session are:

- to examine the importance of accepting the positive characteristics in ourselves and others
- to explore the value of individuality, acceptance, positive interactions as well as positive goals that motivate and encourage.
- to consider the idea that everyone has the right to be respected as a human being regardless of their external inherent differences (1st Principle)
- to consider that each of us has elements of hero and villain within us – and how we choose to act upon these elements within us has a big impact on those around us
- to explore the philosophical nature of beauty and how it relates to our UU principles

Materials and supplies you will need:

- a DVD of the (original) movie, *Shrek*
- DVD player and TV monitor
- at least one copy of the UU hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- pencils and paper (optional)
- flipchart and markers (optional)

Things to do ahead of time:

- locate a copy of the DVD
- If you will not be watching the whole film, use the DVD menu to select scene #9 (Remove Your Helmet). Make sure to pay particular attention to scenes that portray how the others judge Shrek solely on the basis of his appearance and how this affects Shrek's actions/attitude
- watch the movie in its entirety (even if you have seen it before)

Session Outline

Entering Activity: Check-in and chalice lighting (10 min)

Premiere: Introducing and watching an excerpt of the movie, *Shrek* (42 min)

Plot Points: Everybody likes Parfait, right? (15 min)

Wrap Up: Closing Words. (3 min)

Entering Activity

Ask for a volunteer to light the chalice and share with the group (or ask for a volunteer to read) opening words from Resource #56A:

“People are like stained - glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.”

~ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross ~

Begin the session with a brief check-in: ask participants to check-in with their names and how they would answer these key questions: Is there something in the world that you find beautiful even though others may not see the beauty in it? How do you explain what beauty is – what does the word beautiful mean to you? Remind the group that anyone always has the right to pass during times of sharing.

After everyone has had the chance to respond, begin the introduction of the movie.

Premiere

Watching Shrek

Introduce the video by telling the group you will be watching an excerpt from the movie *Shrek*. Ask if anyone has already seen it. If anyone has, ask them if they would be willing to share the premise of the film with the group. If not, introduce the video yourself by saying something to the effect of the following:

When a green ogre named Shrek discovers his swamp home has been overrun by all sorts of fairytale creatures exiled there by the scheming Lord Farquaad, Shrek sets out with a very loud donkey by his side to 'persuade' Farquaad to give Shrek his swamp back. Instead, a deal is made. Farquaad, who wants to become the King, sends Shrek to rescue Princess Fiona, who is awaiting her true love in a tower guarded by a fire-breathing dragon. But once they head back with Fiona, it starts to become apparent that not only does Shrek, an ugly ogre, begin to fall in love with the beautiful princess, but Fiona is also hiding a huge secret.

Begin the video and watch scenes #9 (Remove Your Helmet) through scene 19 (I'm a Believer) In these scenes Shrek and Donkey succeed in freeing the princess from the Dragon's castle. Safely outside, Fiona demands that Shrek remove his helmet and kiss her. He removes his helmet, and she is shocked and disappointed that he is an ogre. Shrek tells her that Lord Farquaad sent him, that **he's** the one who wants to marry her. Princess Fiona tells him in that case that Lord Farquaad should rescue her and she refuses to leave. Shrek picks her up then

they head back to Duloc. When she hears that they will get to Duloc the next day, Fiona gets upset and insists that they make camp immediately. They find a rock cliff, and Princess Fiona sleeps alone in a small enclosure on it. Shrek tells Donkey stories about the stars, and then says that things are more than they appear. Donkey wonders what they will do when they get back to their swamp, but Shrek tells him that it's **his** swamp, and he is going to build a ten-foot wall around his land to keep **everyone** out. Fiona wakes up and overhears Shrek telling Donkey how people judge him before they even know him, and that's why he's better off alone. Fiona closes the door then Donkey and Shrek talk about the stars again.

The next morning, Princess Fiona cooks breakfast. Fiona tells Shrek and Donkey that she is making it up to them because they got off to a bad start yesterday; after all, they rescued her. As they walk towards Duloc, Fiona is suddenly captured by a man swinging from a vine. He calls out for his Merry Men. They all appear, dancing and singing about him, Robin Hood. As he brandishes a knife, Robin Hood finishes the song by saying he will cut out Shrek's heart, but Fiona swings down and knocks him into a boulder. She defeats the Merry Men with Kung Fu mixed with "The Matrix". Shrek and Donkey are amazed. Fiona sees that there's an arrow in Shrek's butt. Donkey starts panicking, so Fiona sends him off looking for a blue flower with red thorns. When Fiona tries to pull out the arrow from Shrek's butt, he squirms, falls to the ground, and Fiona lands on him -- just as Donkey returns with the flower. Donkey gets mad because he thinks they just wanted to be alone. When Fiona pulls out the arrow, Donkey sees the blood and faints. Shrek picks him up, and they head back to Duloc.

In a field, Princess Fiona grabs a spider's web and gathers up the flying bugs bothering Shrek, giving it to him, who eats it

like cotton candy. Shrek catches a frog and inflates it like a balloon, handing it to Fiona. Fiona grabs a snake off a tree branch and inflates it like a balloon, and gives it to Shrek. They push each other playfully, then run off together, and their balloons float away into the air.

They finally reach the windmill and see Duloc in the distance. Shrek shrugs and tells Princess Fiona that her future awaits her. Fiona tells Shrek that she's worried about Donkey, that he doesn't look so good. Shrek and Fiona go to find dinner and firewood. Fiona likes the food Shrek cooked (weed rat), saying that it's delicious. She sighs, then looks at Duloc and says that she'll be eating differently tomorrow night. They lean towards each other, about to kiss. Donkey butts in, saying that the sunset is romantic. Fiona jumps up, panicking. She pretends to be afraid of the dark, goes into the windmill to sleep by herself, glancing back briefly at Shrek. Donkey tells Shrek that he can tell with his animal instincts that Shrek and Fiona "were digging on each other," and says that Shrek should tell Fiona how he feels about her. Shrek tries to deny that he likes her, and then dejectedly says that Fiona is a princess and he is an ogre. He walks off and tells Donkey that he's getting more firewood, but Donkey sees that there's still a large pile of firewood there. Shrek sits alone by a field of sunflowers, staring at Duloc until night.

Donkey, afraid to be alone by himself in the dark, goes inside the windmill looking for Princess Fiona. An ogress falls through the wood and screams as she lands on the floor, frightening Donkey even more. He's terrified when she stands up, and he screams for Shrek. She finally calms him down and convinces him that she is the princess. He wonders what happened to her, telling her that she's... different. She looks at her reflection in a barrel of water and recites a spell: "*By night one way, by day another.*

This shall be the norm until you find love's first kiss and then take love's true form." She tells Donkey that when she was a little girl a witch cast a spell on her; every night she becomes "*this, this horrible, ugly beast*"; she was placed in a tower to await the day her true love would rescue her. Fiona sits down and tells Donkey that it's why she has to marry Farquaad tomorrow before the sun sets and he sees her like this. She insists that she has to, because only her true love's first kiss can break the spell. Donkey tells her that she's an ogre, and Shrek's an ogre, and that they have a lot in common.

Shrek walks back to the windmill, holding a sunflower. He's rehearsing what he will say to Princess Fiona when he gives it to her. When he climbs the steps of the windmill, he overhears Fiona asks Donkey, "Who could ever love a beast so hideous and ugly?" Shrek becomes disheartened because he thinks Fiona was calling him ugly, and then throws the sunflower down and storms off towards Duloc. Fiona tells Donkey that the only way to break the spell is to marry Lord Farquaad. Donkey says that **she** should tell Shrek, then goes outside. Fiona opens the door and looks around, but only sees the sunflower and takes it inside. Donkey looks around then sleeps by the campfire.

In the morning, Princess Fiona goes outside to tell Shrek about her spell. She opens the door and calls for him, but only sees Donkey outside snoring. The sun rises and she transforms back to human form. Shrek walks up and she rushes to greet him, but he angrily walks past her and sits on the steps. She says that she has to tell him something, but he replies that he heard everything she said last night. A horse whinnies and they turn around. Fanfare announces Lord Farquaad's arrival as he rides towards them, accompanied by some knights, then Donkey wakes up. Farquaad greets Princess Fiona, and then Shrek demands that Farquaad give him the deed to his swamp, as promised.

Farquaad tells Shrek that the swamp is cleared out as agreed, then tells him to take the deed and go before he changes his mind. Shrek grabs the deed and stands aside. Farquaad grabs her hand and proposes to her. She looks at Shrek, who is staring at his deed, then accepts. Farquaad jumps up happily and tells her that he'll make plans for them to marry tomorrow. She stops him and says that they should get married today, before the sun sets. Donkey and Shrek argue and then Shrek storms off to his swamp.

At his swamp, Shrek sees that the fairy tale creatures are gone; only their tents remain, along with some debris. He sighs heavily and walks back to his house.. Princess Fiona, in her wedding gown, looks sadly out the window. Shrek looks sadly out his window, then angrily takes a sunflower off the table and throws it into the fireplace. Fiona sadly looks at herself again in the mirror. Donkey drinks from a pond by the forest, then is startled when he hears and sees the dragon crying; they console each other. Shrek is alone, and tries to eat at his table; Fiona is alone, and tries to eat at her table; they both put their faces in their hands.

Shrek hears a thumping sound outside and opens the door to see Donkey has returned. They argue over ownership of the swamp. Shrek apologizes, and admits that he is just a big, stupid, ugly ogre. Donkey forgives him because that's what friends are for. Shrek wonders what Fiona said about him, but Donkey tells him to ask **her**. Shrek cries out that they won't make the wedding in time. Donkey whistles and the dragon flies down. Shrek climbs the chain up then the dragon puts Donkey up too. They fly away to Duloc.

At the castle, the Bishop is marrying Princess Fiona and Lord Farquaad. The dragon lands outside, and then the knights run away fearfully. Shrek bursts into the

church just before Farquaad and Fiona kiss, shouting that he objects. Shrek grabs her hand and tells her that Farquaad only wants to marry her so that he can be king, then tells her that Farquaad is not her true love. Fiona asks him what **he** knows about true love. Shrek stammers, and Farquaad laughs because Shrek loves the princess. Fiona looks at the setting sun and recalls her spell. She walks to the window and tells Shrek that she wanted to show this to him before. She transforms into an ogress, and then grins sheepishly at Shrek. The audience is shocked. Farquaad sees Fiona and says that "it" is disgusting and orders his guards to get "it" out of his sight, to get them both. As Shrek and Fiona try to reach each other, Farquaad declares that the marriage is still binding, that he is still king, and puts on the crown. As guards drag Shrek away, he frees one of his hands and whistles. The dragon bursts through the large stained glass window with Donkey on top and swallows Farquaad, killing him, then burps out his crown. Shrek tells Fiona that he loves her, and she tells him that he loves him too. They kiss, and then Fiona begins her transformation as her voice-over recounts the rest of the spell. She rises up into the air, glowing. Bright light radiates from her, then a shock wave from her shatters all the windows in the church except one (which the dragon later breaks). Fiona completes her transformation, and then returns to the floor and collapses. Shrek helps Fiona up. She's still an ogress, and tells Shrek that she doesn't understand, that she's supposed to be beautiful. Shrek tells her that she **is** beautiful, and they kiss again.

At the swamp, Shrek and Fiona get married, with Donkey and all the fairy tale creatures as guests. One of the fairy godmothers transforms the three blind mice into horses, and a garlic bulb into a carriage, and then Shrek and Fiona leave in the carriage. Donkey takes over the song, with the others singing and dancing. The wedding

celebration continues while Shrek and Fiona ride away into the sunset.

Stop the DVD as the credits begin to roll.

Plot Points

Everybody likes Parfait, right?

Begin the discussion by asking for general impressions, and things which occurred to the group as they were watching the video. Then, if no one brings it up, ask the group to consider:

Shrek tells Donkey that people “judge me before they even know me.” Who judges Shrek solely on the basis of his appearance? (Possible answers are the people of Dulac, Robin Hood, Lord Farquaad, or everyone except Donkey.) Princess Fiona hates herself as an ogress – why do you think she feels that way? What are the assumptions our society makes about beauty? What are the societal assumptions about the ugly? Are you familiar with the saying, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder? What does that expression mean to you? Can you think of any other sayings about beauty? (Some might be: Beauty is only skin deep, or a thing of beauty is a joy forever.) How do these sayings relate to our 7 UU Principles? This movie takes on many of society’s notions about things through the use of satire. What beliefs or traditions does this movie take on? (i.e., traditional fairy tales, handsome doesn’t always mean brave or good, beauty doesn’t always mean good or gentle, ugly doesn’t automatically mean evil or bad, everything/everyone has feelings.) Shrek lashes out in anger and pain at Fiona and, especially at Donkey. What are the consequences of this? Donkey tells Shrek that he came back because “friends forgive each other.” How does forgiveness relate to acceptance? (Friends accept each other in their entirety – the good and the bad.) What helps Shrek to ask Donkey for forgiveness?

Wrap Up

Closing Words.

Invite a participant to extinguish the chalice while you or one of the participants read these closing words:

I would rather be adorned by beauty of character than jewels. Jewels are the gift of fortune, while character comes from within.

~ Plautus (c. 254 – 184 BC), Roman Playwright
~

“The greatest gift that you can give to others is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance.”

-- Brian Tracy --

Taking It One Step Further:

If your group will be watching the entire movie rather than just an excerpt, here are some additional ideas to expand the experience:

More Discussion

How do you think things would be different if the Fiona would have changed into the “beautiful” version of Fiona after Shrek kissed her? What do you think might have happened if Shrek arrived late to the wedding after Fiona & Lord Farquaad kissed? How does this movie challenge the traditional roles of men and women? (It reverses the traditional roles of knight and damsel in distress.) Are there any other traditional values this movie challenges?

More Activities

Ask the group if they can make a list of songs, stories or movies with the theme of acceptance. Consider: How do each of these songs, stories or movies approach the idea of “acceptance?” What do they all have in common? How are they different?

Either alone or in small groups, have participants write and illustrate another fairy tale satire. They can choose whatever fairy tale they wish to satirize.



Resource #56A

Opening Reading:

“People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.”

~ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1926-2004), Swiss-American psychiatrist ~

Closing Readings:

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~ Plautus (c. 254 – 184 BC), Roman Playwright ~

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