

Session Seven

You Want Fries With That?

The objectives of this session are:

- to talk about what it means to be different and work to achieve your dreams
- to look at learning to accept yourself for who you are
- to see how believing in yourself and being true to yourself can yield positive results
- to explore the idea that people aren't always what they seem – appearances are sometimes deceiving

Materials and supplies you will need:

- the DVD (or videotape) of the movie, *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*
- DVD player (or VCR) and TV monitor
- a chalice and matches or lighter
- pencils for everyone
- a bowl of some kind of treat or food-shaped erasers or gummy candy
- one copy of Resource #9 – Word Search Puzzle – one for each participant

Things to do ahead of time:

- locate the DVD or videotape and rent it from the library or video store if necessary
- If you will not be watching the whole video, use the DVD disc menu to select scene (Scenes 13 – 21), or if using a VHS tape, cue it by finding the right segment and pause the tape at that point.
- Watch the movie in its entirety prior to the session (even if you have seen it before)
- Make sure that you have enough Word Search puzzles – look at it ahead of time along with the solution page (Resource #10) so that you can help participants find words if they ask.
- Find the treats or food-shaped erasers/gummies for the opening activity

Session Outline

Opening Activity: Chalice lighting, reading and check-in (10 min)

Premiere: Introduction and watching an excerpt of the movie, *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*. (27 min)

Reflection: “Inventing Yourself” Discussion questions (15 min)

Processing: “Where’s My Meatball?” (10 min)

Closing: “Making Peace with Who You Are” (5 min)



Opening Activity (10 min.)

Invite everyone to take a treat from the basket as they enter. Light the chalice and share with the group (or have someone read) the Opening quote:

"One must not attempt to justify them, but rather to sense their nature simply and clearly."

by Albert Einstein

Go around the circle of participants and ask them to check-in with their name and one thing about themselves that makes them different from their friends.

Remind the group that anyone always has the right to pass during times of sharing.

Premiere

Watching *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* (27 min.)

Introduce the video by telling the group you will be watching an excerpt from the movie,

Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs. 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 along these lines:

On the small island of Swallow Falls, an outcast boy, Flint Lockwood, is a clumsy inventor who has the unfailing support and encouragement of his mother. Flint and his Mom think that he's a genius, even though none of the things he's invented work well, make sense or are very useful. The town of Swallow Falls has become famous for their sardines and they even have a local celebrity and mascot, Baby Brent. Brent's early fame has caused him to become a bully and show off. Eventually, the demand for sardines dries up and the town is not able to export their sardine stocks. The cannery closes and the locals end up having to eat sardines all the time. Years later, Flint's mother dies and he is left alone with his skeptical father Tim Lockwood, an old fisherman who has a sardine store and thinks Flint should give up inventing. Tim loves Flint but has trouble expressing his feelings, so he gives Flint a partnership in his store and invites him to work there with him. But Flint, being the inventor that he is, has just invented a food replicating machine that converts water into food.(The Flint Lockwood Diatonic Super Mutating Dynamic Food Replicator or FLDSMDFR.) He decides to test it out... but things don't go according to plan and he manages to launch it into the atmosphere. It begins to rain hamburgers and other food in the island. A television station sends a weather reporter intern/ trainee (Sam Sparks) to cover the phenomenon and Flint becomes famous. However, the greedy and gluttonous Mayor Shelbourne overworks the machine and the food becomes a menace to the human race. But when Flint sense something's wrong with the machine, the mayor convinces him to ignore it. Flint and Sam and their friends have to set things right and save Swallow Falls and the earth.

Begin the video and watch scenes #13 (which opens with Flint asking Sam out on a date) until point indicated after scene #21 (which has Flint, Sam, Manny, Brent and Steve taking off in the flying car to save the earth).

As the scene opens, a very nervous Flint summons up the courage to ask Sam out on a date. He finally gets the nerve, after doing some research, and takes Sam to the Jell-O palace that he's made for her. (Jell-O is her favorite snack.) Just when they are about to kiss, Flint is interrupted by a call from the Mayor, who has become really huge from eating all the food. He asks Flint to cut the ribbon at the new grand opening of the town, now named Chew and Swallow.

Flint rushes off to meet his father for dinner, but his dad is concerned that Flint's invention isn't good for people and that the food appears to be getting larger. On the way home to the lab, Flint notices a giant hot dog and realizes that his father is right.

At the lab, Flint has figured out that the town is now in danger from his invention, but the Mayor convinces him to keep going. He appeals to Flint's need for approval and tells him that if he doesn't keep his machine on no one will ever like him. Flint goes against his better judgment and programs the machine for the next day's feast.

The re-opening of the town is a huge event and people have come from all over the world to see it. Sam is worried about the changing atmospheric conditions decides to check out the "Doppler 2000 Turbo" and is alarmed by what it shows. She rushes off to tell Flint, but he turns her away because he's too caught up in the big event (and all the fame) and dismisses her. ("Why can't you just go do the weather or something?") As Flint cuts the ribbon, Steve comes to warn him of the danger, and he looks up to see a spaghetti tornado. Flint decides to go to the lab and turn off the machine.

When Flint arrives at the lab, he finds the Mayor there programming the machine. They argue and the Mayor throws a giant radish at the transmitter just as Flint attempts to send the kill code and turn off the food replicator. The

radish smashes the transmitter before the kill code is sent and the machine goes crazy trying to create the huge food order that the Mayor sent. (an all-you-can-eat Vegas-style buffet!)

Since the transmitter is destroyed, Flint decides that the quickest way to stop the machine is to go up into the clouds in his flying car and manually input the kill code, which he has downloaded onto a flash drive. When he unveils his plan to the townspeople (and apologizes for all the trouble he's caused so far, Sam volunteers to go with him, along with Manny, her camera man (who is also a doctor in his native Guatemala and a pilot!) Baby Brent decides to go along, too, since he is no longer the big celebrity in the town. and hopes to find his new identity as a hero with Flint.

Stop the DVD just after Baby Brent hops in the car and shouts as the car flies off. (at the end of Scene 21.)

Eventually, Flint and his friends are able to shut down the machine and save the Earth, just in the nick of time. He is saved from falling to earth by one of his inventions (the ratbirds) and finally gains the acceptance of his father. The movie ends with Flint and Tim hugging and then later going into business together. (At last a use for the misbegotten spray on shoes mixture – permanent roof sealer!)

Reflection (15 min.)

Inventing Yourself

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:

Flint has managed to be very comfortable with who he is – he knows that he's different, but thinks that's OK. How do you think he's managed to get so comfortable in his own skin? (One answer might be that the constant support and encouragement of his Mom made the difference in his life.) When Sam tells Flint that "I, too, was a nerd," Flint says, "Too?" Why

does he say that? (He doesn't realize that he's a nerd or that there's anything wrong with being smart.) Flint is happy with being smart, but Sam isn't – she constantly tries to not act as smart as she really is. Why? Is it harder for girls to be accepted if they are really smart? Does our society have different expectations of behavior for boys and girls, especially when it comes to science or education? How is this reflected in the attitude of Sam's boss toward her? ("Send the intern. She's cite and really perky." "Well those are the only two qualities we look for in a weather girl.") Flint's Dad does love him, but he has a very different idea for the direction that Flint's life should take. Why do you think it's so hard for Tim to tell Flint how he feels about him? How does this contrast with Earl the Cop and his son Cal? (Earl goes to the opposite extreme and constantly tells Cal that he loves him.) What do you think is Mayor Shelbourne's real motivation for revitalizing Swallow Falls? Do you think he's ever really cared about the people of the town? How does he manage to convince Flint to ignore the danger and keep the machine running? When Cal overdoses on junk food and needs a doctor, everyone is surprised to see that Manny the cameraman is actually a doctor. Why? What kind of assumptions do people make about others and what are these assumptions based on? Have you ever made an assumption about someone based on their appearance or actions?

After everyone has had the chance to add to the discussion, introduce the word search puzzles.

Processing (10 min.)

Where's My Meatball?

Pass out the pencils and the word search puzzles to everyone. Give them about 10 minutes to work on them – if they want, they can form partners or teams and see which team can come up with the most words in 10 minutes. (Or if time is short, they can take them home to finish.) While they are working on the

puzzles, allow for people to reflect more on the movie, maybe by asking them what part they liked the best.

Closing (5 min.)

To close, stay in the circle. Have a youth read the Closing quote:

"Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events."

by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Then ask them to think about one thing about themselves that they really like.

After a moment of reflection, extinguish the chalice (or have someone else do so), and excuse the youth.



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 and have some fun as a group:

More Discussion:

Flint isn't really allergic to peanuts, he just says that to Sam so that they will have something in common and she'll like him. Have you ever

pretended to be something that you aren't just to impress someone? How did that work out? What happened when you decided to just be yourself? Is it possible to have a relationship based on false qualities or promises? How easy is it to keep up the charade?

Breaking up into small groups, discuss the movie. What was your favorite part and why? How many ways do you think Tim Lockwood is different from his son? Do you think that this is one of the reasons that he has trouble talking to Flint? (When Tim goes into his son's lab, he realizes that Flint is really smart and talented. He also shows that he is totally ignorant about technology.) Why does Flint let go of the licorice rope and fall into the pit with the FLDSMDFR alone even though he knows that he can't get back out.

Reconvene and have a speaker for each small group share their findings.

More Activities:

Have each person imagine something they wish they could invent. Provide magazines and art supplies and allow them to create it. Some people may wish to write about it instead, while others might want to form a small group and perform a skit reflecting a typical day in the world with their new invention. You might even have some musical youth that want to write a song about it instead, perhaps providing new lyrics to a familiar tune.

Resource #9 – Meatballs Word Search

Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs

G S K
V E C P K O A R K
M L M U H G U D Z T M U P
G R H P S D Y V O E Z J G G I A S
R B L S E D K A E T S I E J S D S B R
Q O B N X S I U Z P S A P V S U S Z C P V
Z Y V L A N T I M L O C K W O O D H N B W
B E A M M V Y A C C E P T A N C E S C V A Y N
P A M S E N E K C T O D A N R O T U G B T F
F B Z P N N Y B Q W N W K N R T I Y R Y Q Y U S H
Q P A T A T W C D O O W K C O L T N I L F B S D T
I R O M N H M O E B B D X S U M I K C R O R X K S
D K R S G F Y T W D O U W V F H L Z J O E O E E G V R
S R V P B C L U I O C Q V G T N U W G C S G N G I Q E
C S Q A S U O W G C E K A C N A P E A R L B T N Y Q X
F D G T N K N I L Q O U S L L A F W O L L A W S C
A X H E T B B F L O X G N S L D L J B A X R L H A
P J E V Z M E B I B K D W A N L A Z E B S G I N C
I T E O N C G K D H C M R M N A N L T O C U M
O T V L I O A Y U E O C D C F F F G A K L Z C
I D L M G L P M O N F I J Q F A O E M P R
I C E C R E A M W M C N S X G Q N M R D T
P J C E Z M I Q J B E H F E S Q W E H
G L P O K U F U N S V T A L Y E V
J W E A T H E R J J S V X
B J E D X G R O O
X Z M

ACCEPTANCE
BABYBRENT
EARL
CHICKENS
CONFIDENCE
DANGER
FLINTLOCKWOOD
ICECREAM
INVENTOR

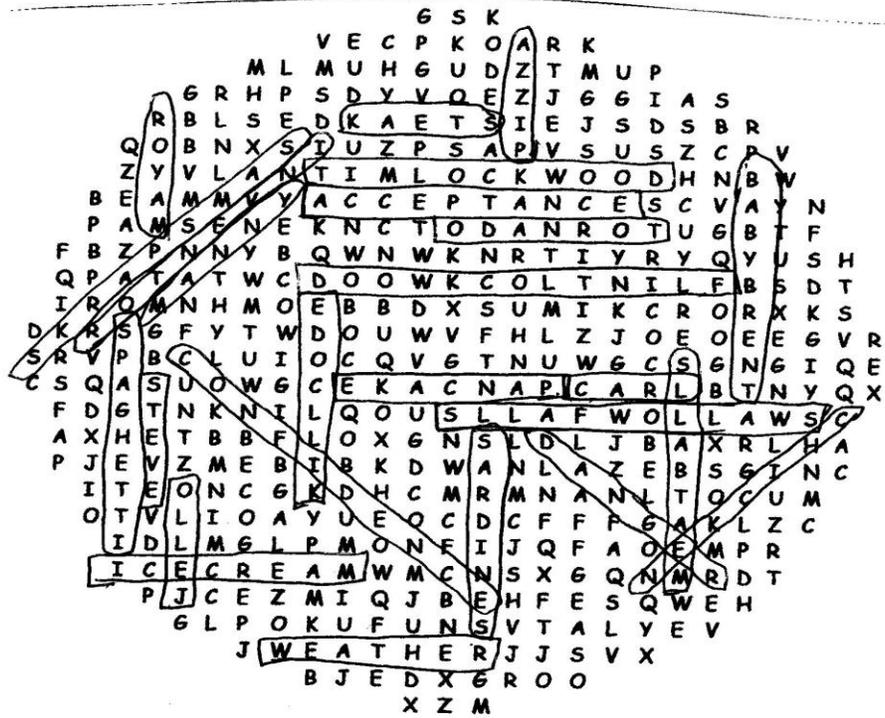
JELLO
KILLCODE
MANNY
MAYOR
MEATBALLS
PANCAKE
PIZZA
SAMSPARKS
SARDINES

SPAGHETTI
STEAK
STEVE
SWALLOWFALLS
TIMLOCKWOOD
TORNADO
WEATHER

Resource #10 – Answer sheet

Resource #9 – Meatballs Word Search

Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs



ACCEPTANCE
BABYBRENT
CARL
CHICKENS
CONFIDENCE
DANGER
FLINTLOCKWOOD
ICECREAM
INVENTOR

JELLO
KILLCODE
MANNY
MAYOR
MEATBALLS
PANCAKE
PIZZA
SAMSPARKS
SARDINES

SPAGHETTI
STEAK
STEVE
SWALLOWFALLS
TIMLOCKWOOD
TORNADO
WEATHER