



theme: Identity #3 – Coal To Go

materials: Lots of lipstick, one big piece of paper, smaller pieces of paper for everyone, pencils, bibles

welcome

What did you dream about becoming when you were a child? What happened to that dream?
What do you dream about becoming now?

read

Read Isaiah 6:1-13

Have you ever had to confront a truth about yourself that you did not want to see? How did that affect you?
How did you deal with it?

How do you think you would react upon meeting God in all His majesty like Isaiah does here?

What does “unclean” mean, and why do you think Isaiah said it?

Can you relate to Isaiah’s cry that he is an “unclean man with unclean lips living amongst an unclean people”?

What do you think Isaiah is expecting God will do with / to him?

What do you think he thought about the angel flying towards him with a huge fiery coal in his hand? What would you think?

Why did the angel put the coal on Isaiah’s lips? What did that signify? (Wouldn’t it hurt?)

Why did Isaiah have to go through that process before God sends him out on mission (who will go etc...) What does holiness have to do with mission?

What message does God want Isaiah to take to his people? Is this a positive message?

Prophets often have had to deliver very unpopular messages. How would you feel if you had a message like Isaiah’s to deliver?

Why, if God knows the people won’t even listen to Isaiah, does He send Isaiah out to give the message?

Does it matter if we think the mission we’re called to is “successful”? How do you measure the success of a God-given mission?

interact

Take your big piece of paper and have everyone help draw a huge fire on it with the lipstick. Make it as big and colourful as you can, then tape it to the wall.

Then read out Isaiah 6:1-8 again. Let each person consider his or her own condition before God, just as Isaiah did. Who are you? Are your lips clean? Play some music in the background as you consider this and ask God to reveal who you are, and ask Him who He wants you to be.

If / when you feel ready, approach the lipstick fire and kiss it. Sounds weird, I know, but it is simply a symbolic identification with Isaiah’s experience when the coal was placed on his lips.

think

There should be some lipstick on your lips now, so get a smaller piece of paper and kiss it, so that the colour smudges on. Around the colour write the names of all your friends, family, or people to whom you feel called. Pray that you would be willing to go and bring the fire you have been given to them.



live & pray

Is anything holding you back from obeying God's call to you for mission? Is it fear? Sin? Do an awareness exam each day – that is, go through your whole day in your mind and ask God where He could be found in each moment. Give everything, the bad and the good, back to God in prayer, and ask Him to reveal to you anything that is unclean within you. Closer connection to Christ will free you up for mission!

useful resources

Movie: *Nacho Libre* – Nacho has to be freed from his pride in order to accomplish his mission.
Movie: *Evan Almighty* – the sequel to *Bruce Almighty*
Website: <http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/2306.htm> -- A helpful commentary on Isaiah 6.

leader's guide

The term "unclean" had to do with the Torah Law, and with Isaiah's moral state before God. That he was unclean meant that Isaiah was sinful, not holy, and not worthy to be in the presence of God. This was his identity, and the identity of his people. Isaiah knew that any human, particularly one that was unclean, should die upon meeting the living and holy God. He would have expected therefore to die, which is why he cries out that he is "unclean". God does not actually tell him that this won't happen, and sends the angel flying towards him with a huge burning coal, which is probably how Isaiah expects to be killed.

The coal on his lips is meant to represent the burning away of sin, the refining fire, the cleansing and purification of sin. Sacrifices were burned on the altar when they were given to God, and so Isaiah's lips were being made clean by God so that he could deliver his message. Yes, I imagine it would hurt. A holy messenger for the Lord was Isaiah's new identity.

The message God gives to Isaiah is not a positive one. It is one of judgement, and impending doom for His people. And God explains that people won't even really listen to Isaiah's message. But success for Isaiah was obedience to God's call, not the result of His message.