



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 12: Respond

Suggested Week of Use: November 17, 2024

Core Passage: Acts 26:19-29

News Story Summary

Sports teams releasing players is a common occurrence. For the Pittsburgh Pirates, though, releasing first baseman Rowdy Tellez has made big news because of the timing. Tellez was only four plate appearances away from receiving a \$200,000 performance bonus. Rather than pay the bonus, the Pirates designated Tellez “for assignment,” removing him from the active roster.

Pittsburgh general manager Ben Cherington said that the upcoming bonus had “zero factor in the decision.” However, the organization has the second-lowest player payroll in Major League Baseball. In addition, the Pirates were eliminated from playoff contention on September 16. Tellez was benched a week later.

For more about this story, search “Pirates criticized for releasing Rowdy Tellez.”

Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, instruct adults to move to the center of the room for a round of “Would You Rather?” Explain that you will read a series of either/or questions that will require them to respond by moving to one side of the room or the other. Read the following questions one at a time, giving adults time to decide and move based on their choices:

- Would you rather receive a gift or offer a gift?
- Would you rather be in the spotlight or behind the scenes?
- Would you rather receive a compliment or offer a compliment?
- Would you rather hear criticism from a friend or an enemy?
- Would you rather work through conflict or avoid conflict?
- Would you rather receive criticism or criticize someone?

After each statement, allow a few adults to explain their responses. At the end of the game, say: *Criticism can be used to help someone or hurt them. It can be aimed at a person, but it can also be aimed at a business, organization, or group of people.* Relay the story about the Pirates releasing Rowdy Tellez and the criticism they received for their actions. To transition to the lesson, say: *Christians are sometimes criticized for their faith. Today’s study will focus on how one early believer responded when facing opposition.*

Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, group adults into small teams and give each team a pen and piece of paper. Recall the story of the public criticism the Pirates faced after releasing Tellez. Say: *Christians often face criticism for sharing their faith with others.* Direct teams to think of three critical responses a person might face when telling someone about Christ. They should also write a positive way to respond to that criticism. When teams have finished, allow them to share their work. Afterward, provide time for adults to think about situations in which they have or might face opposition to their faith. Instruct them to pray about how they might respond to any current criticism they are facing. Close in prayer, asking God to help each person remain steadfast in the face of opposition to the gospel.