

THE MEANS OF GRACE

THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS

ACTIVITY

INTOLERANCE, REPENTANCE, AND FORGIVENESS

Theme: The world says intolerance is bigotry. Jesus says there are inflexible truths and we cannot tolerate less. We need to seek Christ's desires for our actions as we stand firm.

Materials: Plastic baggies, cotton balls, mustard, water, paper towels

Procedure: (10 minutes)

Put cotton balls in two separate baggies. Have one of the students remove a cotton ball, dip it in mustard, and hold it up for the class to see. Ask, **What would happen if we put this cotton ball back in the bag with the others?** (It would get mustard on the other cotton balls.) Have the student put the cotton ball in one of the two bags. Close the bag and toss it to one or two of the other students (to spread the mustard around). Show the mess that is spreading. Say, **This is what happens when we tolerate the sins of others and do not call them to repentance. Sin spreads among us.**

Ask, **Was Jesus ever intolerant?** (He cast out demons; He rebuked the Pharisees; He overthrew money tables in the temple.) Discuss the catechism meaning of excommunication ("to put outside of communion"). Ask, **Why would God want us to practice excommunication?** Remove one of the mustard-covered cotton balls. Say, **When we practice excommunication, we separate someone who will not repent of their sins. Can that person be restored to the congregation?** (Yes.) **What will it take to restore them?** (Repentance and forgiveness.) Have one of the students wash the cotton ball off with water and dry it with a paper towel. Put it in the bag with the clean cotton balls. Say, **Through Jesus' forgiveness, God restores us to communion with Him and one another.**