



**OBJECTIVE:**

This object lesson takes an ordinary sponge and uses it to teach a lesson on how we can respond to pressures of others, and making decisions that may involve a choice between right and wrong. What comes out of us when the “squeeze” is on!

**TIME NEEDED:** 20-30 minutes

**GROUP SIZE:** Any size group

**MATERIALS:**

- Regular Sponge
- *(Optional)* Regular sponges that can be cut into 10-12 nice size pieces for mini sponges for students to keep as a reminder of the lesson.
- Bowl of clean water
- Bowl of dirty water *(Add a couple drops of food coloring or Kool-Aid to “dirty” it)*

**LESSON:**

Hold up your sponge and ask the students what sponges are used for or what they do. Answers may include many things, but make sure it is mentioned that they soak up liquid and then release the liquid when squeezed. Another answer you might receive is that it can be used to clean, but what if what is in the sponge is dirty instead of clean, they can’t always do what they are supposed to do.

Next, ask the students – Do we ever get “squeezed” in life? If so how? You may have to explain that “squeezed” means that we are pressured by others. Allow time for answers and thoughts; these will vary of course for different age groups, but may include- when other (friends, parents, children, teachers, etc.) pressure us to do something. When we let anger or frustration build up until we can’t hide it any longer, when we have too many obligations or responsibilities, when bad or unexpected things happen in our life.

Then ask - So if we get “squeezed”, what comes out? What comes out of a sponge when it’s squeezed? Tie in answers to eventually conclude that whatever is in the sponge or in us, or that which has been soaked up, will be what comes out.

Just like the sponge - If we have bad attitudes, negative thoughts and no values to help us, “the squeeze” will bring out angry and hateful words and actions. However, if we spend time being filled with good character and moral values, “the squeeze” will bring out good things like kindness, honesty, patience and other good things.

Explain to the kids that the bowl of clean water represents good values we have inside us and the colored water represents negative words and actions. The sponge represents us.

Now soak the sponge in the clean water and squeeze the clean water from the sponge into the colored water and have the student's notice what happens. The clean water affects or dilutes the colored water. It makes the negative stuff less apparent.

This time, soak up the colored water. Discuss what are some of the negative things we may be soaking up? Ideas may include things like: negativity from others, anger or frustration, bad language, bad attitudes and ideas from TV, movies, music, etc. Squeeze the dirty sponge into the clean water, it changes it. Ask the students what it does. (*it put all the negative into the good water.*)

Then discuss that in the same way as the sponge, whatever is being "squeezed" out of us whether good or bad, affects those around us. Talk about some ways our actions and attitudes, good or bad, can affect those around us.

*Examples: Our anger at someone can cause them to be angry or hurt. A younger sibling may be watching and copying what we do. Someone may see kindness and love in us and stop doing the bad things to others, like teasing or bullying.*

Point out to the students that if a sponge is filled with clean water, when it's squeezed, good things come out. If filled with bad things, then the negativity comes out. We are the same way. If we soak up what is good, we won't get "squeezed" by negative words or actions and we can make a positive effect to those around us.

Decisions may involve a choice between right and wrong, and sometimes it's not easy to know what to do. Whenever you aren't sure what's the right thing to do, stop and think about the sponge and ask yourself – how will my words or actions affect those around me?

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- Have you ever really wanted to do something, but deep down you felt it wasn't right? How did you decide what to do?
- How often do you think about whether something is right or wrong before you decide to do it?
- When you're faced with a choice between right and wrong, what influences your decision?
- What would happen if nobody cared about doing the right thing?
- How do you know when something you might do is right or wrong?
- Why do people sometimes do the right thing even when it's not as easy or as much fun as something else? Does it take courage to do the right thing?
- Does a person's character play a role it being able to see what is right and wrong? Why or why not?

**IT TAKES COURAGE TO HAVE CHARACTER!**

