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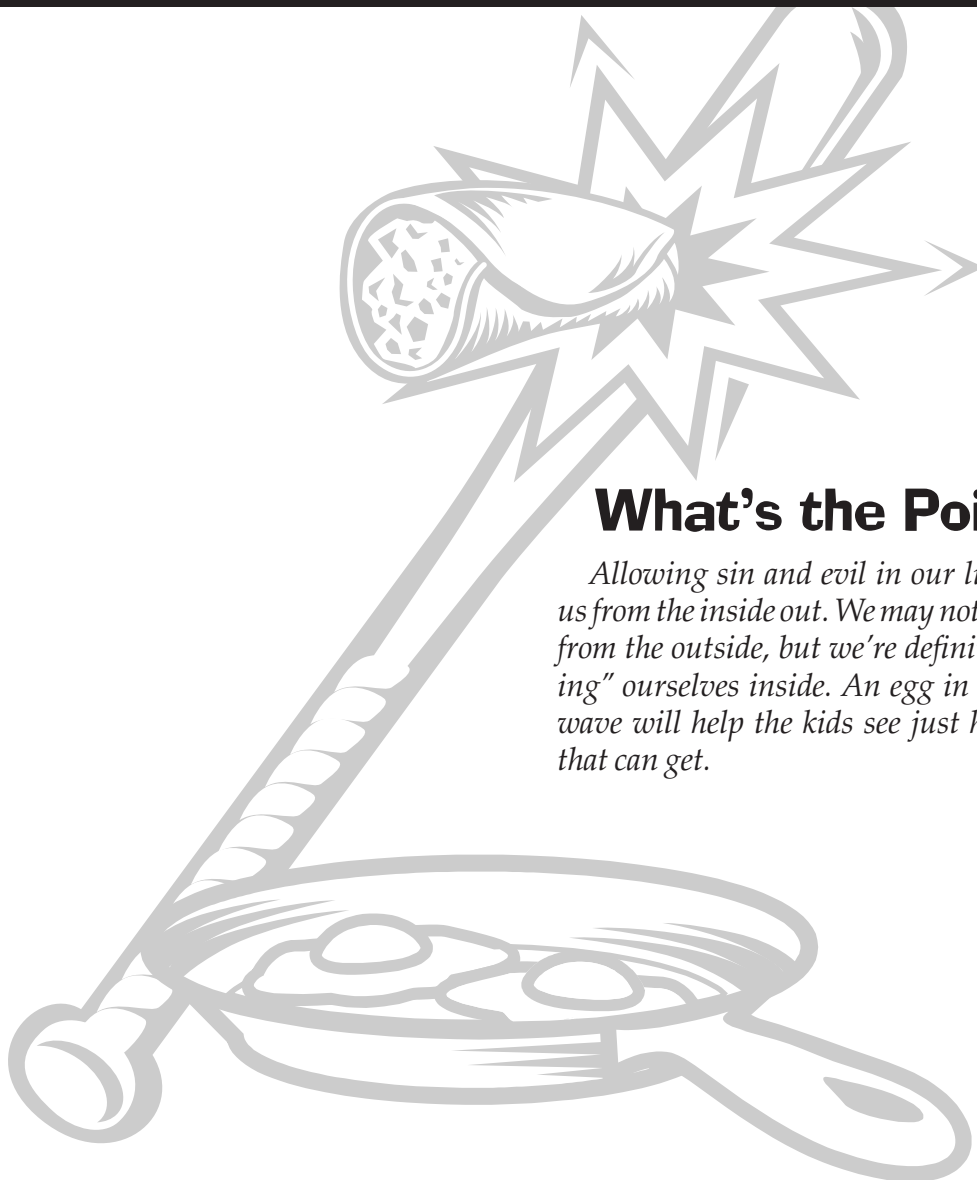
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Micro-Mess



What's the Point?

Allowing sin and evil in our lives affects us from the inside out. We may not look like it from the outside, but we're definitely "cooking" ourselves inside. An egg in the microwave will help the kids see just how messy that can get.

Things You'll Need

- An uncooked egg in the shell (with some extras on hand, just in case)
- A heavy-duty, clear glass bowl (Pyrex would be a good choice for this)
- Several heavy plates or something of similar weight that will sit on top of the bowl
- A piece of paper and a pen for each kid
- A microwave (borrow one from a friend or neighbor if you don't have one)

Don't let the word mess in the title keep you from doing this one. If you have boys, they'll love it. If you have girls, consider this a great opportunity to demonstrate why we don't microwave eggs in their shells. If you have both boys and girls, you can't miss.

You'll need at least one egg for this one. The kids may want to do the activity more than once, so have some extra eggs on hand. You'll want a piece of paper and a pen for each of the kids so they can make "observations" as you go along.

Here We Go

You need to try this activity first. Yep, before you get the kids together, and preferably when they aren't home, try "nuking" an egg on your own. I imagine every microwave is different, so you'll want to know how yours reacts.

I took an egg right out of the fridge and put it in a thick glass bowl. I covered it with a heavy stoneware plate and set the timer for five minutes. I had just stepped out of the room for something when I heard a loud "woomphh." It had taken about two minutes for the egg to explode. The stoneware plate even lifted off the top, leaving scrambled-egg shrapnel all over the inside of the microwave. I learned two things: First, this was really fun, and second, next time I'll stack a couple more plates on top.

Once you've tested things out and cleaned any stray egg bits out of your microwave, you're ready to call in the troops. You might start out by saying something like this:

All right, kids, you're going to help me do a little experiment here. I'd like one of you to get an egg out of the fridge and put it in this glass bowl. We're going to cover it and put it in the microwave for five minutes. Are we clear so far?

If your kids are anything like ours, their pulses just increased a bit. They're probably pretty sure you aren't supposed to microwave eggs, so the fact that you're telling them to do it probably has them intrigued. One of the kids may even try to warn you that something bad might happen to the egg. Thank him, but explain that you're going to find out what happens firsthand. My guess is your kids won't warn you; they'll want to see the show.

Now, each of you will have a pen and paper. You'll be observing what happens in the microwave and recording it. Every fifteen seconds I'll say "time" and you guys will write down your

Micro-Mess

observations. If you see no significant change, simply jot the letters NC on your paper to signify “no change.” Any questions?

They’ll be eager to get going, so you’ll have to keep moving so you don’t frustrate them. Hand out the paper and pens. Get the egg in the bowl, place it in the microwave and close the door.

Take just a second to check where the kids are. Don’t let them get too close. You don’t want anybody pressing his or her nose up against the window on this one. We set up chairs for the kids about five feet away from the microwave. You might ask one of the kids to set the timer to five minutes and press the start button.

Now, glance at your watch and call out “time” every fifteen seconds. The kids should scribble down a “NC” for no change at each fifteen-second interval. If they have any idea that the egg might explode, the tension will definitely be mounting. When the two-minute mark approaches, try not to give anything away. Keep a straight face so that the kids can’t be quite sure if what they’re expecting will happen. Even if they are expecting it, the egg suddenly bursting will catch them by surprise. They’ll love it!

Once the egg has exploded, open the microwave. Be careful—the egg crumbs will be hot. Give everything about thirty seconds or so to cool down and then let the kids examine the scraps of egg plastered inside the bowl. There’s a good chance that they’ll want to do it again. That’s fine, but I’d finish the devoes first. Then, after you’ve made the application, go ahead and blow up some more eggs. It will be a great way to reinforce the truth of what you’ll be telling them.

After they’ve examined the mess, you might have them sit back down at the table and start off with something like this:

Now, that’s why we don’t microwave eggs. There was, however, a good reason we did it this time. I’ll explain in a minute, but first tell

Avoiding a Meltdown

I don't need to tell you that none of these items should be made of metal, do I? Well, don't do it. The ensuing sparks are admittedly cool-looking and the kids would probably think it was great, but it isn't very good for the microwave.

me about your observations. Tell me what you noticed the first fifteen seconds, and the second and the third.

Get their input. You should get a bunch of “no change” responses. Perfect.

OK, so we see the egg had no visible change at first, and then suddenly “boom!” it wallpapered the bowl, right? So, if nothing was happening, why did it just blow up like that?

We’re leading them to the answer we’re looking for. If they give it to you, great. If not, no big deal. Just move on.

Just because the egg didn’t appear to be affected by the microwave, it didn’t mean it wasn’t being cooked. To a casual observer, it almost seemed like the egg could stand the heat. The problem was, the microwave was cooking it from the inside out. The egg looked fine, but inside there were some definite changes going on.

In real life, sin has the same kind of result. We can allow some sin in without looking any different in the mirror. Like an egg in the microwave, sin cooks us from the inside out.

Let’s listen to a few verses from the Bible:

My son, pay attention to what I say;
listen closely to my words.
Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;
for they are life to those who find them
and health to a man’s whole body.
Above all else, guard your heart,
for it is the wellspring of life.

(Proverbs 4:20-23)

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept

the word planted in you, which can save you. (James 1:21)

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. (3 John 11)

Tie It Together

Name some ways that other kids, maybe even Christian kids you know, allow sin to creep into their lives.

You've been doing all the talking for the last couple of minutes, so you need to get them engaged again. You're asking how "other" kids let sin into their lives. That's a lot less threatening than asking your kids how they let sin into their own lives. You may still get a glimpse at what your kids are allowing. Be quick to listen and slow to speak here.

Sometimes we flirt with sin just by what we choose to see on TV or at the movies. There can be a subtle corruption that takes place in our lives. Sometimes we're acting one way at church or home and another at school.

Sometimes we act like we're real angels, but it's a cover for some not-so-angelic things going on inside us. That's what the Pharisees did in their day. Jesus called them hypocrites, snakes and whitewashed tombs. That "whitewashed tombs" comment meant that they looked good on the outside, but inside the corruption was growing until it burst into open lies, deception and murder.

You can allow things in your life that shouldn't be there, things like pride, greed, rebellion, dishonesty, hypocrisy and others. You can be involved in sin that you think you can handle or cover up. You can look in the mirror and appear



just the same as you always were. You must remember, though, that sin affects the heart, and if you let it stay in your life, it will cook you from the inside out.

That's why God warns us to guard our hearts. The sin we let in often enslaves us long before we even realize it. That's a scary thought, but it's right there in Proverbs 5:21-23.

It's probably a good idea to read those verses out loud, or you could give the kids an "assignment" to look them up later.

Once in a while you'll hear of a great man, a Christian or maybe a high-profile person, who suddenly is caught in some big sin. People are shocked because the person always seemed to possess real integrity. The fact is, that person is just another egg that blew up. That person allowed sin inside, and it was cooking him until, to everyone's surprise, it finally burst out.

Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, and somehow he thought he could compromise with evil. He had a lot of wives, and they turned his heart from God. If the wisest man who ever lived couldn't escape the effects of sin, then it's a pretty good bet that we can't either.

People know that an egg in its shell can't be cooked in a microwave without blowing up. That's why nobody cooks eggs that way. It's dangerous. When it comes to sin, people know that allowing it in their lives is dangerous too, yet they do it anyway. Since we know that sin cooks us from the inside, we should try to see how far we can stay away from sin.

Somebody once said, "The only thing harder than living in this world is living in two worlds." I think what he meant was that living as a Chris-



tian in this world can be hard, but not as hard as trying to live like a Christian sometimes, and like a sinner other times. A double life like that is definitely living in the microwave.

My desire for you is that you protect your heart(s). Avoid evil. You can't escape its long-term effects. You need to follow God with a whole heart. Sometimes you're going to want my help with that. I'm not perfect, but I can help you if you find yourself struggling at some point. Talk to me, talk to the Lord, but don't let sin just sit there cooking you, OK?

Fight the urge to talk too much here. Try to notice if any of the kids seems to be struggling. Maybe they'll want to talk to you privately. Be sure to allow an opportunity for that.

You may want to microwave another egg or two now. The kids will enjoy it, and it will help etch the truth of the lesson on their hearts and minds.

Working It into the Week

Here are some passages that may be helpful for the kids to read during the week.

Day 1: Mark 7:6-8

Day 2: Proverbs 1:8-10; 3 John 11

Day 3: Proverbs 4:18-27

Day 4: Colossians 3:5-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Day 5: Proverbs 5:21-23, 2 Timothy 2:22

Day 6: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 1 John 1:9

