

Questions for Discussion on Restorative Justice

1. What elements in the story are experiential and related to a trust-healing model?
2. What elements in the story fall short of this model and relate more closely to a legal model?
3. What is justice in this process? How would you describe it? How does it function?
4. Suppose the Grosmaires had decided on no penalty, only forgiveness? Would that be justice? In what sense? In what sense would it not be justice?
5. Did Conor need to be punished and do time in prison for what he did? Apparently, the Grosmaires thought so. Why did they think so? Do you think so and if you do, why? If you don't why not?
6. What kinds of cause-and-effect relationships took place in this story? Would a more judiciary and penal approach have caused Conor to face what he did more effectively? Why or why not?
7. Who besides Conor had to face what he did themselves? How did this approach allow them to face themselves?

8. What is forgiveness? Is forgiving someone for my own sake (self-preservation) really forgiveness? If forgiveness is part of love and love is always other-centered, is not forgiveness *for* the other person?

9. How does one forgive an enemy/killer for the enemy's/killer's sake? Why does Jesus say, "Love your enemies" instead of "forgive your enemies"?

10. If you were Andy or Kate Grosmaire how would you want to handle this case? Is there anything you would do differently, and if so, what and why?

11. If you were Julie or Michael McBride, how would you want this case to be handled? Is there anything you would do differently, and if so, what and why?

12. Suppose the murderer hadn't been a 19-year-old who fell apart, but instead a serial killer who had no sense of guilt? How would restorative justice work in this case? Does one ever have to use the legal model on those who will not face themselves or on those for whom the legal model alone is reality?

13. Is there a one-to-one correspondence between the picture of God we have today and how we treat others tomorrow? How has this worked historically?

14. Why, then, do we occasionally meet someone with a good picture of God but terrible treatment of others? What has gone wrong?