



**I FORGIVE
OTHERS**

LESSON OVERVIEW



MAIN POINT

We can forgive others just as we have freely been forgiven.



MEMORY VERSE

And forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who have sinned against us.

Matthew 6:12



SCRIPTURES TO STUDY

Matthew 6:12-15,
Matthew 18:21-35, Luke 6:37,
Colossians 3:13



TODAY'S BIG GOAL

The children will understand how important it is to stay out of judgment and to forgive others.

	BALLOON BATTLE
	REVIEW & INTRO, MEMORY VERSE & VIDEO: THE GREAT PICKLE PARDON - 2
	THE UNFORGIVING BACKPACK
	THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT
	THE MERCY COAT
	LET IT GO!

TEACHER NOTES

Revelation Spotlight:

When we are willing to forgive others, we are honoring God's Way and choosing to love others exactly as He loves us and to stay in His mercy. And this is good for us as well as them!

Forgiveness is certainly the most powerful gift of God's love that we have been given. We receive it through no action of our own, but by acknowledging our deep need for it! And through it we receive all other blessings. When we chose to receive forgiveness, we are admitting that we need "The Jesus Way" back to our heavenly Father. In this week's lesson, the children will learn that once forgiven, it is only right to offer forgiveness to others. Freely we have received, and freely we give. Many children will say "It's not FAIR!" when confronted with the concept of forgiveness. Be ready to assure them that they are right! It is not fair. But neither is it fair that God forgave them. We dare not choose to walk in law and judgement once we have received love and mercy ourselves. Jesus emphatically teaches us how important it is to STAY in the Way of forgiveness.

Matthew 6:14-15 says, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Jesus teaches that once we have stepped under God's mercy by our humility, we cannot also wander into the territory of pride and judgement of others at the same time. Indeed, such pride shifts us into enemy ter-

ritory. Warn the children that this is why the enemy works so hard to get us offended and to bring us into unforgiveness and bitterness. Unforgiveness is the opposite of God's love toward us.

Our Bible story today tells the parable of the Unforgiving Servant. Peter learns that there is no limit to the number of times we must extend forgiveness. Jesus tells Peter he must forgive, not 7 times (considered a holy number) but 70, 7 times! Jesus did not mean 490 times. The number 70 represents judgement. And the number 7 represents completeness and rest. Jesus is telling Peter, that judgement is no longer the way God is dealing with people. He is now reaching out and offering mercy and grace through the sacrifice of Jesus, beginning a New Covenant.

As you pray for the children and work with them this week, help them to understand that forgiveness is a way of life that blesses both them and others. Help them to recognize where their hearts may need to be cleaned of old hurts and wounds and where they can let go of bitterness toward others and receive God's healing peace. If the Spirit leads, be ready to hear their stories and to pray with them, even if you must adjust your plans.

Foundation Scripture:

"Now we have been resurrected out of the "realm of death" never to return for we are FOREVER alive and FORGIVEN of all our sins!"

Colossians 2:13 TPT



BALLOON BATTLE



SCRIPTURE

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

Luke 6:37



ELEMENT OF TRUTH

You cannot live without sin while holding others' sins in your hands at the same time.



MATERIALS

40 small balloons – 20 each of 2 different colors.



PREPARATION

Blow up balloons and have in two separate garbage bags. Have a volunteer ready for each team to keep track of any penalty points when the music stops, and to help count up the balloons at the end.

Kids, today we are going to play a fast-paced game of Balloon Battle.

I need a volunteer from each side of the room to be our captains. Who thinks they have fast hands? *(Choose two enthusiastic volunteers to be captain of the two teams named for the color of the balloons you have. Dump the opposite color balloons on each side. If red team/blue team, put blue team balloons on the side where red team captain is standing etc.)*

Now, here are the rules of the game. Each of you will start with 30 points. And every balloon is worth one point. You will have 60 seconds on the clock. When I say, “Go!” you have to pick up your opponent’s balloons and throw them onto the other side. Try to get as many of their balloons back on their side as you can. For every balloon you move to the other side, you will get 1 point. BUT...at any time during the play, we will randomly stop the music. When the music stops, anyone holding or throwing a balloon will lose 10 points. Are our captains ready? Start the clock!

(Play game music while they begin to throw balloons. Stop randomly and see who loses 10 points. After the game is up, count up and see how many points each team has from balloons. Then hit them with the adjusted score for the penalty points of holding a balloon.)

Thank you, captains! *(If there is a winner, announce who it is and give a prize if desired to winning side.)*

Lesson Tie-in:

Kids, did you notice something strange about this game? The more you try to win by throwing the balloons back on the other side, the more likely you were to get into penalty trouble when the music stopped. In fact, the penalty is so high it completely wipes out any progress you make for throwing. The only way to win is to NOT be touching the balloons.

Well kids, those balloons represent sins. And when we try to throw them back at others, that’s like us trying to point the finger of judgement for other people’s mistakes. When we do that, God says WE are the ones who actually lose. Not only does bitterness and unforgiveness hurt our hearts, but God says that only HE is judge of all people. Today, we are going to continue learning about forgiveness and specifically, how important it is to FORGIVE OTHERS.



THE GREAT PICKLE PARDON - 2



REVIEW

In Lesson 1 we learned that ALL people need to be forgiven. And we learned that by dying on the cross for our sins, Jesus took our punishment and made the WAY open for all people to come back into relationship with God.

The veil was torn, and Jesus said that the old way of trying to follow the laws to come into God's presence was FINISHED. The new way of relationship with God through His gift of forgiveness has begun.



INTRODUCTION

Today, we are going to talk about something that is a big priority in our relationship with God. Just as God has forgiven us, He asks us to join Him in loving others and to be willing to forgive. This is actually really important to God and one of His top priorities for us. He knows it is good for our hearts to stay out of the sin of unforgiveness, because unforgiveness can open the door to the enemy to hurt us with bitterness. And because we have received His forgiveness, that means we can now give it away too.

And that's our main point for today.

(Show slide)



MAIN POINT

We can forgive others just as we have freely been forgiven.

We don't always have to trust someone again or to stay close to someone who treats us wrongly, but we God does want us to forgive, so that our hearts are free. We can leave the other person and whatever punishment they deserve in God's hands. We will talk about how and when to repair relationships that have been hurt in another lesson. But today, we will begin by understanding that it is always God's will that we forgive.



MEMORY VERSE

(Show slide)

Our memory verse today comes from the prayer called the OUR FATHER. It's where we ask God to forgive us, but I want you to notice what comes right with it.

(Read the verse)

And forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.

Matthew 6:12

God ties our forgiveness right into forgiving others. That's because holding grudges and unforgiveness in our hearts is also sinning! Because only GOD is the Judge.



THE GREAT PICKLE PARDON - 2

Let's say it together. *(Lead the children in repeating the verse. You can also use any of the Memory Verse presentation ideas found in the introduction.)*



VIDEO

Before Video:

We are about to head back to see what's happening in Bitter Creek. It seemed like Bitterness, Anger and Offense were really getting a foothold in the Mc-Noise and the Stratfeels families. But Jack and Mrs. P were praying. Let's see how the families are doing as the Pickle Contest gets closer.

After Video:

Well, Corey and Sissy seem to be making some progress. Did you notice that Jack told them that staying in unforgiveness toward others dishonors God? Why do you think that's true? Do you remember what we said last week about why forgiveness is so special and important? *(Allow answers)*. That's because God chose FORGIVENESS as the way to show us His love and bring us back into relationship. That makes forgiveness a very valuable and honorable thing to give. Let's dive in a bit more today.



THE UNFORGIVING BACKPACK



SCRIPTURE

Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Colossians 3:13



ELEMENT OF TRUTH

Holding onto other's sins against us only hurts us and weighs us down.



MATERIALS

Wrapped gift box from Lesson 1, backpack, crumbled pieces of brown or grey paper.



PREPARATION

Put the crumpled paper in a bag, and put the gift into an empty backpack. Ask one volunteer to help throw the crumpled paper at the teacher while narrating.

Do you remember our gift from lesson one? This gift represents the forgiveness that God has freely given me. *(Put gift into backpack and put it on.)* I'm going to carry that gift with me wherever I go.

But suppose at some point in my life someone sins against me. *(Volunteer throws one or two of the crumpled paper and hits the lead teacher.)* Ow! Whoa. That person just did me wrong. *(Pick up the paper.)* I'm a Christian, so I'm not going to throw it back, but I'll tell you what... I'm going to remember that and I'm not going to forgive them. *(As you say this, stuff the paper in the sack.)* And as I go along, others might sin against me too!

(Have volunteer throw more papers.) Oooo! That's really painful. And it's SO unfair. I'm not going to let that one go! *(Put paper into backpack.)*

Wait kids! Is that what I should do? Now I'm carrying that nasty sin around with me. You see, I might think that I don't want to let the person who hurt me get away with something, but if I don't forgive, who is the one really hurt by unforgiveness? It's me! My pack of things just gets heavier and I have these nasty sins mixing with God's beautiful gift. You know what! I'm going to let those things go.

Lord, forgive that person for hurting me. *(Take some paper out of the backpack, and throw it away from you but NOT toward the volunteer.)* And Lord, I let go of all of these sins. Forgive those who have done me wrong. *(Empty rest of papers and put to the side.)*

That's better. That's a lot lighter for me. Forgiveness really is the best choice for us to make! When I release those people instead of judging them and holding onto their sins, I let God take care of it and He is the only one that deserves to be the Judge. Luke 6:37 says, "Do not judge others, so that YOU will not be judged. Forgive and you will be forgiven."



THE UNFORGIVING DEBTOR



SCRIPTURE

Peter asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy, seven times."

Matt 18:21-35



ELEMENT OF TRUTH

Forgiving others is the only appropriate thing to do once we have been forgiven.



MATERIALS

One crown, one Bible robe, 2 simple servant tops or sashes, one guard robe and a rope.



PREPARATION

Choose volunteers or older kids to pantomime the story. The lead teacher can play the part of the king.

A good reference to use as preparation to tell the story in pantomime, or to use as video element directly, can be found in the Matthew video series available on YouTube.

<https://youtu.be/yf9jWonGL74>

Start Time Stamp at 2:26:30

Today, we have a Bible story that will really help us understand why Jesus wants us to forgive others. One day, Jesus was explaining to his disciples that they must forgive others who have sinned against them. He told them that doing so would be loving others the same way the Father loved them.

Peter, thinking he was being holy came and asked Jesus. "How many times should I forgive my brother who sins against me? Seven times?" Peter probably used seven because the Jewish people knew that the number 7 was a holy number that represented God and His completeness. Do you remember that God finished creating the earth in 7 days? So, Peter might have expected Jesus to be impressed.

But Jesus said, I tell you not 7 times, but 70 X 7 times. Was Jesus just giving Peter a math lesson? 70×7 equals 490. Was Jesus saying that if someone sinned against you 491 times, you didn't have to forgive them anymore? No! Jesus was showing Peter that God was starting a new way of man coming to God through forgiveness. The number 70 in the Bible represents God's Judgement. And sure enough, the number 7 does mean completeness. Jesus was saying that the Way of Forgiveness makes the Way of Judgement complete and done away with! To help Peter understand, Jesus told him a parable. What is a parable? It's a special story that makes a point!

(Tell story of the Unforgiving Servant from Matthew 18 using costumes, players and pantomime if desired.)

One day a wealthy king who had many servants was looking over his accounts and noticed one servant owed him over a million dollars. He called in the servant and demanded, "Pay back what you owe me!" But the servant didn't have the money. If the king chose to, he could have the servant sent to debtor's prison where he would have to stay the rest of his life, and never be able to work to pay off



THE UNFORGIVING DEBTOR

the debt. The servant begged the king, "Please be patient with me, and I will pay back what I owe you." The King had compassion on the servant and forgave all the debt and let the man go free. *(The King hugs the servant and sends him off happy.)*

But that servant went out and found another servant who owed him \$100. He grabbed the servant by the neck and said, "Pay back what you owe me!" The servant didn't have the money. The servant dropped to his knees and begged his fellow servant, "Please be patient with me and I will pay back what I owe you." *(Pause for dramatic effect)* But the servant refused! He had the fellow servant thrown into debtor's prison.

Well, when some of the King's servants heard about this they told the King. The king called in the servant. *(Point to the servant and use hand gestures to demand he kneel.)* "You wicked servant," the King said. "I forgave you all that debt because you asked me to. Shouldn't you have had compassion on your fellow servant." So, the King had the servant thrown into debtor's prison.

Jesus ended his story by saying, this is the way my heavenly Father will deal with you if you do not forgive your fellow servants from your heart.

Kids, do you see Jesus's point? When we - like that first servant - have received mercy and forgiveness for our sins, it is completely out-of-line with God's way of love and forgiveness, to judge others and hold their sins. Once we enter this New Jesus Way of being forgiven by God, we must choose to continue to live in that way toward others too!



COAT OF MERCY



SCRIPTURE

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:14-15



ELEMENT OF TRUTH

Forgiving others helps us stay under God's covering of mercy.



MATERIALS

One red robe or piece of red material, tablecloth or graduation gown.



PREPARATION

Have the robe out of sight but ready to put on at the right time.

We have been talking a lot about receiving God's mercy instead of judgement. That's what God's forgiveness is to us – His mercy gift.

The Bible says, God's mercy is even greater than His judgement. And we see that in action when God decided to send Jesus to die in our place.

When we received that gift from Jesus, we put it on God's mercy. This red cloth (*robe etc.*) represents the blood of Jesus. His sacrifice paid the price for our forgiveness. We have chosen the way of mercy! Praise God. We are saved from the wrath of God's punishment against all sin.

But did you know that it is our job to keep that Coat of mercy on as we live in this world?

What if someone comes along and does something wrong to us? (*Have a volunteer throw the crumpled paper at us.*)

Well! That was wrong and they treated me badly. But, should I get into judgement and unforgiveness against them? To do so, I would have to lay down the mercy coat. (*Take off the coat and pick up the paper as if you will throw it back.*)

Eeek! I don't want to live under judgement either. Nope! I'm not going to take the bait. I'm going to keep my mercy coat on and forgive that person. (*Toss the crumpled paper aside and put "coat" back on.*)

Now that doesn't mean that what the person did wasn't wrong or that I am letting them "off the hook."

No! I am not their judge. That's NOT my responsibility. But I am going to forgive them and ask God to deal with them, and keep my own heart right and continue in the way of Mercy I have chosen. That's my responsibility.

It's not always easy. Forgiveness requires humility, realizing that every one of us makes mistakes - big and small - and needs God's mercy.

How is forgiveness fair? Forgiving another is not "letting them off the hook" but giving the situation to God, and staying out of judgement because God alone is Holy and qualified to judge. We will talk more about this in small group.



LET IT GO!



SCRIPTURE

And forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who have sinned against us.

Matthew 6:12



ELEMENT OF TRUTH

We can release people of their debt of sin to us just as God has done FOR US.



MATERIALS

Cards with the Our Father prayer and coloring image, teardrop shaped red paper or cardstock cut-outs or traced, scissors (optional if you would like the kids to cut out their drops), pens or pencils, Sea of Forgetfulness.



PREPARATION

Prepare a story that you can share from your personal life where you had to forgive someone who hurt you.

Cut out or trace enough (if letting the kids cut them out) tear drop shapes so that each child can have a few.

Activity:

(Pass out copies of the Our Father)

Kids, let's start our small group today by praying a very famous prayer together. It's called the Lord's Prayer because Jesus taught it to His disciples when they asked Him to teach them to pray. And if Jesus put something in this model prayer I think it must be important.

Are you ready? Let's say it together.

(Lead the children in the Lord's Prayer. Let them color while you discuss the questions below.)

Discussion Questions:

1. What did Jesus include in this prayer that connects to our topic of forgiveness?
2. Why does Jesus call sins debts in this prayer? Have you ever felt like someone owes you something or stole something from you when they hurt you? *(Allow responses.)* What do you think those people should have "Coming to them?" *(Punishment, bad things, something to equal justice or fairness.)*
3. What does it mean to cancel or forgive someone's debt? *(Forgive, release them, say that nothing has to be taken from them or punishment given to them for what they did.)* Does that seem fair? Was it fair when God forgives you of your sins?
4. Does God want us to live by the law and judgement and fairness or the new way of mercy and forgiveness?



PUSH PAUSE:

(Share a personal story of a time you had to forgive.)

Let's take a moment and let the Lord show us if there is anyone that has hurt us that we need to forgive or release from their debt to us. If the Lord shows you people as we pray, you can choose to forgive them and Let It Go. As a way to remember that you are releasing them, you can put their first names on a drop and when ready, you can ask God to forgive them and throw the drop into the sea of forgetfulness. *(Lead the children in a prayer of discovery asking God to show them if there is anyone against which they are holding a grudge or any unforgiveness toward in their hearts. Sit in quietness. Then remind them that forgiveness is good for them as well as the person. Instruct them how they can take a moment with the Lord and pray for God to forgive the one(s) who hurt them, and then to use the drops as a symbol.)*