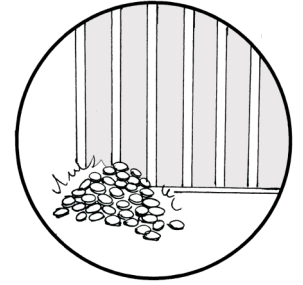


Lesson #1-26*The Unforgiving Servant*

Matthew 18:15-35

**Key Verse:**

“Not seven times, but, I tell you, [forgive] seventy-seven times.”

Matthew 18:22

The Point:

We are called to forgive, just as God forgives us.

Unit Theme (March 6—April 7)

The Ways of the Kingdom

God Forgives

Exchanging words of forgiveness

Instructions:

1. Eastern Orthodox Christians begin Lent with “Forgiveness Sunday” and have a specific ritual that is centered on the idea of forgiveness.
2. Stand in a circle as we prepare to ask and offer forgiveness individually around the room. By sharing these two simple lines with each other, we can experience the power and love that flows from God through the act of forgiveness. The first person in the circle will turn to their left and say, “Forgive me, a sinner.” The second person will respond, “God forgives, and I forgive.” The two will then exchange a handshake or hug of peace, whichever you are both comfortable with. The second person will then turn to the third person and say, “Forgive me, a sinner.” The third person will respond, “God forgives, and I forgive.” The two will then exchange a handshake or hug of peace. Go until all have given and received forgiveness and a
- handshake or hug of peace. The words should be spoken thoughtfully and the actions performed carefully. By showing respect in tone and actions you are showing respect to God and each other.
3. The act of giving and receiving forgiveness is healing and humbling and can be a powerful reminder of God’s forgiveness.
4. It is important to remember that God calls us to forgive those who have wronged us, but that forgiveness does not mean it is okay for someone to hurt you and keep on hurting you. If someone is doing that, you should speak up and tell someone right away. Hurting others is never okay.

Note: You may also form a line where the person at the end walks by each other individual, asking forgiveness, and then stops at the front of the line. Repeat continuously for everyone. Make adjustments for those with limited mobility.