

C+G
Education

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LIVING THE WORD

**Cross+Generational
Education
Years A & B**



Leader's Guide

Sample Lesson

September 13, 2020

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Sunday, September 13, 2020
15th Sunday after Pentecost
Year A

The Unforgiving Servant

Gospel Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

First Reading:

Exodus 14:19-31

Second Reading:

Romans 14:1-12

Key Verse:

“Should you not have mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?”

– Matthew 18:33

The Point:

Jesus calls us to forgive others in the same way that we are forgiven.

Liturgical Color:

Green



Activities & Supplies

Into the Word

The Changing Nature of Forgiveness

Think about forgiveness throughout life.

10 min.

- Groupings Guide
- Materials for chosen cross+generational grouping
- Mural or poster paper
- Markers

Seasons of the Word

Forgiveness Is Growth

Being the Church means forgiving each other.

10 min.

- Note paper
- Pen or pencil
- Optional: green altar paraments, whiteboard or mural paper and marker

Learning the Word

The Unforgiving Servant

Identify where we fit in this story.

15 min.

- Bibles
- Mural paper
- Markers

The Word in the World

Sharing Forgiveness

Practice giving and receiving forgiveness.

5 min.

- Index cards
- Pens or pencils



Beyond the Gospel

Through a Tunnel of Water Play an active game to demonstrate the story.	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible
Additional Activities		
Sweet and Sour Taste forgiveness.	5 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lemons• Horseradish• Candy or cookies• Spoons• Sharp knife• Napkins
Vanishing Sin Use rice paper to illustrate forgiveness.	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rice paper• Pencils• Bowls of hot water• Large serving spoons• Insulated container
Follow the Cloud Practice following as God leads.	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poster board• Flashlight
Sending		
	5 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Word @ Home take-home sheet





Cross+Generational Ministry has at its core the concept that faith is formed through meaningful relationships. When we connect with people of a different generation, we are able to learn from them and share our own experiences, no matter what age we are. We find our place in God's story best by exploring that story as community.

Effective cross+generational experiences are:

- *Experiential*
- *Interactive*
- *Engaging*
- *Story-centered*
- *Home-based*
- *Equalizing*

all of which promote an **encounter with God**. All of the activities included in this leader guide are intended to engage these principles, through intentional cross+generational interaction and active, creative activities that bring the Bible story to life in our lives.

We pass on the faith through every action, experience, or relationship that nurtures a transformative relationship of trust with God and shapes the way we see and interact with God's world. When we do this in meaningful, intergenerational relationships, our faith is enriched from the diversity of the experiences we share with each other. Our communities are strengthened, and we have confidence in our sense of belonging to God and with each other.



Background for Leaders

God continues to save God's people through Jesus. We respond to that by loving and caring for others, but it is not that response in itself that brings us salvation. Salvation comes only through God in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Summary: Matthew 18:21-35

The Unforgiving Servant

Peter begins the conversation with a question about forgiveness: "How many times, Lord, do I need to forgive someone who sins against me?" And Jesus, rather than answering with a specific number, gives Peter a symbolic answer: you are to forgive again and again and again. Then, Jesus explains further with a parable.

A king is owed money by one of his slaves, but the slave is unable to pay it back. The king threatens to throw the slave out, but shows mercy instead. However, the same slave then encounters someone who owes *him* money, and does not extend the same kindness, having the indebted slave thrown into prison instead. The king hears about the incident and orders that the first slave be punished. And this, says Jesus, is what will also happen to you if you do not forgive.

First Reading Summary: Exodus 14:19-31

As the Israelites journey to freedom, God leads them as a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. Pharaoh does not let them go easily, however, and sends his armies after the valuable slaves to return them to Egypt. In the continuing story of God saving God's people, the waters are parted so that the Israelites can pass through, but the pursuing Egyptian army is drowned.

Second Reading Summary: Romans 14:1-12

Paul reminds the people of the Roman church that not everyone will have the same level of faith and the same ways of living out that faith. Instead of criticizing or judging one another, we are to love and support one

another. It is not our habits or rituals that make us worthy. Rather, it is the death of Jesus on the cross that gives us our identity in Christ.

The Point:

Jesus calls us to forgive others in the same way that we are forgiven.

It would be human nature for many of us to do what the servant in today's story does. But as Christ-followers, we are called to behave in a new way and set a new example. We are called to forgive other people—including those who have wronged us—as a reflection of the forgiveness that we experience through Christ.

Festivals & Seasons: Green

Today is the 15th Sunday after Pentecost. Green is used to indicate our growth in faith, and this season after Pentecost is a time in which we focus on the teachings and ministry of Christ. Some congregations use differing shades of green throughout the season, using a lighter green in summer and a darker green in fall. This green season follows Pentecost, the story from the Book of Acts in which the Holy Spirit appeared as tongues of flame on the heads of the apostles, and when the barriers of language were removed so that all people could understand one another. In the same way, the Holy Spirit breaks down barriers and unites us today.

Prayer of Preparation:

Jesus, help us today to hear your parable of the unforgiving servant. Help us to treat all of those around us the way that you treat us: with love, forgiveness, and patience. Remove our judging nature, and replace it with your love. Amen.

Lesson Plan

Into the Word

The Changing Nature of Forgiveness

10 min.

Think about forgiveness throughout life.

Supplies:

- Groupings Guide
- Materials for chosen cross+generational grouping
- Mural or poster paper
- Markers

Preparation:

1. Determine how you would like to group participants at their tables (in a cross+generational grouping), using the Groupings Guide.
2. Prepare the materials indicated in the Guide.
3. Decide how many age-levels you need for the discussion based on how many small groups you have. More than one group can discuss each age level.

Instructions:

1. Welcome the class and instruct them to group themselves cross+generationally according to the method you have selected from the Groupings Guide.
2. **If someone is sitting alone, please introduce yourself, and invite them to join you. Young children who are not comfortable leaving their families should sit at a table with someone in their family.**
3. **Today we are going to talk about forgiveness. Who can tell me what it means to be forgiven?** Allow responses. **Sometimes, we do something that is wrong, or that is hurtful to other people, or someone does something that hurts us. It can make our relationships with those people feel uncomfortable, or make us sad. When that**



happens, we need to say that we are sorry and ask that person if they forgive us. When we forgive someone else or they forgive us, it means that we are able to move past what has hurt us and make our relationship whole again.

4. On each table, you will find a large sheet of paper. I am going to give each table a different age group to focus on, and your job is to think of things for which people in that age group might need to be forgiven. For instance, toddlers will need to be forgiven for different things than adults, and teenagers seek forgiveness for things that older persons will not.
5. Assign an age group to each small group (infant, toddler, early childhood, upper childhood, teenager, young adult, middle aged adult, senior adult), and give them time to talk.
6. Invite groups that are willing to do so to share their thoughts.
7. **We all need forgiveness throughout our lives. Today we will hear the story of an unfortunate slave who did not make the right choice when it came to forgiving someone else.**



Seasons of the Word

Forgiveness Is Growth

10 min.

Being the Church means forgiving each other.

Supplies:

- Note paper
- Pencil
- Optional: green altar paraments, whiteboard or mural paper and marker

Preparation:

1. Place the green paraments on an altar or worship table.

Instructions:

1. **We are in the very long season of Pentecost. Pentecost begins in the spring, and continues throughout the summer and until Advent. It can feel like it drags on and on and on. Pentecost is one of our green seasons—a time of growth.**
2. **When we think about forgiveness, do we think about growth?** Accept any answers. Sometimes, forgiveness might just feel like a difficult end to a painful situation. But often, when we look back, we realize that those times in which we have needed to forgive someone else—or when we have needed to ask for forgiveness ourselves—have been times of immense growth.
3. **Let's begin by making a list: what are some things for which we may need to forgive or seek forgiveness from someone else?** Make a list on a whiteboard, mural paper, or small piece of paper for your own reference.
4. **Let's demonstrate what that looks like. We will do this as a prayer activity together. As you are able, stand in a circle with your small group.** If your group is smaller, you might choose to do this activity in one circle with everyone together.



5. **As I read each item that we listed, slowly curl yourself into a ball, until you are all tucked in to yourself. Let's pray: God, we seek forgiveness for many things, including...** Read each item on the list. Instruct participants to slowly curl down and inward. Give participants a moment to stay in their curled position quietly.
6. **But God, you are a forgiving God. As we hear your word of forgiveness, we unbend and unfold, and we grow out of our inward selves, facing those around us in healing and reconciliation. God, you forgive us for...** Read each item on the list a second time. Instruct participants to slowly uncurl. **Thank you for forgiving us. Amen.**
7. Optional: If your group has members with limited mobility, you could have them begin by facing one another in the circle. Instead of curling in, they could turn to the outside of the circle to demonstrate the isolating nature of sin. As the forgiveness section is spoken, they could turn back toward the center of the circle, toward reconciliation, and toward one another.



Learning the Word

The Unforgiving Servant

15 min.

Identify where we fit into this story.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Mural paper
- Markers

Preparation:

1. Place mural paper and markers at each table.

Instructions:

1. **Let's begin by reading our story together. Our story is found in the Gospel of Matthew, so which is the first book of the New Testament, chapter 18, verses 21 through 35.** Allow small groups to find the passage and take turns reading at their table, or read the story aloud to the larger group.
2. **Let's pretend that we are Peter first. What do you think happened to make Peter ask this question? Peter is known for his impulsiveness—one can just imagine him asking this question of Jesus because he is reacting to a situation that has just happened. What do you think happened to Peter to cause him to ask this question?** Allow groups time to imagine, and share responses if they choose.
3. **Next, let's place ourselves into the parable. Pretend, first, that you are the king. Why do you think the king has decided it is time to settle up with this servant who owes him money? Talk about it at your table. As you talk, doodle this king's home on the paper at your table.**
4. **Now we are the servant who is being called before the king. What does that slave's face look like when he hears that the king wants to talk? On the count of three, everyone make his expression. One, two, three!**



5. **Read through verses 24 through 27. What do you think is going through the slave's mind? Write some words on your mural paper.**
6. **Continue with the rest of the story. Have two people in your small group pretend to be the two slaves in verses 28 through 31. As you listen, everyone else in your small group should look distressed. Allow groups time to reenact this section.**
7. **Now we return to the king. Point to his home on your paper.**
8. **Pretend you are the slave who is called back before the king. Now what kind of expression do you have on your face?**
9. Finish reading the parable out loud to the large group.
10. **What do you think about that ending? What does that mean to you? Talk about it with your group.**
11. Allow groups time to finish and share their responses if they are willing. **This story might sound like a story about punishment, but it is actually a story about God saving God's people. Another one of our readings this week is also a story of God's salvation. We will hear that in a moment.**



The Word in the World

Sharing Forgiveness

5 min.

Practice giving and receiving forgiveness.

Supplies:

- Index cards
- Pens or pencils

Instructions:

1. We are talking a lot in this lesson about forgiveness, and forgiveness can be a very powerful thing. Imagine what would happen if we really forgave one another at school or home or work in the same way that this king forgives the servant, or in the same way that God forgives us. What might that look like? Allow responses.
2. Think of a situation at school, work, or home where you can make a difference by either forgiving someone or by giving someone a second chance. You do not need to talk about this but write or draw it on your card. Just write or draw enough to remind yourself what you are thinking about.
3. This coming week, challenge yourself to make that change. When you do, write down on your card how the people from whom you seek forgiveness or whom you need to forgive react. What changes? How does that make you feel? We will talk about this next week.



Beyond the Gospel

Through a Tunnel of Water

10 min.

Play an active game to demonstrate the story.

Supplies:

- Bible

Instructions:

1. **The Old Testament lesson today is familiar to many of us. It is the story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, leaving slavery and entering a time of freedom. God saves God's people once again.**
2. Instruct adults who are able to do so to stand in two rows facing each other, with their arms raised and hands joined across the aisle, forming a tunnel. Divide younger participants into two groups: the Israelites and the Egyptians. Choose one person to be the angel of God.
3. Begin reading the passage from Exodus 14:19-22, and instruct the angel and the Israelites to walk through the sea tunnel of adults. Continue with verses 23-31, with the tunnel collapsing on the Egyptians as they go through.
4. Allow participants to change roles if they would like to do it again.



Additional Activities

Sweet and Sour

5 min.

Taste forgiveness.

Supplies:

- Lemons
- Horseradish
- Candy or cookies
- Spoons
- Sharp knife
- Napkins

Preparation:

1. Before serving any food, always check with participants or caregivers for students who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.
2. Cut lemons into small wedges.

Instructions:

1. **What does it make you feel like when someone hurts you or you hurt someone else?** Allow responses. **Sometimes that can be an icky feeling. If that feeling were a taste, maybe it would taste like this lemon or this horseradish.** Allow participants to taste items.
2. **But forgiveness is sweet! It is sweet when we forgive other people, and when other people forgive us. And it is especially sweet when Jesus forgives us! Let's share a sweet snack together to celebrate the taste of forgiveness.**
3. Distribute the candy or cookies.



Additional Activities

Vanishing Sin

10 min.

Taste forgiveness.

Supplies:

- Rice paper
- Pencils
- Bowls of hot water
- Large serving spoons
- Insulated container

Preparation:

1. Prepare steaming hot water. Keep it in an insulated container to keep it warm.
2. Cut rice paper into small slips, approximately ½ inch by 1 inch.

Instructions:

1. **It is hard for us to imagine God’s forgiveness. God forgives us so completely that it is as if whatever we did wrong did not ever happen. It is gone—vanished!**
2. Give each participant a small piece of rice paper and a pencil. **On this piece of paper, write one thing that you would like to ask God to forgive. It does not have to be long. Just write enough so that it means something to you. God knows what you are asking.**
3. Pour hot water into bowls, if necessary. Invite participants to come forward and place their rice paper in the water. As you stir the paper into the hot water, the rice paper will dissolve and disappear, in the same way that our sins vanish when God forgives us. As the paper dissolves, share words of forgiveness similar to this: **Whatever it is for which you seek forgiveness, God through Jesus has already forgiven you. God loves you, and will always hear your confession. Remember that you are loved and forgiven. Amen.**



Additional Activities

Follow the Cloud

10 min.

Practice following as God leads.

Supplies:

- Poster board
- Flashlight

Preparation:

1. Cut a cloud shape out of a large piece of white poster board.

Instructions:

1. **Our Old Testament story for today tells about the Israelites following God as God led them. Do you remember what God looked like during the day?** *[A cloud.]* **And what did God look like at night?** *[Fire.]*
2. **Today we are going to practice following as God leads.** Ask someone to be the first leader. **Should we begin by pretending it is day or night?** Let the group decide. If they choose day, give the leader the cloud poster board. If they choose night, give the leader the flashlight and turn off the lights.
3. Allow the leader to lead the group around the room in Follow-the-Leader style for a minute or two. Change leaders and times of day until everyone who would like to lead has participated.
4. When finished, ask: **How is this like following God in real life?** *[Sometimes it is easy to know where God is and to follow God; other times it is difficult to see God and follow God.]*
5. **God always leads us, but we do not always follow. Our story today reminds us that it is important to follow God.**



Sending

Check to make sure everyone has their notecard from The Word in the World activity. Invite participants to hold the card in their hand and place their hands together in the center of the group. Pray together. **God, be with us this week as we seek to give and receive forgiveness. Give us courage and wisdom and love. Amen.**

Remember to send “The Word @ Home” take-home sheet with participants before dismissing them.





The Word @ Home

Pentecost 15

Gospel Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

The Point

Jesus calls us to forgive others in the same way that we are forgiven.

Key Verse

“Should you not have mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?”

– Matthew 18:33

Scripture Summaries

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

The Unforgiving Servant

Jesus explains forgiveness with a parable: A king is owed money by one of his slaves, but the slave is unable to pay it back. The king threatens to throw the slave out, but shows mercy instead. However, the same slave then encounters someone who owes him money, and does not extend the same kindness, having the indebted slave thrown into prison instead. The king hears about the incident, and orders that the first slave be punished. When we do not forgive others, our relationships are damaged; but God always forgives, even when we do not show the same mercy to others.

First Reading: Exodus 14:19-31

In the continuing story of God saving God’s people, the waters of the Red Sea are parted so that the Israelites can pass through, while the pursuing Egyptian army is drowned.

Second Reading: Romans 14:1-12

Not everyone has the same level of faith and the same ways of living out that faith. Instead of judging one another, we are to love and support one another.

Seasons & Festivals

Today is the 15th Sunday after Pentecost. Green is used to indicate our growth in faith, and this season after Pentecost is a time in which we focus on the teachings and ministry of Christ. Some congregations use differing shades of green throughout the season, using a lighter green in summer and a darker green in fall.

Discussion Starters

- How do you feel when you have done something wrong? When you are forgiven?
- Is it easier to forgive or to be forgiven? Why?
- Ask for forgiveness from one member of your family at home.

Prayer of the Week

God, help us to give forgiveness when others hurt us and to ask for forgiveness when we hurt others. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you. What is God's message to us? How should we respond?

Sunday

Read Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus teaches about forgiveness through a parable. Look online for stories of miraculous forgiveness. Share what you have found.

Monday

Read Hebrews 11:23-29 The impact of faith in the life of Moses. Look through Exodus to review Moses' story. Use a concordance or online tools to help.

Tuesday

Read Romans 14:13–15:2 Paul teaches us how to treat others. Create an obstacle course. Take turns blindfolding one another and help each other avoid the obstacles.

Wednesday

Read Mark 11:20-25 Jesus teaches about prayer. The word of Jesus is powerful! Draw pictures of the images in this passage.

Thursday

Read 2 Corinthians 13:1-4 Paul's words of warning to the Corinthians. Knowing that Christ speaks through you, what do you think he is saying to others?

Friday

Read 2 Corinthians 13:5-10 Paul commands believers to examine their own faith. It is hard to remember that we are examples to others of Jesus. What one behavior might you need to change to be a better example?

Saturday

Read Matthew 19:23-30 Jesus teaches about heaven. Create other illustrations to describe the amazing power of God's salvation.



Blessing for the Week

Share this blessing while tracing a cross on each person's forehead or hand with their permission:
You are loved and forgiven.