



LIVING THE WORD

**God's Word @ Home
Family Faith Formation
2020-2021**



Family Guide

Sample Lesson

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

The Unforgiving Servant

Gospel Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

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

Gospel Summary

Jesus explains forgiveness by telling a story called 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.

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 God wants us to behave in a different way and set a different example. We are called to forgive other people as a reflection of the forgiveness that we experience through Jesus.



Activities & Supplies

Introduction

The Changing Nature of Forgiveness

Think about forgiveness throughout life.

10 min.

- Large sheet of paper
- Markers

Learning the Word

The Unforgiving Servant

Identify where we fit in this story.

15 min.

- Bibles
- Large sheet of paper
- Markers

Activities

Sharing Forgiveness

Practice giving and receiving forgiveness.

5 min.

- Index cards
- Pens or pencils

Vanishing Sin

Use rice paper to illustrate forgiveness.

10 min.

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

Prayer

5 min.

- The Word @ Home take-home sheet



God's Word @ Home

Introduction

The Changing Nature of Forgiveness

10 min.

Think about forgiveness throughout life.

Supplies:

- Large sheet of paper
- Markers

Preparation:

1. On your paper make headings of Babies, Children, Teenagers, Adults, and Grandparents. Leave enough room under each heading so you can write a list of items.

Instructions:

1. Today we are going to talk about forgiveness. 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.
2. We have a large sheet of paper. Let's 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 grandparents will not.
3. Talk about the lists as you create them.
4. 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.



Learning the Word

The Unforgiving Servant

15 min.

Identify where we fit into this story.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Large sheet of paper
- Markers

Instructions:

1. Read Matthew 18:21-35 together.
2. **Let's pretend that we are Peter. 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?**
3. **Next, let's pretend 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? Let's talk about that. As we talk, doodle this king's home on the paper.**
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 aloud. **What do you think is going through the slave's mind? Let's write some words on the paper.**
6. Continue with the rest of the story. Have two people pretend to be the two slaves in verses 28 through 31.
7. **Pretend you are the slave who is called back before the king. Now what kind of expression do you have on your face?**
8. Finish reading the parable out loud.
9. **What do you think about that ending? What does that mean to you?**
10. **This story might sound like a story about punishment, but it is actually a story about God saving God's people.**



Activity

Sharing Forgiveness

5 min.

Practice giving and receiving forgiveness.

Supplies:

- Index cards
- Pens or pencils

Instructions:

1. 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? Talk as a family for a moment or two.
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?



Activity

Vanishing Sin

10 min.

Use rice paper to illustrate 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 person 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. Allow everyone to 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.**



Prayer

Make sure everyone has their index card from the Sharing Forgiveness activity. Invite them 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 use “The Word @ Home” sheet throughout the week as a part of your family devotions!





The Word @ Home

Pentecost 15

Gospel Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

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.