

Help Us Forgive Others

(Matthew 6:9-13)

Introduction

[Teacher, show a magazine picture of two friends to the class. Talk about things we say or do that can hurt friendships. Explain that every time we hurt someone, or they hurt us, it tears our friendships apart. As you're speaking, slowly tear the picture of the two friends down the middle separating them.]

This is what happens when we don't forgive each other. Our friendships get torn apart. Last week we learned that Jesus taught His disciples, and us, to ask God to forgive our sins. This week we learn that it's just as important for us to forgive others when they sin against us.

Opening Prayer

Father, when others hurt us, it's difficult to forgive them. Often, we don't even want to forgive. We need Your help. Even though we've done things that displease You, You still love and forgive us. Help us understand how much You have loved and forgiven us so we will want to forgive others, too. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
(Matthew 6:12)*

Lesson

We've been learning the Lord's Prayer. Can anyone recite it? Let's say what we've learned so far together:

Matthew 6:9-10a

Our Father in heaven

May Your name be kept holy.

May Your Kingdom come soon.

May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need.

Forgive us our sins.

First, we learned that God wants us to have a close relationship with Him. He wants us to call Him, "*Father*." He is a loving Father who cares about us, understands what we're going through, and can comfort us. When Jesus gave His disciples this recipe for prayer, He told them to begin prayer by calling out to, "*Our Father in Heaven*."

Next Jesus taught us that it is important for us to keep God's name holy. That means that we are to keep His name special. When you pray, it's important to remember Who you're talking to. Then begin your prayer by honoring God's name. Pray, "*Father, we admire You and adore You. We honor Your holy name*."

Next, we learned that someday Jesus is coming back to Earth. When He gets here, He will set up His wonderful kingdom and live among us as our King. That will be an exciting day, indeed! That is a time we should all be longing for — and praying for. It thrills God's heart when we let Him know in prayer that we are eagerly looking forward to that day. Pray, "*May Your Kingdom come soon*."

And while we wait for God to come back and set up His kingdom on Earth, we learned that we should be praying that people would do things God's way here on Earth! Pray, "*Father, while we wait for Your return, help us to do Your will here on earth just as the angels do in heaven*."

After we've asked that God's will be done, we can come to Him and ask Him to provide our basic needs. He is our great Provider! He may not provide all our *wants*, but He knows our everyday *needs* and promises to care for us.

Next, we learned how important it is for us to ask God to forgive us when we sin. Because God is perfect, He has to punish all sin. The reason God can forgive us is because Jesus already paid the price, the debt, for our sins when He died on the cross.

The next phrase in the prayer is...

Matthew 6:12

...as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

After we ask God to forgive us for our sins against Him; then we should ask Him to “*Help us forgive those who sin against us.*” God expects us to forgive others.

Forgiving others can be hard. Sometimes people really disappoint us or hurt us. If someone is mean to you, you want to be mean back. If someone calls you a name; you want to call them a name back. And on it goes. Forgiveness goes against our natural instincts. It’s something we all have to learn to do.

- How do you feel when it is hard to forgive others?

How Would You Handle This Situation?

[Put the following situations on cards and let the children pick cards and tell how they would handle the situation.]

- Your teacher gave you lots of homework on the weekend. You had others plans, but had to cancel them because of your teacher.
- Your little brother left his toys out and Mom made you pick them up.
- Your sister borrowed your favorite jacket and spilled juice on it.
- Your best friend got to be team captain at recess and didn’t choose you for the team.
- You asked for the last piece of dessert but someone ate it.
- Your brother borrowed your video game and lost it.
- You called your friend, left a message, but your friend never called you back.

- Your parents made you help clean out the garage when you wanted to go to a friend’s house.

[After the activity, discuss the following questions:]

- What situations are the most difficult for you to forgive?
- Is there anything that you would never be willing to forgive someone for doing? (What and why?)

Last week we learned that God says that when we do something wrong, there is a price to pay. God says sin *must* be punished. The Bible tells us there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. A life has to be given. Even if we only did one naughty thing in our whole life, we would still deserve the death penalty. There is a price to pay.

But God came down out of heaven and lived among us. He was born as a baby and lived a sinless life, for one purpose. Jesus came so that He might shed His blood for us so that we could be forgiven of our sins.

Psalm 103:8

The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to die so that we might live with Him forever in Heaven.

Psalm 103:10

He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.

It should have been you; it should have been me nailed to that cross. But He loves us so much that He took the punishment that we deserve!

Psalm 103:12

He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.

Because of what Jesus did on the cross, when we pray for forgiveness, God doesn't even see our sin anymore. It's as if you never sinned. He sees you completely pure and clean.

Jeremiah 31:34b [Teacher, read...]

"And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

When God forgives us, He no longer remembers the wrong things we've done. God asks us to forgive others just as He forgives us.

How often do you think God forgives you? Well, suppose you sin one time per hour. Sin isn't just wrong actions others can see, but also selfish attitudes and hurtful thoughts no one but God knows about. Multiply that one sin per hour by sixteen waking hours a day, then by seven days a week, and then by fifty-two weeks in a year. By the time you're ten years old, you've already needed God's forgiveness at least 58,240 times! Aren't you glad God is so generous with His forgiveness?

God has forgiven you more times than you can count. Can't you offer that same forgiveness to others? God asks you to forgive others even when it's hard or when they don't deserve it.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. (32) Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Comic Relief

[Teacher, give each child a marble-sized piece of Silly Putty modeling clay. One "egg" of Silly Putty is enough for two children. Or, you can

make your own putty by mixing ½ cup of white glue with ¼ cup liquid starch. For best results, add the liquid starch 1 tablespoon at a time, mixing thoroughly before adding more starch.

Demonstrate how to transfer a picture from a newspaper comic strip onto the putty by pressing the putty over the comic strip. Show children how they can stretch the putty to create different facial expressions on the comic strip characters. Let kids create angry or mad faces from the comic strip characters with the putty. Then have them squeeze the putty into a ball to erase the picture. Give kids a few minutes to transfer and erase several pictures. Then discuss the following:]

- Suppose you transferred a picture and never erased it. How is that like when we don't forgive someone?
- How is erasing the picture like God forgiving us?
- How does it make you feel to know that God doesn't remember your sins?
- How do you feel knowing that God expects you to forgive others just as He's forgiven you?

When we don't forgive someone, it is as if we have a picture of that person's sin on our minds. We keep looking at it over and over. God asks us to forgive others and put those pictures out of our minds.

Colossians 3:13

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

When you forgive someone, you need to forget about it, just like God does with your sins. [Teacher, erase the board.] If someone has wronged you, you need to erase the memory of their sin from your mind. Wipe it clean like this board.

When we remember that God has forgiven us for so much, we become more willing to extend that same forgiveness to others when they sin against us.

[Teacher, give the children adhesive bandages.]

Let's write words on these band aids that would help two friends forgive each other, for example, "I'm sorry" or "I forgive you."

[Use the bandages to stick the picture of the two friends back together and mend their friendship.]

When we do wrong, we want God to forgive us, don't we? Well, God expects you to forgive others completely in the same way we want Him to forgive us. If you're having a hard time forgiving someone, remember all the wrongs that God has forgiven you and ask Him to help you.

Matthew 6:14-15

If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. (15) But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Pray, "Forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us."

Closing Prayer

Father, we know You forgive us so often. You forgive the wrong things we do. You forgive the wrong things we say. You forgive our selfish, hurtful thoughts. You're always happy to forgive us and promise not to remember our sins. Thank You for forgiving us so freely. Lord, the sins of others against us are tiny compared to the sins You forgive us for doing. Help us remember that You want us to forgive others even when it is hard to forgive. Let us feel so thankful about being forgiven by You that we're happy to forgive others. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. After we ask God to forgive us of our sins, what should we ask Him for? (To help us forgive others that sin against us.)
2. Why is it sometimes hard to forgive others? (Sometimes people really disappoint us or hurt us.)
3. God says that sin must be punished. What is God's punishment for sin? (Death! Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.)
4. What happens to our sin when we pray for forgiveness? (It's removed from us as far as the East is from the West.)
5. When we don't forgive someone, what happens to the memory of that sin? (It stays on our mind.)
6. What do you need to do when you forgive someone? (Forget about the sin; erase it from my mind.)
7. What helps us when we find it hard to forgive someone? (Remembering that God has forgiven us much.)
8. What are some words you can use to help mend a torn friendship? (I'm sorry, I forgive you.)

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