

Show God's Love by Forgiving Others

(Colossians 3:13-14)

Objective: *The students will learn that they can show God's love by forgiving others.*

Materials: *Bibles, paper plate for each child, colorful markers, clear plastic film canister for each child, white glue, bowl of birdseed.*

Before Class: *Write 70 X 7 on the sides of the film canisters. Then write, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you!" Colossians 3:13, on each paper plate. Put the birdseed into a bowl from which the children can scoop out the seed. You can also glue 7 seeds to the lid of the film canister before class so that it has time to dry. Complete one craft beforehand to use during class time.*

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever been wronged? [Let the children respond.] How does that feel? Should you forgive people when they do wrong things to you? Why? [Don't give the answer to the kids, let them tell you why they think they should. In this lesson they will discover that we should forgive others because that pleases God.]

We have been learning that God wants us to show His kind of love to others, even when they don't deserve it.

1. In our first lesson we learned that God's love is everywhere and that he wants us to love Him back with all of our heart, mind, and soul. The best way to do that is by showing God's kind of love to others.
2. Next, we learned that God knows all about us. He always knows where we are and what we're doing and what we're thinking and feeling. And, even so, He still loves us completely. In the same way, He wants us to love others, even people who do wrong to us and don't deserve our love. Because that's the way He loves us.

3. Third, we learned that because planet earth belongs to God, we can show others that we love Him by taking care of our environment properly. We did an activity that showed the effects of an oil spill on the ocean, birds, plants and animals. We talked about ways to care for God's possessions.
4. Next, we learned that one way of showing God's love is by being a good neighbor—that is, by thinking of others first and sharing what we have with them. We did an activity to show how sharing brings people together and often brings beautiful things into our lives—we put individual drops of food coloring in a dish of milk. Then when we added drops of dish soap it caused the food coloring drops to swirl together to make a beautiful rainbow.
5. In last week's lesson we learned that we can show God's love by being compassionate to those who are hurting—people who are sad, lonely, scared, shy, or feeling rejected. We put Band-Aids on a broken heart and talked about ways we can help people with hurts on the inside.

Today we're going to learn that we can show God's love to others **by forgiving them** when they do wrong things to us. It isn't easy, but with the power of God's Holy Spirit, all things are possible.

Opening Prayer

Lord, I want to learn how to love others with Your kind of love—a love that keeps on loving even when the other person doesn't deserve it. Father, I know that takes the power of the Holy Spirit, so I ask You now to fill each of us to overflowing with Your love for others. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.
(Colossians 3:13-14)*

Lesson

I'm going to tell you a little story.

Danny and Jimmy were best friends. Every morning Danny went over to Jimmy's house so they could walk to school together. Then, almost every day after school, Jimmy came over to Danny's house to play basketball in Danny's driveway.

One day, Danny went to Jimmy's house, but Jimmy had already left for school. He was walking with Chad. Chad was the most popular boy in school. Then, for the next week, Jimmy played with Chad after school and didn't play with Danny. Danny felt very hurt and he was angry at Jimmy.

On Saturday, Jimmy came over to Danny's house with his basketball and said he was sorry that he ignored Danny all week. After Jimmy apologized, he asked if Jimmy would still play basketball with him?

- What should Danny do?
 - Should Danny say "no" because Jimmy didn't act nice?
 - Should Danny find someone else to play with because Jimmy didn't act like a friend?
- What will happen if Danny forgives Jimmy? (They might be friends just like before. They would have fun playing basketball.)
- What will happen if Danny doesn't forgive Jimmy? (Jimmy would figure out that it isn't nice to treat your friends like that. Danny could find a better friend)

Let's see what Jesus said about forgiveness:

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.

How many of you have had a hard time forgiving others? Forgiving others is one of the most important things we can do.

Matthew 18:21

Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"

Peter thought he was really going all out. He thought seven times would be extravagant!

Matthew 18:22

"No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"

- Why does God think forgiving others is so important? (He wants us to get along with other people; He wants us to show other people His kind of love.)

Jesus paid for our sins when he died on the cross. God forgave us of all our sins because of what Jesus did for us. If God sent his only Son to earth to die so we could be forgiven, God must consider forgiving others very important. We are to forgive others as God forgives us.

John 15:13

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

It's easier to forgive others when we remember how much God has forgiven us.

Our Memory Verse shows us what will happen when we forgive others. [Review the Memory Verse for today.]

"Make allowance for each other's faults" means to not get mad when someone does something to us that we don't like.

Why should you forgive others? (Because the Lord has forgiven you. You should do the same kind of forgiving that God does. Jesus

forgave all my sins so I should forgive everyone who does something against me.)

Forgiving others is showing God's kind of love to them. We show them that God loves people and forgives them. Forgiveness helps put people together. Anger and un-forgiveness pulls people apart.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for forgiving my sins. Help me to be a forgiver like You. Help me to forgive those who have hurt me. Help me put people together instead of getting angry and pulling people apart. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Seventy Times Seven

Materials:

- Bowl of birdseed
- Colorful Markers
- Paper plate for each child
- White glue
- See-through film canister for each child

Procedure:

Give each child a paper plate to work on. If you didn't do this before class, have each child glue 7 seeds to the lid of their film canister. Then have them count out 490 pieces of bird seed to put in their film canister. Explain to the kids how this represents how many times we are to forgive a person who sins against us. We are not to just forgive someone only 7 times like the number of seeds on the lid. No! We are to forgive someone 70 times 7. [Don't let the children get frustrated by this exercise, encourage them to stick with the counting as long as they can, then help them to understand that we are to keep on forgiving people who are mean to us an innumerable number of times.]

If the children weary of counting seeds, have them color pictures on their paper plates to show how it feels to be forgiven and/or how it feels to forgive someone else.

Game Center

Forgiveness Relay

With chalk or masking tape draw a big heart on the floor. Place objects, such as large blocks, in the heart with labels indicating hurtful things children do to others such as lying, calling someone a mean name, not sharing, cheating in a game, and so forth. [You can have the children help you make the labels and tape them onto the blocks.]

Form 2 teams. Have each team line up. First person in the line must run to the heart, pick up a hurtful thing bring it to their team's trash can, say "*I forgive you,*" throw it into the trash, and tag the next team member to "*go.*" When the heart has been cleaned of all sins, the team that removed the most sins gets the Clean Heart Award.

