

Forgive Us Our Sins

(Matthew 6:9-13)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Heaven is a wonderful place. The Bible tells us that in heaven, the streets of the city are pure, clear gold like glass. God tells us many others things about His home. No one is ever sick there. No one ever dies. There is no night there. Every person in heaven will be perfectly happy always. What a special place it is! The most wonderful thing about heaven is that Jesus is there.

Heaven is perfect because God is perfect in every way. He has never thought or said or done anything wrong. That is why His home, heaven, is perfect, too. But there is one thing that can never be in heaven. That is sin.

Do you know what sin is? (The bad things we do) Yes, sin is anything we think, say, or do which does not please God. Sin causes sorrow and sadness in our world. Can you think of some things people do that are sin? (Stealing, lying, disobeying mom, saying bad or mean words.) Yes, those things are sin. The Bible says that every one of us has sinned—me, you, your parents—all people. We sin because we were born with a *want to* do things our own way instead of God's way.

God has said sin must be punished. The punishment for sin is death—to be separated from God forever. God knew there was nothing you could do to get rid of your sin. He knew you could not be good enough to please Him. So, He made a way for your sin to be forgiven.

Today we're going to learn why it's important for us to ask God for forgiveness when we do wrong things that hurt Him.

Opening Prayer

Father, we're glad we can ask You to forgive us when we sin. Thank You for being willing to forgive us and for making us clean again.

Please show us today why it's so important to turn to You whenever we do wrong things. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Forgive us our sins... (Matthew 6:12a)

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.

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.

The next phrase in the prayer is...

Matthew 6:12

Forgive us our sins.

Some versions of the Bible say it this way: "*Forgive us our debts.*" A *debt* is something we owe, like a bill. If you can't pay your electric bill, then you are *in debt* to the Electric Company. They may give you a period of *grace* to try to get the money to them, but if you don't pay your bill, they will turn your power off.

When we do something wrong, there is a price to pay, too. God has said sin *must* be punished. The punishment for sin is death—to be separated from God forever.

Hebrews 9:22b

*In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. **For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.***

This is why in the Old Testament times, they sacrificed animals. They knew that to have their sins paid for, blood had to be shed—a life had to be given. There is a price to pay when we sin; sin has to be punished.

Ten Commandments

God gave us ten good rules that He wants us to follow. [Teacher, show the children a poster of the Ten Commandments as paraphrased below:]

1. Do not have any gods but Me.
2. Do not worship idols.
3. Keep God's name holy.
4. Set aside a special day for God.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Do not murder.
7. Be true to your husband or wife.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not lie.
10. Do not want what others have.

God only gave us ten rules to keep. How are you doing?

- Can you think of a time when you didn't keep one of these rules?
- Have you ever cheated at a game? (That's lying.)
- Have you ever been angry with someone? (That's like murder.)

Matthew 5:21-22

You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' (22) But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court, And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

- Do you think it's a big deal if we disobey one of God's rules? Why or why not?

James 2:10

For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's law.

When we break one of God's rules, it's called sin. Even if it seems like a tiny thing to us, it's a big deal to God.

If you are perfect all your life – you never lie or cheat or steal – but then one day you call your brother an idiot, you've broken God's law and deserve to be punished by death.

- What do you think happens to your relationship with God when we break even one rule? What does sin do to our friendship with God?

Habakkuk 1:13a

But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil.

God is perfect. He can't even look at evil. When we sin, it messes up our friendship with God. He wants us to turn from our naughty behavior and do things that please Him.

But the good news is, the Lord Jesus took the punishment you and I deserved for our sins. When they nailed Him to the cross, what came from His hands and feet? (blood) The Bible says that while He hung there on the cross, God laid on the Lord Jesus the sin of all of us—all our lies, our meanness, our bad temper. All our sin was put on the sinless Jesus. Jesus shed His blood for us. It should have been you; it should have been me that was nailed to that cross. But He loves us so much that He took the punishment that we deserve!

What do you do when you disobey God? God wants to forgive us of our sins. All we have to do is pray and ask God for forgiveness. God will forgive us.

When we are naughty and come to God and confess our sins to Him and ask Him to forgive us, God says, your sin debt has already been paid for in full by Jesus. And then, He takes away the bad things we do so we can be friends with him again.

Mint Condition

[Teacher, give each child a few tarnished pennies.] When these pennies were first made, they were perfect. There was nothing wrong with them. They were bright, shiny copper pennies. But over the years, they started to tarnish. They don't look nice anymore. They're dull and dirty.

- How is this like what sin does to us?
- Why should we care that sin tarnishes us?

I want you to clean off the pennies. Make them nice and shiny again. Take a baby wipe, and rub your pennies until they look brand-new. [Give each child a baby wipe. Let the children rub their pennies for several minutes. If they get discouraged, prompt them to keep going. Say things like, "Maybe you just need to try longer." After a few minutes, ask:]

- How is this like our ability to get rid of our sins by ourselves?

[Give each child a plastic cup and spoon. Pour one-half inch of vinegar into each cup. Have children fill their plastic spoons with baking soda and stir it into the vinegar. Have them drop their pennies into the mixture. While the mixture is working, read...]

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

This verse means that when we admit our sins to God, He will forgive us and make us clean again. All we have to do is ask. But we have to own up to our sins and plead guilty to God.

Then, He wants us to repent of our sins; that is, turn away from doing that naughty thing.

[Have the children remove their pennies from the solution.]

- How is the vinegar and baking soda like God's power to forgive?
- Why can we trust God to forgive us?
- Do you have the power to forgive yourself for your sins? (No! Only God has that kind of power!)

We don't have the power to get rid of the wrong things we do—just like we couldn't clean our own pennies. Only God has the right "formula" to make us clean. We mixed vinegar and baking soda to clean our pennies. God uses Jesus' blood to make us clean. Because Jesus shed His blood for us on the cross, every time we ask Him to, God will forgive us and make us clean again.

We don't need to be afraid of talking to God when we sin. God sees everything we do all the time. So, He already knows what you've done. God loves us and *wants* to forgive us. He's just waiting for us to come to him and say, "*Father, forgive me of my sins.*"

Crossed Out

Preparation: Before class cut out the shape of a cross from poster board. Fasten the cross to the wall with tape.]

The Bible says that we all do things that we know are wrong. We've already thought about ways we've broken God's rules, and we've learned that we can ask God to forgive us for doing these things. The reason God can forgive us is because Jesus paid the price, the debt, for our sins when He died on the cross.

[Have each child write on sticky notes things they know they have done that displease God. Give the group a few minutes. As they write out a sin, have them place the sticky note on the cross. Have the

children bow their heads and wait quietly as the other children finish up. Ask them to pray silently while they wait there.

When all the sticky notes have been placed upon the cross, turn it over so only the clean, white side is showing and all the "sins" are hiding on the other side.]

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

Let's close by thanking God for forgiving us...

Closing Prayer

Father, all of us have sinned and we want to be forgiven. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross and taking the punishment that we deserve for our sins. Thank You for being faithful and just to forgive us when we confess our sins to You. We love You very much. 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. What is a debt? (Something we owe)
2. How is sin like a debt to God? (He says that all sin must be punished.)

3. What is God's punishment for sin? (Death. There is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood.)
4. Have you ever done anything that deserves the death penalty? (All people have sinned and deserve to be punished by death!)
5. What came from Jesus' hands and feet when they nailed Him to the cross? (Blood)
6. What should you do when you break one of God's Ten Commandments? (Pray, confess, ask for forgiveness.)
7. What does *confess* mean? (To admit we're wrong. To own up to our sins and plead guilty to God.)
8. Do you have the power to forgive yourself of your sins? (No! Only God has the power to forgive sin.)
9. How can we become clean again when we've sinned? (When we pray, God promises to forgive us.)
10. What's the best thing about knowing that God forgives us when we pray? (We can ask God for forgiveness when we do something wrong. God promises to take away our sins and make us clean again.)
11. Why can we trust God to forgive us? (He said in 1 John 1:9 that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. He made a promise and He always keeps His promises!)
12. Why does what Jesus did on the cross take the punishment we deserve for sinning? (Because Jesus was God and is perfect. When He shed His blood it was the perfect sacrifice.)

