



LESSON 63

3rd and 4th Grade

Principle: We are to forgive as we have been forgiven.

Bible Character(s): Jesus and Peter

Scripture Reference: Matthew 18:21-35

ATTENTION VOLUNTEER: Today's lesson covers the topic of forgiveness. Children from foster or adoptive homes or children who have experienced abuse or neglect of any kind could be very sensitive to this lesson. A child should not be forced or coerced into sharing a story unwillingly. There does not need to be the awkward silence waiting for a child to share if they are not ready. Should a child choose to share an experience of deep hurt, their response should be welcomed and heard, as well as communicated to the coach or children's director to further address the situation. Please don't hesitate to let your coach or children's director know if you need assistance at any time during this lesson.



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, read through Matthew 18:21-35.

Peter approaches Jesus and inquires how many times we should forgive those who offend us. The Gospel teaches us that God's love and forgiveness is boundless, so ours should be too. He desires for us to have a spirit of humility, to forgive others because He has already forgiven us. We struggle with offering forgiveness to others because we desire justice, but we forget that justice was served for our undeserving souls by a righteous God. Jesus lived a sinless, holy life, yet willingly sacrificed it so that we could be made right with God. The wages of sin is death, and we are unable to pay it. We have a merciful, gracious God who has given us the gift of life through love and forgiveness. We can depend on His free, abounding mercy, to change our heart and give us a spirit of forgiveness for others.

Have you taken time lately to ponder how great His forgiveness is to you? His mercy is unlimited and our goal is to become like Him. If we have been recipients of God's mercy and forgiveness, shouldn't we extend grace to others? Do we practice this on a daily basis? Spend a few minutes in prayer, thanking God for His merciful forgiveness for our sins, and ask Him to help you love and forgive others as He forgave you.

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

Gifts We Have Been Given Word Search

Supplies:

Worksheet – Word search side (1 per camper)

Give each camper a worksheet and have them complete the word search.



BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts – fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we will learn more about forgiving others and the freedom that comes from giving it. We will observe how a heart filled with hurt instead of forgiveness is heavy and no longer free.

Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group? What was the staff member upset about? (Being fed up with having to keep forgiving the other staff member.) What did that staff member learn about forgiveness? (Jesus forgives us so we should always forgive others; there should be no limit as to how many times we forgive.)

Can anyone remember what we talked about last week? Does God care more about the condition of our heart or our outward appearance? (God cares more about the condition of our heart.) We discussed how following the rules and doing what others expect us to do is not a bad thing, but this does not change the sin in our hearts. Who can change our hearts? (Only Jesus can change our hearts.) God wants us to live in a way that brings glory to Him by obeying His commandments. He wants us to worship Him with all of our heart so that everything we do is for Him, not just because it is what we are expected to do.

Today we will read what Jesus says about forgiveness. Forgiveness is choosing to not be mad at someone for something they did that hurt you. Let's begin by reading the Bible in Matthew 18 [NLT].

Matthew 18:21-22

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

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

We do not know why Peter asked Jesus this question. In the Old Testament, Amos 1:3 says, "For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath." It is thought that the Israelites may have taken this to mean they only needed to forgive someone three times, that for three sins God shows favor, but for four He does not. If Peter believed this, then he would have thought he was doing really well to forgive someone seven times. Do you think Peter was surprised to hear Jesus say, "No...seventy times seven"? (Allow responses.)

How Many Times?



The purpose is to see that we should always forgive.

Supplies:

Jar of birdseed (1 per bin)

70 X 7 = ____ poster (1 per session)

Show the jar of birdseed to your campers. Have one of them count out ten pieces. Show them the 70x7 poster and work together to do the math and fill in the blank. Older campers can do the math; leaders can do the math for the younger campers.

Tie It Together



How many pieces of birdseed are in the jar? Do you think there are more or less than 490? (Allow responses.) 490 is a large number. Do you think Jesus meant that you need to count how many times you forgive someone? (Allow responses.) No, He meant that we are to always forgive others. If someone hurts you by saying something mean and they continue to hurt you in this way, you are to continue to forgive them.

Let's continue to see why we should always forgive, even when someone continues to hurt us.

Act it Out!



The purpose is to help the campers understand Jesus' parable.

Supplies:

Crown (1 per bin)

Servant signs (2 per bin)

Read through verses 23-35 aloud and use some of your campers to illustrate each character in the story (the King, the servant who owed the King a debt, the other servant who owed the first servant a

debt).

Matthew 18:23-35

23 “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. 24 In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. 25 He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. 26 “But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ 27 Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

28 “But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

29 “His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. 30 But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

31 “When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. 32 Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. 33 Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ 34 Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

35 “That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

Tie It Together



Why was the king mad at the servant? (The King forgave the servant and did not make him pay a lot of money; the servant did not do the same for someone who owed him money. He accepted forgiveness but did not offer forgiveness.) In these verses, the king is like God. God forgives all of our sins when we believe and trust in Him. We should forgive others because we have been and continue to be forgiven. Our sins against God are much greater than another’s sins against us. If God can forgive us for our sins, shouldn’t we forgive others when they hurt us?

Complete Forgiveness



The purpose is to illustrate forgiveness vs. holding a grudge or counting wrongs.

Supplies:

Cup (1 per bin)

Bag of pebbles/small stones (1 bag per bin)

In this illustration, the pebble represents a wrong done to you and the cup is your heart. Ask the campers to give you an example of a time that someone hurt them. Tell them this is represented by the pebble. Drop the pebble into the cup. Add pebbles to the cup for each example your campers

give you.

Tie It Together



When we choose not to forgive others, the pebbles pile up in the cups, just as resentment piles up in our hearts. This un-forgiveness is sin. How does it make you feel when you choose not to forgive someone? Do you feel like you are carrying around a weight in your heart? (Allow responses.) That is what sin does to us, and especially the sin of choosing not to forgive. It holds us back from loving others in the way God wants us to love. We do not experience true joy that God offers us when we obey His commandments. God commands us to forgive others. Forgiving others takes a huge weight off of our heart and makes us free. (Pour out the pebbles to emphasize the point.) We are also free to love and experience joy when we live to worship and bring glory to God. But if you choose to not forgive, you choose resentment. This is sin. We must forgive others, because God forgave us!

Heart of Forgiveness?



The purpose is to have the campers examine their heart to see if they have a forgiving heart.

Supplies:

Worksheet – “Heart of Forgiveness” section (1 per camper)

Have campers think about times that they have forgiven others for something that has been done against them. Tell them to write these examples down (or draw a picture of them) in the “Heart of Forgiveness” section of the worksheet. Next, ask them if there is anyone in their life right now that they are holding a grudge against and have not forgiven. Lead the campers in a prayer, asking God to help them have a heart of forgiveness.

Tie It Together



Is it easy to forgive? What makes it difficult? (Allow responses.) It can be hard to forgive someone if they hurt us badly. We are angry, and we think the other person deserves to be punished. Often, we hold onto the sin they committed against us until we experience justice. **If forgiving someone is hard, talk to your parents or your small group leader about it.**

Have you ever hurt someone else and they forgave you? (Allow responses.) How do you think it made that person feel when you hurt them? Do you think you deserved forgiveness? (Allow responses.) All of us have been hurt by others, and we all hurt other people. This is our sin. Every time we sin, we hurt God. But Jesus took the punishment for our sin when He died on the cross. He continues to show us forgiveness if we ask Him. We do not deserve His great love, but God gives it anyway. Because God forgives us, we can forgive others. If we do not forgive, then we sin not only against the person who hurt us, but also against God.

Forgiveness is For Us and For Others



The purpose is to illustrate that we all receive forgiveness and we need to forgive our family, friends and neighbors.

Supplies:

Worksheet – “4...” section (1 per camper)

Have the color the “4 givenness, me, others” at the bottom of the worksheet as a reminder that forgiveness is for all of us.

Tie It Together



For those of us who believe and trust that Jesus died for our sins, God has granted forgiveness if we ask Him. We can forgive because God has forgiven us, and continues to forgive us. Take this home to remind you that God has forgiven you, so you are to forgive others.

Prayer Time

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close small group time. Thank God for forgiving us of our sin through Jesus. Ask Him to help us have a heart that forgives others, because we have already been forgiven.



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