



WEEK ONE – MARCH 2019 – SECOND/THIRD

Bible Story: *Mercy Mercy Me (The Unmerciful Servant) • Matthew 18:21–35*

Bottom Line: *Forgive others because God forgives you.*

Memory Verse: *“Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you.” Colossians 3:13 (NIRV)*

Life App: *Forgiveness—Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn’t have to pay*

Basic Truth: *I should treat others the way I want to be treated.*

Summary: We start the month with one of Jesus’ parables recorded in Matthew 18:21–35. Jesus told this parable because Peter asked a question about forgiveness. Peter might have thought he was doing pretty well to say he’d forgive someone seven times, but Jesus raises the stakes and says we ought to forgive others even more. Jesus shows what this means with a parable about a servant who is shown incredible forgiveness yet doesn’t do the same in return.

PRE-SERVICE ACTIVITIES

1. Early Arriver Idea

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Bingo chips

What You Do:

- Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and asking about their past week
- Invite kids to place their offerings in the *For Everyone* box on the wall near the main entrance
- Set the bingo chips in the center of your Small Group space.
- Instruct kids to count out seven bingo chips.
- As more kids arrive, place all the chips back in the center and challenge the group to another round of counting—this time to 77.

2. Add ‘Em Up

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Encourage kids to select a partner.
- Partners will stand, facing each other, with their hands behind their backs.
- Say, “On your marks, get set, SHOW!”
 - On “SHOW!” each kid must hold up one to five fingers on one hand.
 - The other hand must remain behind their back.
- Pairs will add up the two hands (one from each player). If the total for both is seven, that pair is out and must sit down.
 - For example: If one child holds up three fingers and his partner holds up four fingers for a total of seven, the pair is out.
- Repeat with remaining pairs, calling out, “Ready, Set, SHOW” for each round, as time and interest allow.

What You Say:

“What number were you trying to avoid? (Pause for responses.) Yes! The number seven.

[Transition] Pay close attention to our Bible story today to find out why SEVEN is the wrong answer.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

LARGE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

Bottom Line: *Forgive others because God forgives you. God’s love for us is huge. That love drives God to forgive us when we do something wrong. God can help us to forgive people in our life. When we realize how much God has forgiven us, we can turn around and forgive people who might hurt us. This might be difficult, but God can give us the help we need to love others and show forgiveness.*

SMALL GROUP

1. Forgive or Not Forgive

[Bible Story Review]

Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play

What You Need: Two pieces of paper, marker

What You Do:

- Write “FORGIVE” and “NOT FORGIVE” in large block centered on the papers, one phrase per page.
- Set the signs a few feet apart from each other, somewhere in your Small Group area.
- Gather the kids to stand between the two signs.
- Point them out and let the kids read them aloud.
- Read the review questions and forgiveness scenarios below.
 - Kids will decide if the statement indicates a choice to “forgive” or “not forgive,” and they’ll move to the corresponding sign.
- Make sure the kids return to the center before you ask the next question or scenario.
- Ask the following questions to review today’s Bible story:
 - When the servant came before the king, owing a large sum of money, what did the king do? Did he choose to forgive or not forgive the debt? (Yes, instead of throwing him into jail or insisting that he repay him, the king chose to forgive the debt completely.)
 - When the now-forgiven servant saw the man who owed him a small amount, what did he do? (He did NOT forgive. He refused to cancel the other man’s much smaller debt.)
- Scenarios:
 - Your little brother takes something without permission and loses it. You scream and yell and tell him he can’t ever come in your room again. (Not forgive)

- A friend tells you she'll play with you at recess but ignores you the whole time. Later, she remembers her promise and apologizes for not playing with you. You accept her apology. (Forgive)
- A kid on the playground makes fun of your name. You make fun of his, too. (Not forgive)
- Your teacher misspells your name on the school program and apologizes when he realizes his mistake. You say, "No problem!" (Forgive)

What You Say:

"The reason today's Bible story seems so unfair is that the servant wasn't willing to do something that had been done for him. He refused to forgive the debt he was owed even after his own much larger debt had been forgiven. Why do you think he refused to forgive? What do you think you might have done in this situation if you were that forgiven servant? (Allow a few moments for discussion.)"

*"God is like the king in this story Jesus told. He will always forgive you, no matter what. Forgiveness isn't easy. But we CAN choose to forgive when we remember that we've been forgiven first. Let's choose to **[Bottom Line] forgive others because God forgives you.**"*

2. You Say This!

[Memory Verse Activity]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Bibles, "Memory Verse Sentences" Activity Pages

What You Do:

- Divide your group into three teams.
- Using the navigation tips below, help each group look up and read Colossians 3:13 together.
 - **Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders:** *Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Colossians in the list under "New Testament." When the kids find Colossians, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Colossians. Help the kids find the page. When they find Colossians, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 3. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 13 in chapter 3.*
- Have the kids stand up with their team.

- Hold up the first memory verse sentence, point to a team, and have them read the sentence. Then hold up the next sentence, point to a different team, and have them read the sentence. Repeat with the third sentence and the final team.
- Continue repeating the verse, pointing to different teams for each sentence during each round.
- After repeating the verse, ask kids what it means to “put up with someone else.”

What You Say:

*“Great job, teams! (Hold up the last page with the third sentence of the verse.) This verse reminds us to ‘forgive as the Lord forgave you.’ God isn’t asking you to do something that He isn’t willing to do Himself. And God won’t ever ask you to forgive without His help. He knows we’ll be tempted—just like the servant in our story today—to hold onto our anger or frustration and refuse to forgive. When we start to feel that way, choose to **[Bottom Line] forgive others because God forgives you.** Remember, forgiveness fixes it!”*

3. Pray and Dismiss

[Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Lead kids in prayer using the conversation guide below.

What You Say:

*“Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive someone. Seven times? Maybe you feel like you had to forgive your brother 777 times just in the last week. But we shouldn’t keep score. The point Jesus was trying to make is that it’s not about a certain number; it’s about doing what you can to fix it. And it’s easier to fix it when we remember we can **[Bottom Line] forgive others because God forgives you.** Let’s pray and ask God to help us do that this week.*

“God, You are awesome! Thank You for choosing to forgive us and to fix what’s broken because You love us. This week, when we have the chance to forgive but we want to stay mad, help us remember that we’ve been forgiven. Help us choose to forgive. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to talk to their parents about how the king in today’s Bible story is like our heavenly Father. Remind them as they leave to **[Bottom Line] forgive others because God forgives you this week.** Also, don’t forget to hand out this month’s content overview to each parent!