



WEEK ONE – MARCH 2019 – PRETEEN

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

Key Question: *Why does forgiveness matter?*

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 ACTIVITY

1. Get Your Head in the Game

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

What You Need: “Tally Cards” Activity Pages, a pair of dice, pencils

What You Do:

- Explain that kids are going to play a number game.
- To play:
 - Give kids a “Tally Card” and a pencil.
 - Explain that the object is to have the most points after three rounds.
 - For round one, ask kids to stand up.
 - Roll two dice and tell kids to write the sum of the dice in the first column (round one) of their “Tally Cards.” For example: A two and five were rolled—kids write “7” (2+5) in the round one column.
 - After each roll of the dice, kids must each choose to keep going or to stop.
 - If they decide to keep going, they remain standing. If they decide to stop, they sit down and “lock” in their points for round one.
 - Roll the dice again.
 - For the kids who are standing when a “one” is rolled, they lose all their points and get a zero for that round.
 - If a one isn’t rolled, kids who chose to keep going continue to add the numbers showing on the dice.
 - For example:
 - Roll one is a two and five. Kids record 7 (2+5) on their Tally Cards.
 - Roll two is a three and six. Kids add 9 points (3+6) to the 7 points they already recorded on their Tally Cards for a total point score of 9+7=16.
 - Continue rolling dice for round one until everyone is sitting or a “one” is rolled.
 - For rounds two and three, kids may choose to stand up again or to sit out for that round.
 - If kids are sitting when a “one” is rolled their points are safe.
 - Anytime a kid is standing and a “one” is rolled, they lose the points for that particular round.
 - If kids are standing and double “ones” are rolled, they lose ALL their points for all the Rounds.
 - The kid with the most points after three rounds wins.
 - Optional: Allow kids who are sitting to take turns rolling the dice.

What You Say:

“In this game you had to decide when to stop so you didn’t lose your points. [Transition] Let’s head to Large Group to hear about something Jesus says we should not stop doing, even if we have already done it 77 times.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

LARGE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

Key Question: *Why does forgiveness matter? As kids grow up, they’re used to adults telling them to say they’re sorry or that they’re forgiven. However, as preteens it’s important to learn why choosing to forgive others is important. We hope that kids start to understand that the way they forgive others can reflect how much God forgives us.*

SMALL GROUP

1. Bible Story Extension

[Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: “Picture Cards” Activity Page, spoons

What You Do:

- Lay out the “Picture Cards” and instruct each kid to pick a set of cards; a set of cards contains four cards with an identical picture on each of four cards.
- Gather the “Picture Cards” selected and shuffle them.
- Explain kids will play a game similar to Spoons. To play:
 - Gather kids in a circle and place the spoons in the center of the circle; there should be one fewer spoon than number of kids playing.
 - Deal four cards to each kid.
 - Kids simultaneously pass one card from their hands to the kid on their left, and they pick up a card passed to them from the kid on the right. This continues until someone has collected four of a kind. Kids should never have more than four cards in their hands.
 - When a player has four of a kind, he or she say nothing but quietly grabs a spoon. Once a player takes a spoon, all the other players must do the same, even if they don’t have four of a kind.
 - The player without a spoon selects one of the cards and explains how the picture relates to the story.

- To review as many pictures as possible, keep the pace of the game fast. Depending on the time, play two to four rounds and then discuss the remaining pictures as a group.
- If you have a large group (>10 kids) divide the group in half and play two games simultaneously.
- Post-game discussion could include:
- Collect one of each picture and ask the group to put the cards in order of the story. Be sure to use an example of all the cards even if the cards weren't used in the game.
 - Ask: Why do you think Jesus told Peter we should forgive 77 times? (This is an opportunity to talk about the fact we don't keep track of how many times we forgive someone but that Jesus wants us to keep forgiving even if it is a lot.)
 - Compare the debt the king forgave to the debt the servant refused to forgive. What was the difference? Why do you think Jesus told the story this way? (If necessary, prompt kids to think about how much God forgives us and guide the conversation to discuss the fact the king forgave a great debt just like God forgives us greatly.)

2. Discussion Questions

[Application Activity]

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

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask:
 - Do you think forgiveness is a strength or a weakness? Why?
 - Why does forgiveness matter?
 - How do you know if you have forgiven someone? What does it look like to forgive someone? (This is an opportunity to review what forgiveness is and what it is not from the Take a Snapshot Activity)
 - How can it help you show forgiveness if you know and think about how everyone is made in the image of God?
 - Is forgiveness about fairness? What if you don't think someone deserves to be forgiven? (Encourage kids to explain their answers.)

3. Make It Personal with Prayer

[Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Gather kids in a circle.
- Ask kids to take a deep breath and let it go.
- Explain sometimes it is hard to forgive others, and it can take time before you are able to let go of what you are holding against someone. When it is hard to forgive, you can ask Jesus for help.
- Encourage kids to close their eyes.
- Tell them to focus on their breathing, taking a deep breath in and letting it go.
- After a couple rounds of breath, encourage them as they breathe in to silently say in their head, “Jesus.”
- After a couple rounds of breath, encourage them as they exhale to silently say in their head, “Help me to forgive.”
- After a couple rounds of breath, close in prayer.

What You Say:

“Jesus, You are there for us! When we think we just can’t forgive or we just aren’t ready to forgive, You have our backs. Help us to remember to come to You when we struggle. Help us to remember the power of Your name, Jesus, and to ask You for guidance and for help to forgive others. Amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, don’t forget to hand out this month’s content overview to each parent!