
PRE–SERVICE ACTIVITY

1. Get Your Head in the Game

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

What You Need: “First Step” Activity Page, pencils

What You Do:

- Pair kids up.
- Give each pair a “First Step” Activity Page.
- Tell teams to make a list of what is wrong in the picture.
- Encourage teams to decide what would be the first thing they would fix.
- Allow teams time to share what they would fix first and why.

What You Say:

*“There were a lot of things that needed to be fixed. Sometimes, when we are faced with a lot of options, it is difficult to decide what our first step should be. **[Transition]** However, there is always a first step we should be ready to take. Let’s head to Large Group to hear what it is.”*

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

LARGE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

Key Question: *What is keeping you from forgiving? Sometimes it’s hard to forgive. Maybe our feelings are really hurt. Maybe we’re physically hurt. When others hurt us, it’s sometimes hard to let go of how they made us feel. We hope to guide preteens to understand how even if they might never have a perfect relationship with others, they can still work to make things right.*

SMALL GROUP

1. Take a Snapshot

[Application Activity]

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

What You Need: “Scenario Cards” Activity Pages, masking tape

What You Do:

- Divide the group into teams of three
- Give each team a set of “Scenario Cards”
- Create a line with masking tape. On one end of the tape write the word “EASY” and on the other end write “HARD”
- Encourage teams to read each “Scenario Cards” and place the card on the tape to show whether it would be easy or hard to show forgiveness (or perhaps somewhere in between)
- Facilitate discussion on why teams place the cards where they did. Discuss the similarities and differences in the card placements.
- Ask: When is it hard to forgive someone? (To prompt kids, ask: Is it easier to forgive someone you like or someone who annoys you? Or how do your feelings affect how easy it is to forgive someone? Is it easy to forgive someone when you are angry? What about if you have already forgiven them and they keep doing the same thing?)

2. Discussion Questions

[Application Activity]

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

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask:
 - When is it hard to forgive someone? What can keep us from forgiving someone?
 - What are things people do when they hold a grudge?
 - What have you learned that can help you to take the first step to forgive? How can knowing we are all created in God’s image help you to forgive others?

3. Make It Personal with Prayer

[Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Uninflated balloons

What You Do:

- Gather kids in a circle.
- Hold a balloon and ask kids to think of something they are holding on to that they need to forgive or something they have forgiven in the past.
 - After each example kids share, blow the balloon a little bigger.

- Examples could include: Someone said something mean to you. Or someone said they would do something and they didn't follow through. Or maybe you got in trouble for something your sister did.
 - Note: Encourage kids to stick to listing minor grievances and annoyances, being careful not to let them “gossip” about friends they have in common, and making sure to be sensitive if you have any kids who are currently in or have been in difficult and more serious circumstances.
- Explain God doesn't want us to hold on to anything that keeps us from forgiving someone; God wants us to let go of anything we are holding against someone. (Let go of the balloon.)
- Give kids a balloon.
- Tell them to blow up the balloon, and as they do, encourage them to silently tell God about what they maybe holding on to that they need His help to let go of.
- When their balloon is inflated, tell them to hold it closed while you pray:
 - “God, You are amazing! You sent Jesus so we could have Your forgiveness no matter what we've done. God, when we are hurt or angry it is hard for us to forgive. Often the first step we need to take is to tell You how we feel and trust You will help us to put up with each other and let go of what we are holding against someone. Help us to forgive as You forgave us; help us to take the first step. Amen.”
- Tell the group to let go of their balloons.
 - Optional: Suggest kids remember this balloon activity and when they need to let go of something they are holding against someone to take the first step and tell God about it, asking for His help to let it go.