



MARCH THEME

FIX IT UP

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 18:21-35

Dude, Where's Your Forgiveness? |
77 Times / Unmerciful Servant

BOTTOM LINE

Since God forgave you, you should
forgive others

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, NIV

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, and with God's help...
I can!

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **FORGIVENESS** and God's character, as shown
through God's big story

This WEEK: We finish the month with another one of Jesus' parables in **Matthew 18:21-35**. Jesus tells the story of a servant who likes to live it up—even though he's weighed down by MILLIONS of dollars in debt! This servant gets a big break when the king forgives his debt. You'd think he's got it made—until he finds a man who owes him a few bucks. You'd think he'd pay it forward and cancel the debt, but that's not what happened. He gets caught when he didn't forgive others like the king forgave him.

Bottom Line: **Since God forgave you, you should forgive others.** Forgiveness is full circle. God chose to forgive us when we had a huge debt against God because of our sin. Because we are forgiven of so much, when others hurt us, we should respond with forgiveness in return. We pray that kids will start to realize how, in response to the love they're given by God, they can forgive people in their life.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Ask God to help kids realize the great forgiveness God has made available to them. Pray that they would fully embrace the love God has offered them and be excited to share it with others.

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Engage kids in conversation. Use the questions below to facilitate discussion.
 - What is something you do a lot? Maybe it is something you do every day. Is there something you do every hour?
 - What is something you wish you could do every day? Maybe have ice cream for breakfast, or go to a movie, or ride a roller coaster?
 - What are things you count or keep track of? Is there something you collect? Do you have to count up the minutes you read each week for school? Do you keep track of your allowance and how much money you have? How about the number of days until spring break or summer break?

•• COUNT IT UP!

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:



- Ask for two volunteers and have them stand back to back.
- When you say “FORGIVE,” the kids should face each other and show one to five fingers on one hand. The object is to be the first kid to add the sum of fingers showing between the two partners and say “forgive” for each finger showing.
- Whoever does it fastest moves to the next round.
- Have another kid challenge the winner.
- Continue until everyone has had a chance to play.

What You Say: “In this game, what is the most times anyone had to say ‘forgive’? What is the maximum number possible in this game? (10 times; 5 fingers showing from each kid) Forgiving someone 10 times would be a lot of forgiveness! I wonder what the limit is for how many times we are to forgive someone. **[Transition] Today in Large Group Worship/Wow Family Worship we’ll see/we saw how many times Jesus says we should forgive.**

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Large Group Worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

•• **WHAT’S THE STORY?** *(application activity / review the Bible story)*

What You Need: “Story Cards”

What You Do:

- Shuffle two sets of “Story Cards” and place them on your small group table, face down in a 4x4 grid.
- Kids will take turns turning over two cards. When a kid turns over two matching cards, he must say what the picture has to do with the story in order to keep the match.
- The kid with the most matches wins.

What You Say: “Forgiveness starts with fact that God forgives us! We continue to mess up and God is still willing to forgive us. God’s forgiveness is amazing! Forgiving someone who hurt you, or was mean to you, or lied to you is hard. But when you have been hurt or treated unfairly, you have a chance to pass on God’s forgiveness to others. **[Bottom Line] Since God forgave you, you should forgive others.** Forgiving someone doesn’t mean you have to be their friend, but it does help free you from the hurt or the anger you may feel toward them. Forgiving someone and not making them pay is a way of showing others you trust God.”

•• **FORGIVENESS FRISBEE TOSS** *(application activity)*

What You Need: Prepared paper plates, copy paper, markers, masking tape

What You Do:

- On the pieces of copy paper, write “Forgiveness Is” on one and “Forgiveness Is Not” on the other.
- Make a line down the middle of your small group table with masking tape and put one piece of paper on each side.
- Using masking tape, make a line about 10-15 feet from the table.
- Your group needs to decide if the statement on each Frisbee is an example of what “forgiveness is” or an example of what “forgiveness is not.”
- Once they decide, they work together to fly the Frisbee onto the correct side of the table. Kids must stand on the tape to fly their Frisbee. If they miss, they can retrieve the Frisbee and try again.
- Once all the Frisbees are on the table, discuss which are on each half and why.



Follow-up discussion ideas are listed below for the statements on the plates...

FORGIVENESS IS...

- **Repetitive.** This goes with the Bible story today. Ask kids how Jesus replied to Peter's question: "Lord, how many times do I have to forgive someone who sins against me? Up to seven times?" (Matthew 18:21 NIV). Refer to Matthew 18:21-22.
- **A wise choice.** Ask kids why forgiveness is a wise choice. What could you miss out on if you choose not to forgive, if you choose to make someone who wronged you pay? This could lead into the plate with the statement, "freedom from anger and bitterness".
- **Freedom from anger and bitterness.** Forgiveness allows you to move on and move forward with the relationship. When you forgive, you let go of the anger and bitterness. You might still be hurt or might still get angry when you remember what the other person did, but you don't dwell on it because you've forgiven them.
- **A gift from God.** This ties into our memory verse: "Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13 NIV).
- **Deciding someone doesn't have to pay.** This is an opportunity to talk about revenge and how it is difficult to show others God's love if you are spending your time thinking how to "make someone pay." Showing forgiveness is a way to show others you trust God no matter what.

FORGIVENESS IS NOT...

- **Forgetting it happened.** This could be an opportunity to discuss forgiveness doesn't mean you ignore it happened. For example, if someone treats you mean or is unkind, even though you forgive them, there is still a consequence for their action. Maybe you decide to not spend time with them or perhaps you need to tell a teacher or parent how they are treating you.
- **Fair.** Forgiveness isn't about being fair, it is about remembering since God forgave you, you should forgive others.
- **Based on emotion.** Forgiveness is hard. And sometimes we have to forgive someone even when we don't feel like it.
- **Trusting someone no matter what.** This is an opportunity to talk about how people will make mistakes; no one is perfect. But God is perfect and you can trust God no matter what. People may say one thing and do another but God always does what God says. People in your life may come and go but God is always there for you.
- **Being someone's friend.** You will encounter people in your life who don't make wise choices. If someone continues to make unwise choices, you can forgive them but choose not to spend time with them because of the choices they make. Just because you have decided someone who wronged you doesn't have to pay, that doesn't mean you have to be their friend. You do need to treat them the way you want to be treated but you don't need to go out of your way to spend time with them.

What You Say: "Forgiveness is an incredible gift God gave you and [Bottom Line] since God forgave you, you should forgive others. But it is important to remember what forgiveness is and what it is not. Forgiveness is deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay. Forgiveness is a choice you make again and again—a decision you make to trust God. Forgiveness can be hard, especially when you are hurt or angry. But forgiveness isn't about being fair or forgetting how people treat you. Forgiveness is about God and trying to live the life God wants for you—a life free from anger and bitterness, and trusting God no matter what."

•• **REPEAT** (memory verse)

What You Need: Timer or mobile device (optional)

What You Do:

- Have kids sit in a circle.
- Tell one kid to say the first word of the memory verse. The next kid repeats the first word and adds the next one. The next kid repeats the first two words and adds the next one, and so on.
- Continue around the circle with each kid adding one word until the entire verse is said.
- You can time it to see how fast kids can accomplish the task.

What You Say: "It got tiring repeating the verse over and over, and sometimes forgiving someone over and over can be tiring. But remember what Jesus told Peter in the beginning of our story today. How many times should you forgive? Up to seven times? Jesus said: "I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times" (Matthew 18:22 NIV). What did Jesus mean by 77 times? (We should forgive as many times as it takes.) God will not stop forgiving you. God will forgive you as many times as it takes. God forgives you over and over and

