



MARCH THEME

FIX IT UP

BIBLE STORY

Luke 15:11-24 (25-32)

Dude, Where's My Son? | The Prodigal Son

Spark Story Bible | pg. 378-383

BOTTOM LINE

Everyone needs to be forgiven, even me

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 can trust God no matter what

FOR LEADERS ONLY

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

This WEEK: We continue our look at forgiveness with one of Jesus' most well known parables. In **Luke 15:11-24 [plus 25-32 to finish out the story]**, Jesus talks about a kid who thinks he's got it all together. He demands half of his dad's money and takes off to spend it on himself. It's only when the money is gone he realizes he's made a HUGE mistake and needs forgiveness. He's got just one hope: that his dad will let him come home and be a servant.

Bottom Line: Everyone needs to be forgiven, even me. Realizing one's need for forgiveness is a huge step for anyone. But through Jesus' story, we hope kids realize that everyone needs forgiveness, even them.

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 each of you see where you could ask for forgiveness and that you would have the courage to do so.

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

What You Need: Copy paper, crayons

What You Do:

- Hand out copy paper and crayons. Ask kids to draw a picture of their home. As they do this, ask the following questions:
 - What does your house look like?
 - Who lives at your house?
 - Do you have any pets?
 - What's your favorite part about your home?
 - What's your least favorite part?
 - What do you like to do at home?
 - Would you rather stay at home or go somewhere else?

•• LOST COIN

What You Need: Coin

What You Do:

- Have one member of your small group close his eyes.
- Quietly hand the coin to another small group member.



- Have all small group members (*except the one with his eyes closed*) put their hands behind their back.
- Ask the first group member to open his eyes and guess which kid has the coin hidden behind his back.
- The person guessed should open his hands and show if he has the coin.
- If he does, celebrate by clapping! If not, the guesser should guess again.
- Play until the coin is found.
- Play again with a different group member closing his eyes.

What You Say: “Sometimes it’s frustrating trying to find things that are lost, like when you’re late for school and can’t find your coat. But sometimes it’s fun, like when we play these games. **[Transition] Today in Large Group Worship/WOW Family Worship, we are going to hear/we heard about someone who was really happy to find what he lost.**”

[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.

●● **RUNNING HOME** (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: 4 pieces of copy paper

What You Do:

- Set up the pieces of paper in a diamond shape, like baseball bases.
- Ask if anyone has ever played baseball or softball. Tell kids that today they get to play a game that is similar, but this time they’re on God’s forgiveness team, so there are some special rules: there are no “outs!”
- Kids will take turns pretending to hit a ball and running the bases.
- While one kid is running, the other kids can try to tag the runner, but even if he gets tagged, he still gets to run to home plate.
- Play until everyone in the group has had a turn to “bat.”

What You Say: “The lost son in our story today made some bad choices. When you make the wrong choice, it’s like getting ‘out’ in baseball, just like your friends were trying to get you out by tagging you. But on God’s team, we can always be safe from getting out. No matter what happens, you can always run back home because God always forgives all of us! **[Make It Personal] (Tell your group an age-appropriate story about a time when you made the wrong choice, but God forgave you.)** **[Bottom Line] Everyone needs to be forgiven, even me.**”

●● **FORGIVENESS TOOLS** (*application activity*)

What You Need: “Forgiveness Tools” activity pages, tape, crayons, scissors

What You Do:

- Give each kid an activity page.
- As you read the scenarios below, instruct kids to draw a line on the hammer’s handle, to connect the appropriate pictures.
- Provide help and hints as needed, going slowly to make sure you don’t lose any kids.
- After you’ve gone through the scenarios and kids have connected the pictures, allow them to color their hammers.
- Then help kids cut out the hammer’s head and handle and tape them together.



Forgiveness scenarios:

- I dropped my mom's phone by accident when I borrowed it to play a game and it broke.
- I borrowed my friend's bike and forgot to give it back and it was left out in the rain.
- I ate my little brother's candy when he wasn't looking.
- I played for hours in my room even though my dad had asked me to go to sleep.
- I ate a cookie before dinner even though my mom told me not to.

What You Say: "We don't just need tools to forgive others. We need to be forgiven too! Forgiveness doesn't just include one or the other. Could you imagine how unhelpful this hammer would be without the handle? Forgiveness is the same way. We need the right tools to forgive others and the right tools for others to forgive us because **[Bottom Line] everyone needs to be forgiven, even me.**"

•• **BIBLE PICK UP** (*memory verse activity*)

What You Need: 7 Popsicle sticks, marker

What You Do:

- Read the last part of this month's verse (*Colossians 3:13*)... "*Forgive just as the Lord forgave you*"
- Write one word of the Bible verse on each popsicle stick.
- Gently toss the sticks into the air so they get all mixed up.
- Invite kids to gather them together and then work as a group to put the sticks in verse order.

What You Say: "There is nothing that builds us up more than God's Word. When you read and memorize God's words, it builds your heart up. It takes a strong heart to ask for forgiveness and we know that **[Bottom Line] everyone needs to be forgiven, even me.**"

PRAY AND SEND

What You Need: Copy paper, crayons

What You Do:

- Hand each kid a piece of copy paper and put the crayons out where everyone can reach them.
- As a group, brainstorm some things that kids their age might need forgiveness for (*disobeying a parent or teacher, not being nice to a friend, being annoying to a sibling on purpose, yelling and screaming when they don't get their way*).
- Ask kids to draw a picture of what they might need forgiveness for.
- After they're finished drawing, gather the group together and pray with them. (*This is a great time to give a volunteer or two the opportunity to pray out loud. The pictures the kids drew are great "prayer starters" and can help kids think concretely about what to pray for.*)

What You Say: "We know that we need God's help to forgive others. But our story today got me thinking that we could probably use some forgiveness, too. Let's pray not only for God to forgive us, but that God would help us know what we need to ask forgiveness for because **[Bottom Line] everyone needs to be forgiven, even me.**"

[Apply] Give each parent a Faith Five Family Tools as they come to pick up their child and remind them to use it as a family devotional tool this week.

Tell parents that your group played an awesome game of baseball today. Ask kids to tell their adults what was different about your version of baseball and why they could still run home even if they got tagged out. Help them remember today's **Bottom Line!**