



SEPTEMBER THEME

**LUNCHROOM**  
Make Space at the Table

**BIBLE STORY**

Colossians 3:13; John 21:1-17  
(John 18:1-27)

Forgive and Let By | Forgive One Another

**BOTTOM LINE**

Friends forgive one another

**MEMORY VERSE**

"A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes."  
Proverbs 17:17, NIV

**LIFE APP**

**Friendship** | Using your words and actions to show others you care

**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 **FRIENDSHIP** and God's character, as shown through God's big story.

**This WEEK: Key Question—When a friend hurts you, how do you respond?** When kids are tweenagers, it doesn't take long for best friends to become worst enemies. We hope to guide them through figuring out strategies for how they can respond when they get hurt by a friend. It's inevitable that friends will get into an argument, but when kids are equipped with how to respond, forgiveness might be an easier option for building bridges in the broken relationship.

In **Colossians 3:13**, Paul writes, "Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you," (NIV). Towards the end of the book of John we see friendship through **Jesus and Peter**. After denying Jesus three times, Peter was feeling guilty and ashamed. But Jesus still had plans for Peter. Jesus forgave Peter and restored the broken friendship. And when we put our faith in Jesus, Jesus offers that same forgiveness to us. In turn, we can offer forgiveness to others.

**Bottom Line: Friends forgive one another.** While it's true that people will do things that hurt us, we need to be willing to let it go and forgive because God forgave us first.

**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. Pray that they would be prepared to hear what God wants them to hear today. Pray for the kids who tend to hold grudges or dwell on the wrong things others have done to them. Ask God to give kids hearts of forgiveness toward their friends and to recognize when they need to ask their friends' forgiveness themselves.

**•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA**

**Made to Connect** | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Ask the following questions, encouraging kids to share:
  - Have you ever needed to say, "I'm sorry," to a friend?
  - Was it hard to say you were sorry?



- How did you feel after you apologized?
- Has anyone ever said, “I’m sorry,” to you? What did you say back to them?

### ●● ONE FISH, TWO FISH

*Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group*

**What You Need:** Plastic spoons, fish crackers

**What You Do:**

- Guide the kids to sit in a close circle.
- Give each child a plastic spoon.
- Give one child a fish and ask her to pass it around the circle. The catch is, the kids may only pass the fish using the spoons.
- If a child drops the fish, guide the other kids to say, “It’s okay. We forgive you.”
- Add challenge by introducing more fish to the game.

**What You Say:** “Great job forgiving each other! [Transition] In Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship we’ll hear/we heard about a time when fish and forgiveness went together.”

*[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children’s Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]*

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## 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.

### ●● JESUS FORGAVE [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

*Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment*

**What You Need:** “Jesus Forgave” activity page; “Rebus Cards” activity cards, scissors

**What You Do:**

- Guide the kids to sit in a circle.
- Cut apart and distribute the “Rebus Cards.”
- Narrate the story using the “Jesus Forgave” script as a guide. As you read, cue the kids with the props to hold them up whenever you say each prop’s key word.
- As time allows, guide the kids to switch props and repeat.

**What You Say:** “How do you think Peter felt after he told people that he didn’t know Jesus? *(Pause for responses.)* How do you think he felt when Jesus forgave him? *(Pause for responses.)* After all Peter had done, Jesus still loved him and forgave him. Does God still love you when YOU make mistakes? *(Pause for responses.)* Yes! God will ALWAYS love you, no matter what! When you do the right thing, God loves you. When you do something wrong, God loves you. When you ask for forgiveness, God loves you. Even when you do something wrong and don’t say you’re sorry, God STILL loves you. No matter what, God will NEVER stop loving you. God’s love and forgiveness will never, never, never, NEVER, NEVER end!

“Since God loves us that much, we can love others and forgive them, too. So remember: [Bottom Line] Friends forgive one another.”



●● **I CAN FORGIVE** [Live for God | Application Activity]

*Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding*

**What You Need:** Copy paper, crayons

**What You Do:**

- Guide the kids to get into pairs. Give each team a piece of paper and some crayons.
- Lead the kids to work together to think of times when friends might hurt each others' feelings.
- Ask prompting questions as needed to spur their thinking juices.  
—Some possible situations: A friend not letting you choose what game to play, saying something mean to you, or ignoring you.
- Lead the kids to work together to write and/or draw pictures of those times.
- Encourage the teams to share what they drew or wrote about.
- Guide the kids crumple up their papers and throw them in the air, letting them fall to the ground. Talk about how when we forgive, we let go of our anger toward the other person for what they said and/or did.

**What You Say:** "Sometimes your friends are going to say or do things that hurt your feelings or make you mad. And you know what? Sometimes you're going to say or do things that hurt your friends' feelings or make them sad or mad, too. So when a friend treats you badly, you have a choice: You can treat them badly right back, or you can forgive them. Which choice do you think God wants you to make? (*Pause for responses.*) Yes, God wants us to forgive our friends because **[Bottom Line] friends forgive one another.** God helps us to forgive others because GOD forgave US.

**[Make It Personal]** (*Share about a time when you chose to forgive a friend or when a friend chose to forgive you. Share how you felt as well as how you and your friend became better friends as a result.*)

"So how can you forgive your friends? Can you say, 'I forgive you' or 'It's okay'? Can you be kind to them even when they aren't kind to you? Can you still be their friend even when they do something that makes you feel sad? So the thing to remember this week is: **[Bottom Line] Friends forgive one another.**"

●● **ALL TIMES** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

*Made to Move | An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

**What You Need:** "Memory Motions" activity page

**What You Do:**

- Read the monthly memory verse (*found on the left column of page 1 of this leader guide*) aloud, inviting the kids to say it with you.
- Review the motions for "friend," "loves," and "help." Then teach kids the motions for "all" and "times."
- Next, lead the kids in a "rebus verse."  
—To begin, guide the kids to say the verse and do the motions with you.  
—Then repeat the verse, omitting one word and sign and leading the kids to "fill in the blank" with the word and its motion.  
—Omit an additional word and sign on each repetition until the kids say and do all five "rebus" words.

**What You Say:** "Proverbs 17:17 says: *A friend loves at all times.* Did Jesus love Peter at all times? Yes, even though Peter hurt Jesus by saying that he didn't know him, Jesus still loved Peter and forgave him. Does Jesus love you at all times? Yes! Jesus will NEVER stop loving you, even when you make mistakes. And because Jesus loves you at all times, he wants you to love your friends at all times, too. One way you can love your friends is by forgiving them when they make mistakes, just like Jesus forgives you when you make mistakes. So remember: **[Bottom Line] Friends forgive one another.**"

