

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 kids about what happens when you're playing a game and your partner or teammate messes up.
—How do you feel? How do you think they feel?
—What do you do: yell at them, stop the game entirely, start over again, find someone better to play with, etc.?

- Ask kids if they have ever been let down by a friend before. What was that like?

•• MINIATURE BASEBALL

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

What You Need: Tongue depressors, paper wads, sticky notes, 1 cotton ball per kid

What You Do:

- Play a game of “Miniature Baseball.” The rules are almost exactly like baseball, but everything is tiny.
- The ball is a paper wad. The bat is a tongue depressor. The bases are sticky notes. Each player gets a cotton ball to represent them.
- There are no “balls;” any miss is a strike.
- To run the bases, players have to move their cotton ball along the base path to the base.
- To get a runner out, the fielders have to blow the “ball” to the base before the batter’s cotton ball gets there, or blow it to hit the batter’s cotton ball.
- When the game is over, discuss how you could get “out” in the game—three strikes or get tagged out.

What You Say: “In baseball, you get three strikes and you are out. But in the game of friendship, sometimes you just get one strike and you’re out! **[Transition]** But in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we are going to see/we saw that’s not quite how it should work out.”

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children’s Ministry 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.

•• TAKE A SNAPSHOT [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: 4 pieces of copy paper, tape, markers

What You Do:

- Recruit a few volunteers help to write:
 - “Home” on one sheet of paper and hang with the masking tape in one corner of the space.
 - “School” on another sheet and hang it in a different corner.
 - “Activities” on the third sheet and hang in another place.
 - “Car” on the last sheet of chart paper and hang in last available corner or space.
- Ask everyone to take a marker and spread out around the room so that there are just a few people at each paper category.
- Tell them that today’s biblical principle on Forgiveness comes from Colossians 3:13. The first part says, “Put up with one another . . .”
- Challenge them to add some things to the sheet they’re near that they have to “put up with” from people in the location or during the time that’s written.
 - For example, at school: what do they have to put up with? What do they have to forgive other people for doing there? Maybe blurting out the answer instead of raising their hand, taking your spot at lunch, cutting in line, etc.
- After a minute or two ask everyone to move to the next corner and paper, taking their marker with them.
- Remind them to read what the people before them wrote—they can add new things to the page or they can add a star, exclamation points, question marks, or a comment if they want to add on to something already there.



- Once they've been to all four, talk about what they noticed on the pages. Are there themes or patterns? Did anything stand out?
- Help kids put a positive spin on all the stuff they "put up with" in everyday life—that these things give us more chances to forgive our friends and work on not staying mad or constantly annoyed.

•• ODDS OF FORGIVENESS [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Six-sided die

What You Do:

- Tell the group they're going to create a story together, one sentence at a time.
- The story will be about an imaginary friend named Peter. (Or they can make up whatever name they want, as long as it's not the actual name of someone in your group!)
- During their turn, each kid will state something that Peter did wrong.
—For example: "Peter borrowed my pencil and broke it."
- Then the story passes to the next person who rolls the die.
—If the person rolls anything except a six, he or she has to repeat all of the previous things that Peter did and then add one.
—For example: "Peter borrowed my pencil and broke it. Then Peter stepped on my toe."
- Then the die and the story pass to the next person.
- If someone rolls a six at any point, he repeats all the previous things that Peter did, but then says, "I forgive Peter and don't have to think about those things anymore."
—For example: "Peter borrowed my pencil and broke it. Then Peter stepped on my toe. But I forgave Peter, so I don't have to think about all those things he did anymore."
- The next person will start over with a new story about "Peter."

What You Say: "When we don't forgive our friends it can be exhausting just remembering all the things that they did to make us angry. That's one reason it's better to forgive our friends. When someone does something to hurt us, we can't actually erase what they did from our mind, but if we truly forgive them we free ourselves from having to always think about it and be angry about it. Jesus wants us to extend his forgiveness to others as much for our sake as for theirs. Remember, **[Bottom Line] friends forgive one another.**"

•• DISCUSSION QUESTIONS [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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 some of the following questions and facilitate a discussion with your group...

- What are some things that are easy to forgive?
- What are some things that are harder to forgive?
- What do we worry will happen if we forgive people who have hurt us? Or what keeps us from forgiving our friends?
- How many times do you think you should forgive a friend? Is there a max?
- Does forgiveness mean everything goes back to the way it was before?
- What happens if we don't forgive? What do our friendships look and feel like if someone needs to forgive someone else but doesn't want to do it?

•• VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Bible, copy paper (one sheet per person), pens



GRADE 4-5

SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE