



**MARCH THEME**

**DIY**

**Forgiveness Is Up To You**

**BIBLE STORY**

**Matthew 5:1-2; 23-24**

Step by Step | Jesus Teaches on Forgiveness

**Spark Story Bible, pg. 272-273**

Jesus Teaches About Anger

**BOTTOM LINE**

Take the first step to 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

**FOR LEADERS ONLY**

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

**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 families understand how even if they might never have a perfect relationship with others, they can still work to make things right.

Jesus brought his followers to a mountain to explain to them what it means to live as part of God's kingdom. During that message, he said something important about forgiveness. In **Matthew 5:23-24** Jesus said, “Suppose you are offering your gift at the altar. And you remember that your brother or sister has something against you. Leave your gift in front of the altar. First go and make peace with them. Then come back and offer your gift.” Jesus is teaching us that we should seek to make things right with others before trying to worship God.

**Bottom Line: Take the first step to forgive others.** Forgiveness is important to God. If we are in a difficult situation with someone, we should seek to make it right with them. While there are some relationships that might never be fully restored, we can at least try to offer and show forgiveness to others in our 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 group member by name. Pray that your group would learn something new about God and learn something new about forgiveness. Ask God to give them courage to be brave and take a step toward forgiveness with their friends and family.

**•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA**

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

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Gather kids on one side of your space, and stand several feet away.
- Play “Small Group Leader, May I?” (based on the game “Mother, May I?”).
- Kids will take turns asking questions like, “Small Group Leader, may I take three big hops?” You will answer, “Yes, you may” or “No, you may not.”
- If you choose to answer, “No,” add a qualifier like, “No, you may not. Only kids



wearing red shirts may take three big hops.”

- Play until at least one child reaches you.
- Repeat as time and interest allow.

## •• BALANCING ACT

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

**What You Need:** Pens

### **What You Do:**

- Gather the kids to stand and spread out as much as possible in your small group area.
- Give each child a pen to balance on their head.
- Kids should walk quickly around your small group area while balancing the pens on their heads.
- If a pen falls, they must freeze and cannot move again until a friend picks up their pen for them. *(The friend who helps may hold his own pen in place while helping.)*
- Play as time and interest allow.

**What You Say:** “If you dropped the pen in this game, what happened? *(Pause for responses.)* Yes! You couldn’t move until someone stepped up to help you. **[Transition] Today in Sunday CM Worship/WOW Family Worship, we are going to learn/we learned about how stepping up can make a big difference in our relationships with others.”**

*[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to Fellowship Hall 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.

## •• WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHY? [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

**What You Need:** “Who, What, When, Why?” activity pages, pens

### **What You Do:**

- Pass out a “Who, What, When, Why?” activity page and a pen to each kid.
  - Ask for a volunteer to read the verses on the top aloud to the group.
  - Discuss the verses and ask the questions below.
  - As you answer them together, encourage the kids to write down their own answers in the appropriate spot on their activity page.
- WHO: Who is this verse talking about? *(Us)*  
—WHAT: What are these verses saying? *(Forgive first and be quick to forgive)*  
—WHEN: When should we do this? *(BEFORE anything else)*  
—WHY: Why is this an important truth to apply to our lives? *(Because forgiveness fixes the relationship)*

**What You Say:** “When you read your Bible, it’s important to ask questions like these. Who is this written to? What is it saying? When should I do this? Why is it important? Today’s verses remind us that forgiveness fixes things. Why is it hard sometimes to ask for forgiveness or to forgive someone else? Do you sometimes just want to stay mad? How does choosing to stay mad hurt you



relationship with others? (Allow a few moments for kids to respond.)

“Before we do anything else—even before we worship God—we should make things right. When we’ve hurt someone, the first thing we should do is to ask for forgiveness. When someone hurts us and wants forgiveness, we should give it! Jesus tells us that forgiveness comes first. Refusing to forgive or make things right not only hurts our relationship with others, it also hurts our relationship with God. God loves you and has forgiven you. Let’s **[Bottom Line] take the first step to forgive others.**”

**[Make it Personal]** (Tell your group about a time when you chose to forgive someone instead of holding onto your anger. If you could share an example from around the time you were the age of the kids in your group, that would be ideal. Either way, make sure your example is age-appropriate.)

●● **ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK** [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

**What You Need:** 20 pieces of copy paper, markers, “Forgiveness Scenarios”

**What You Do:**

- Write the numbers 1-20 on the copy paper provided, one number per piece of paper.
- Find an open area to play this game.
- Lay the 20 sheets of paper on the floor in a vertical line in numerical order.
- Instruct kids to stand in a horizontal line next to the number one.
- Select the child standing closest to the numbered papers to go first.
- Randomly give the first player a number (1 through 5) of spaces to move forward.
- Then hand that player a “Forgiveness Scenario.” They should read it aloud and move forward or backward, depending on what the card says.
- Continue with the next person in line, giving them a number (1-5) of spaces to move, handing them a “Forgiveness Scenario” to read, and moving forward or backward accordingly.
- The first player to space #20 is the winner!

**What You Say:** “Why do you think you had to move backward when the scenario was an example of someone refusing to forgive? How is moving forward in this game like a picture of what happens when we take steps to forgive? In each of these scenarios, something happened that either wasn’t fair or was hurtful. It’s natural when we’re hurting to want to hurt the other person back or to stay angry. But that won’t fix it. Jesus tells us that forgiveness comes first. Do just ONE thing to help fix the relationship—to ‘take a step’ toward the other person. That can mean you save them a seat at lunch, even though they said they would be your reading partner today but then they picked someone else. Or it can mean you let your brother borrow a few LEGO® pieces even though he lost them last time. Let’s make sure we **[Bottom Line] take the first step to forgive others** so we can protect our relationships with the people around us.”

●● **MEMORY VERSE STEPPIN’** [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:** “Step by Step” activity pages

**What You Do:**

- Spread the “Step by Step” activity pages out on the floor in verse order.
- Make sure the papers are far enough apart so the kids must take BIG steps to get from one set of words to the next.
- Line up the kids at the beginning of the verse cards.
- Let the kids take turns stepping from one card to the next as they say the words of the verse aloud.
- Make sure one kid gets all the way from start to finish before the next kid starts.

