



**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:**

- Play a game of “Simon Says,” but only give commands that have to do with their feet, such as: stomp, jump, run, skip, walk, tiptoe, etc.
  - If you wish, let kids take turns being Simon.
- Let each round's winner be the next Simon. Or choose the kid who's showing the most self-control and participating in the game by following the rules.



●● **HOPSCOTCH**

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

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Find an open space and invite the kids to play “hopscotch,” by alternating between hopping on one foot and on two feet as though they were navigating a hopscotch course.
- Allow them to get creative by counting, going backward, going fast, jumping with both feet, changing the jumping pattern, etc.
- Keep the pace quick, so that kids aren’t getting bored waiting for their turn.
- Instruct them to move quickly and then hop back in line for their next turn!

**What You Say:** “Way to play hopscotch! It was fun coming up with new ways to move. [Transition] Today in Sunday CM Worship/WOW Family Worship, we are going to learn/we learned what Jesus says about taking steps toward forgiveness!”

*[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.

●● **FIRST STEP** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

**What you Need:** Spark Story Bible

**What You Do:**

- Read “Jesus Teaches about Anger,” p. 272-273, from the Spark Story Bible.
- Find an open area with room to roam.
- Tell kids that they are going to go on a short (10 step) walk.
- Guide the kids to line up side by side with some space between them.
- For the first round, all kids should walk from the starting line at the same time and take 10 steps forward as you count from 1 to 10 (*one step per number*).
- Once kids get the hang of this, tell them you are going to try something different.
- Number your kids from 1 to 10 (*or however many kids you have in your group today*).
- This time, kids should begin stepping when you call their number (*for example, kid number 1 begins when you say one, kid number 2 joins in when you say 2, etc.*)
- If you do this correctly, kids should be staggered in their walking, with number one leading the way!
- If kids master this, you can increase the difficulty by changing how they move (*for example, jump with two feet, jump with one foot, stomp, walk on tip toe, etc.*)
- Continue as long as time and interest allow.

**What You Say:** “You guys did such a good job taking turns as you moved along! What is the name of our friend who took the first step? (*Identify the person who stepped in the #1 spot.*) Jesus taught about how it is important to take the first step toward forgiveness. Forgiveness is so important that Jesus said we should do it FIRST! How do you feel when somebody does something annoying to you



on purpose or takes something of yours without asking? (*Mad; annoyed*) What do you normally want to do when that happens? (*Do it back; yell; stay mad; tell the teacher or a parent and make them get in trouble*) It's okay to be mad or annoyed, but Jesus said it's important not to **STAY** that way. When someone's done something wrong to you, it's important to **[Bottom Line] take the first step to forgive others.**"

●● **FREEZE DANCE** [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:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Explain the concept of a 'freeze dance' to your group. When you say "go," they should dance however they want to. When you say "stop," they should freeze in place.
- Begin the game by saying "go!"
- After about 15 seconds, say "stop!"
- Once the kids are frozen, call out one way (*see list below*) that we can take a step toward forgiving others or showing others that we have forgiven them.
- Challenge kids to quickly perform that action before you say "go" again.
- After a few rounds, feel free to let your kids create some action steps of their own!

**Example Action Steps:**

- High five your neighbor.
- Smile to the person on your right.
- Wave to the person across from you.
- Say hello to the person to your left.
- Give the person behind you a compliment.

**What You Say:** "That was a great game of "Freeze Dance!" Jesus wants us to **[Bottom Line] take the first step to forgive others.** All of the actions we just did when we froze are great ways to take a small step toward fixing a relationship. When somebody does something wrong to us, or when we do something wrong to someone else, it hurts our relationship with that person. What does it feel like when your relationship with your mom or dad is struggling? (*Let a few kids respond.*) What about your relationship with a friend? (*Let another few kids respond.*) Right! It doesn't feel good when a relationship is broken. That's why, even if you weren't the one who did something wrong, it's always a good idea to try to do SOMETHING to help fix the relationship."

**[Make It Personal]** (*Tell about a child-appropriate time when you were brave and took a step toward forgiveness with a friend. Maybe that friend left you out of a group somehow, but you still decided to tell him, "Good luck," when you knew he had a big test coming up. Share how it made you feel and how it affected the relationship.*)

●● **STEP BY STEP** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

*Made to Create | An activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing*

**What You Need:** "Step by Step" activity pages, crayons

**What You Do:**

- Hand out a "Step by Step" activity page (*or two*) to each group member and give them time to decorate it however they would like.
- Once everyone is finished, find an open space and work as a group to put the verse papers on the floor in order.
- Practice saying the verse together a couple times. Or let kids take turns walking along the footsteps, saying each word/phrase as they step on it.

