



MARCH THEME

DIY

Forgiveness Is Up To You

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 18:21-35

Mercy Mercy Me | The Unmerciful
Servant

BOTTOM LINE

Forgive others because God forgives
you

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: Why does forgiveness matter? As we grow up, we're used to adults telling us to say we're sorry or that we're forgiven. However, it's also important to learn why choosing to forgive others is important. We hope that families start to understand that the way they forgive others can reflect how much God forgives us.

We start the month with one of Jesus' parables recorded in **Matthew 18:21-35**. Jesus told this parable because Peter asked a question about forgiveness. Peter might have thought he was doing pretty well to say he'd forgive someone seven times, but Jesus raises the stakes and says we ought to forgive others even more. Jesus shows what this means with a parable about a servant who is shown incredible forgiveness yet doesn't do the same in return.

Bottom Line: Forgive others because God forgives you. God's love for us is huge. That love drives God to forgive us when we do something wrong. When we realize how much God has forgiven us, we can turn around and forgive others. This might be difficult, but God can give us the help we need to love others and show forgiveness.

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. Ask God to help kids understand the very big and abstract concept of forgiveness. Thank God for first forgiving us. Pray that your group would be encouraged to forgive others as a response to being forgiven by God.

•• JUST FOR FUN

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

What You Need: Deck of cards

What You Do:

- Tell kids that you're going to play a card game called "77."
- To play:
 - Shuffle the deck of cards and deal three cards to each kid.
 - Set the remaining cards in a pile in the center of the circle.
 - Kids take turns discarding cards and with each additional card discarded, they add to the running total.
 - For example: Kid #1 discards a five, Kid #2 discards a two and the running total is seven (5+2=7). Kid #3 discards an eight, and the total is now 15 (7+8=15). The goal is to



keep the running total at or below 77.

—Each card is worth its face value with the following exceptions:

...A jack reverses play and does not change the total

...A queen is a pass and does not change the total

...A king takes the total to 77 or keeps it 77 if the total is already 77

...An ace either adds 1 point or subtracts 10 points, decided by the kid who plays it

—After discarding a card, kids announce the new total and pick up a card from the pile in the center of the circle; kids must have three cards in their hands at all times.

—The running total must stay at or below 77; if a kid can't play a card to keep the total at or below 77, he or she gets a point and the round ends.

—Shuffle cards and play again.

—Play several rounds; the kid with the least amount of points at the end wins.

—If there is a tie, shuffle the cards, and have the tied players take turns picking a card. Whoever picks a 7 first is the winner.

What You Say: "In this game we tried to keep our total at or below 77. [Transition] Today in Sunday CM Worship/WOW Family Worship, we are going to find out/we found out what Jesus wants us to keep doing, even if we have already done it 77 times."

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to Fellowship Hall 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 play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: 2 pieces of copy paper, markers, "Statement Cards"

What You Do:

- Write "FORGIVE" in large block letters on one piece of paper and "NOT FORGIVE" on the other.

- Set the papers in the center of your small group table.

- Encourage your group to work together to decide if the statements on the cards belong on the "Forgiveness is..." pile or the "Forgiveness is not..." pile.

- Potential discussion topics are:

—Ask: Are there other statements you would add for what "forgiveness is..." or what "forgiveness is not..."?

—Review the statements in the "Forgiveness is..." pile.

—Ask: Why do you think forgiveness is important? What can be the consequence of holding a grudge and looking for ways to get even? Let's say someone says mean or unkind things to you. What does it look like to forgive them? *(This is an opportunity to talk about forgiveness means letting go of the need to get even. And sometimes forgiveness does result in mended friendships. However, forgiveness doesn't mean you have to continue to hang around people who treat you unkindly or be friends with people who treat you poorly; forgiveness does mean you treat people kindly even if you think they don't deserve kindness.)*

●● BIBLE STORY EXTENSION [Talk about God | Bible Story Review | Application Activity]

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



What You Need: “Picture Cards,” spoons

What You Do:

- Lay out the “Picture Cards” and instruct each kid to pick a set of cards; a set of cards contains four cards with an identical picture on each of four cards.
- Gather the “Picture Cards” selected and shuffle them. Set aside the unchosen cards.
- Explain kids will play a game similar to Spoons. To play:
 - Gather kids in a circle and place the spoons in the center of the circle; there should be one fewer spoon than number of kids playing.
 - Deal four cards to each kid.
 - Kids simultaneously pass one card from their hands to the kid on their left, and they pick up a card passed to them from the kid on the right. This continues until someone has collected four of a kind. Kids should never have more than four cards in their hands.
 - When a player has four of a kind, he or she says nothing but quietly grabs a spoon. Once a player takes a spoon, all the other players must do the same, even if they don’t have four of a kind.
 - The player without a spoon selects one of the cards and explains how the picture relates to the story.
 - To review as many pictures as possible, keep the pace of the game fast. Depending on the time, play two to four rounds and then discuss the remaining pictures as a group.
- Post-game discussion could include:
 - Collect one of each picture and ask the group to put the cards in order of the story. Be sure to use an example of all the cards even if the cards weren’t used in the game.
 - Ask: Why do you think Jesus told Peter we should forgive 77 times? (*This is an opportunity to talk about the fact we don’t keep track of how many times we forgive someone but that Jesus wants us to keep forgiving even if it is a lot.*)
 - Compare the debt the king forgave to the debt the servant refused to forgive. What was the difference? Why do you think Jesus told the story this way? (*If necessary, prompt kids to think about how much God forgives us and guide the conversation to discuss the fact the king forgave a great debt just like God forgives us greatly.*)
 - Do you think forgiveness is a strength or a weakness? Why?
 - How do you know if you have forgiven someone?
 - How can it help you show forgiveness if you know and think about how everyone is made in the image of God?
 - Is forgiveness about fairness? What if you don’t think someone deserves to be forgiven? Do we deserve to be forgiven? (*Encourage kids to explain their answers.*)

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

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

What You Need: “Statement Cards” from the Take a Snapshot activity, “Forgiveness Verse Cards”

What You Do:

- If you have more than 6 kids in your group today, pair kids up for this activity.
- Encourage kids/pairs to select a “Statement Card” describing “Forgiveness is…” from the Take a Snapshot activity. Hand kids/pairs a “Forgiveness Verse Card.”
- Discuss the verses:
 - Are any of the verses familiar to you?
 - Are any of the verses similar to each other? Which ones?
 - Is there a verse you find confusing? (*If so, be sure to discuss it as a group allowing kids to work together to figure out what the verse means.*)
- Challenge: Discuss how the bible verses relate to the statement cards that describe what forgiveness is.
- Work as a group to memorize Colossians 3:13 (*the monthly memory verse*).

