

Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

Lesson 9



Scripture: Matthew 18:21-35










Bible Memory: Luke 6:27, 28, 31

Focus: ♥ Jesus wants us to forgive.

Heart to Heart Teacher Devotion

Ponder for a few moments the grace and mercy of God. Think about the forgiveness He offers and the price Jesus paid for that forgiveness. It's humbling, isn't it? God forgives us for everything every time. Sometimes we forget just how much forgiveness we need! May His grace inspire us to forgive others from our hearts.

Lesson 9 at a Glance

<p>1 FOCUS IN Use one or more of these activities to help students <i>explore what forgiveness means</i>.</p>	<p> Quick Step Posts</p> <p> Option We Have a Match!</p>	<p>Immerse Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activities</i> for lesson 9 	<p>Other Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whiteboard, dry-erase marker, pencils • whiteboard, dry-erase marker, small self-stick notes, pencils
<p>2 EXPLORE HIS WORD Use these activities to help students <i>explain Jesus' parable</i>.</p>	<p> Bible Exploration Matthew 18:21-35</p> <p> Bible Memory Luke 6:27, 28, 31</p> <p> Optional Bible Skill Builder</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resources</i> sheet 2, <i>Resources</i> CD, <i>Activities</i> for lesson 9 • <i>Resources</i> sheet 6 • <i>Resources</i> CD Optional Bible Skills 9 and Optional OT Bookmarks printable files 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles, CD player, pencils • Bibles, reusable adhesive • songs of your choice
<p>3 MAKE IT REAL Use one of these activities to help students <i>express a willingness to forgive</i>.</p>	<p> Quick Step Are You Willing?</p> <p> Option What a Difference!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activities</i> for lesson 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pencils • old pennies, 2 glasses, salt, spoon, vinegar, paper towels, water
<p>4 LIVE IT OUT Use one of these activities to help students <i>choose to forgive</i>.</p>	<p> Quick Step Choose to Forgive</p> <p> Option Backpack Tags</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activities</i> for lesson 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pencils • card stock, scissors, markers, colored pencils, pencils, hole punch, twine

Focus In (10-15 minutes)

- 1** Use one or more of these activities to help students **explore what forgiveness means.**

Focus

♥ Jesus wants us to forgive.

Welcome

- Welcome each student warmly by name.
- Early arrivers will enjoy doing the additional activities on the unit page or *Resources* CD Extra-Time Activities.

Quick Step Posts

Write the word “forgiveness” on the board. Distribute the leaflets and ask kids to turn to the Posts activity. Have a volunteer read Dylan’s post. Tell kids to put a check mark by “Like” if Dylan understands what it means to forgive. Then have a volunteer read Isabella’s post. Have kids put a check mark by “Like” if Isabella understands what it means to forgive.

ASK: **Does Dylan understand forgiveness? Why do you say that?** (no, because he was still mad at his friend even after he said he was sorry)

Does Isabella understand forgiveness? Why do you say that? (yes, because she became friends with Hailey again)

When is it difficult to forgive others?

What does the word *forgiveness* mean? (to give up feeling bad about someone, to give up feeling resentment toward someone)

SAY: ♥ Jesus wants us to forgive others, but it’s not always easy, is it? Let’s keep thinking about that.

Option We Have a Match!

Write the word “forgiveness” on the board.

ASK: **What does the word *forgiveness* mean?** (to give up feeling bad about someone, to give up feeling resentment toward someone)

Give each kid a pencil and two self-stick notes. SAY: **Write on one note a time when someone forgave you. Stick that on your left shoulder. Write on the other note a time when you had to forgive someone. Stick that on your right shoulder.** When kids are done, ask them to stand up. **Try to find someone whose notes closely match yours. If you can’t find someone who matches both of your notes, look for someone who matches one. When you find someone, stand together, put your hands in the air, and shout “We have a match!”** Have pairs share what they wrote on their notes.

ASK: **When is it easy for you to forgive others?**
When is it hard for you to forgive others?

SAY: **Sounds like we all have experience in the area of forgiveness.**
♥ Jesus wants us to forgive others, but it’s not always easy, is it? Let’s keep thinking about that.

Materials

whiteboard, dry-erase marker, *Activities* for lesson 9, pencils



Teaching Tip

Continue to display the poster for the quarter (*Resources* sheet 1).



Be sure to allow plenty of time for students to think who process information more slowly; they may have great ideas to add, if given just a bit more time.

Materials

whiteboard, dry-erase marker, small self-stick notes, pencils



Focus

♥ Jesus wants us to forgive.

Explore His Word (25 minutes)

2 Use these activities to help students explain Jesus' parable.

Bible Background for the Teacher

After hearing a lesson on forgiveness, recorded in Matthew 18:15-20, Peter asked how many times someone is obligated to forgive others. Apparently Peter felt that seven times was more than would be expected. Jesus, however, cleverly turned Peter's literal "seven times" into a figurative "seventy-seven times" (v. 22). Other Bible translations say "seventy times seven." True forgiveness, like perfect love, "keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Corinthians 13:5). Jesus continued His math lesson with a parable. A king went to collect money from a servant owing an absurd amount—10,000 bags of gold. Each of these bags would have weighed several dozen pounds! Realizing his debt was impossible to repay, the servant threw himself on the mercy of the king and, against all odds, was forgiven.

The forgiven servant irrationally went out and demanded money from a fellow servant owing him a mere 100 silver coins—a relatively small amount of money in comparison to the debt of the forgiven servant. Each silver coin was stamped with the Roman emperor Tiberius's head (see Matthew 22:19-21). It was the wage commonly received for a day's work (see 20:2). The *King James Version* translates this coin as "a penny," indicating the coin's small value. Though his fellow servant pleaded for mercy, the forgiven servant refused. Facing the king for a second time, the forgiven servant was now held accountable for his original debt because he didn't forgive the petty debt of his fellow servant. The point of the parable: Forgive others as God has generously forgiven you. Forgiveness is to be offered sincerely from the heart.

Materials

Resources sheet 2, Bibles, Resources CD track 4, CD player, Activities for lesson 9, pencils



Note

The Scripture text is provided on the Resources CD in both the *New International Version* and the *King James Version*, if you want kids to read from the same Bible version.

Media Option

Let kids look up the meanings of unfamiliar words on a smartphone or tablet.

Bible Exploration Matthew 18:21-35

ASK: **What have we been learning about history?** (It's *His* story. It's God's story.)

What New Testament books tell us about Jesus? (the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)

Refer to the Bible time line that begins with "Jesus heals a man." SAY: **Jesus continued teaching people about God and doing miracles. Jesus fed over 5,000 people with a very small lunch. Peter stated that he believed that Jesus is God's Son. Another time, Jesus' appearance changed, and He was transfigured and appeared with Moses and Elijah. This is where we pick up God's story.**

Ask kids to turn in their Bibles to Matthew 18:21. Have a volunteer read the verse aloud. **Let's listen as Jesus answers Peter's question with a parable. Jesus' parable has some high points—meaning that something good happens. When you hear a high point, raise your hands up high.** Have the kids do this. **The parable also has some low points—meaning that something not so good happens. When you hear a low point, put your hands down low.** Have the kids do this. **When you hear about a so-so time, meaning that something not really good or bad happens, put your hands in between.** Have the kids do this. Remind kids that a parable is a story that has deeper meaning, or a story that helps people think about things in a new or different way. Kids may want to follow along in their Bibles as you play track 4 from the CD. Lead the kids in doing the actions while they listen. Pause the CD after verse 31.

ASK: **What do you think will happen next?** Accept responses.

Resume playing the CD, and finish the parable.

ASK: **What did you find surprising about Jesus' parable?** Accept responses.

Have kids turn in their leaflets to The Unforgiving Servant activity. Have volunteers read each sentence aloud and tell whether it's true or false. If a sentence is false, ask a volunteer to make it true. (Answers: 1=T; 2=F; 3=F; 4=T; 5=F; 6=F; 7=T; 8=T)

ASK: **How many times does Jesus want us to forgive someone?** (an unlimited number of times)

From this parable, what did you learn about how important it is to God for us to offer forgiveness to others? (It's very important. If we don't offer forgiveness, God will treat each of us like the king eventually treated the first servant.)

SAY: **Peter thought that offering someone forgiveness seven times was a lot. And that does sound like a lot, doesn't it? But Jesus taught in this parable that there's no limit to the amount of forgiveness He wants us to offer to others. ♥ Jesus wants us to forgive as many times as it takes.**

Bible Memory Luke 6:27, 28, 31

²⁷"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ³¹Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Display the Luke 6:27, 28, 31 poster on a wall or bulletin board. Have kids turn in their Bibles to Luke 6:27, 28, 31, and have volunteers read the verses aloud.

ASK: **Who spoke these words?** Tell kids to look at verse 12 if they're not sure. (Jesus)

How would you sum up these verses?

Have a volunteer stand by the poster and tell the rest of the class what's happening in the photos. Ask kids whether or not the photos show kids living out Jesus' words.

SAY: **These verses are really great ones to memorize because there will always be enemies to love. There will always be people who mistreat us; we can bless and pray for them. Of course, those people need our forgiveness too!** Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group to create motions for one of the sentences from the Bible Memory. When the groups are ready, have each group teach their motions to the rest of the class. Then lead kids in reading the entire passage and doing the motions.

Materials

Bibles, *Resources* sheet 6 poster, reusable adhesive



Note

The Bible Memory in the *King James Version* is included on the *Resources* CD.

Optional Bible Skill Builder

Print and use the *Resources* CD Optional Bible Skills 9 printable file.



Focus

♥ Jesus wants us to forgive.

Make It Real (10-15 minutes)

- 3 Use one of these activities to help students **express a willingness to forgive.**

Materials

Activities for lesson 9, pencils



Quick Step Are You Willing?

Ask students to stand and get in pairs. SAY: **I'm going to tell you about some situations. After you hear about each situation, one of you in each pair needs to gently push down a little on your partner's shoulders like you're putting a weight on your partner.** Demonstrate this with a volunteer, slowly pushing the volunteer toward the floor. **Someone gossiped about you and asked for forgiveness, but you didn't give forgiveness.** Pause slightly after each situation for students to push on their partner's shoulders. **Someone told a lie about you and asked for forgiveness, but you didn't give forgiveness.** Continue in the same manner. **Someone was mean to you; someone took credit for what you did; someone stole something from you; someone bullied you.**

SAY: **Not forgiving can really weigh you down! When you forgive, you'll feel as if a big weight has been lifted from you.** Have kids remove their hands from their partners' shoulders. ♥ **Jesus wants us to forgive like God forgives us. But are you willing?** Have kids turn in their leaflets to the Are You Willing? activity. Lead students through each situation. Tell them to be honest with themselves and circle how willing they would be to forgive if they were in each of these situations. **It's not always easy to forgive, but ♥ Jesus wants us to forgive like God forgives us.**

Materials

old pennies, 2 glasses, salt, spoon, vinegar, paper towels, water



Option What a Difference!



Fill one glass half full of water. Pour two inches of vinegar into the other glass. Have a student stir two spoons of salt into the glass with vinegar. Show kids the pennies. Set one penny aside. Ask a student to drop 10 pennies into the glass with vinegar and salt, and stir.

ASK: **How do you think the pennies will look when we take them out?**
Accept responses.

SAY: **These pennies are getting cleaned up as we look at them. When we take them out, they won't look the same. It's the same with God when we ask Him for forgiveness. He forgives us and cleans us up; we're different than we were before. It's kind of like that when we forgive someone. When we forgive, bad situations get cleaned up and everything is so much better!** Have a student transfer the pennies to the glass of water. Another student can then put the pennies on paper towels. Lay the old penny beside the cleaned-up ones. **What a difference! When we offer forgiveness, that makes a big difference too!**

ASK: **How willing are you to forgive when someone gossips about you? is mean to you? tells a lie about you?**

SAY: **It's not always easy to forgive, but ♥ Jesus wants us to forgive like God forgives us.**

Note

This experiment is adapted from *Simple Science Object Talks* by Heno Head, Jr., © 2007 by Heno Head. Used by permission.

Live It Out (10 minutes)

4 Use one of these activities to help students **choose to forgive**.

Quick Step Choose to Forgive

Ask kids to stand up and do something 77 times or for 77 seconds. A couple of suggestions would be to say "I forgive you" 77 times or do something like walk or run in place for 77 seconds. When kids are done, SAY: **The next time someone laughs at you, lies about you, or is mean to you, you have a choice to make. You can either choose to forgive that person or not. And ♥ Jesus wants us to forgive others, not just once or twice or 77 times, but an endless amount of times!**

Have students turn in their leaflets to the Forgiveness Journal activity. SAY: **This week, at the end of each day, think about how you did with forgiving others. Talk with God about it and ask for His help.** For the prayer time, ask for volunteers to pray aloud. Encourage the volunteers to thank God for the forgiveness He gives us and to ask for His help in forgiving others. Then close in prayer.

Option Backpack Tags



SAY: **The next time someone laughs at you, lies about you, or is mean to you, you have a choice to make. You can either choose to forgive that person or not. I hope that you'll do what Jesus wants you to do—forgive! And remember, ♥ Jesus wants us to forgive others not just once or twice or 77 times, but an endless amount of times!**

Distribute the supplies. Tell kids that they're going to make backpack tags that will help them remember to forgive others as God has forgiven them. Tell each kid to cut from card stock a backpack tag. The tags can be any size and shape that kids would like to have on their backpacks. Encourage kids to write something on the tags that will help them to remember the importance of forgiving others. They could also write on their tags Bible verses about forgiveness, such as Matthew 6:14 or Colossians 3:13. Then kids can decorate their tags. If possible, laminate the tags. Then kids can punch a hole and string with twine.

Close with a time of prayer. Tell kids that you'll pray Colossians 3:13. Invite them to pray aloud together when you pause, repeating the words you've prayed. PRAY: **Dear God, thank You that we can talk with You.** Pause. **Help us to put up with each other.** Pause. **Help us to forgive each other.** Pause. **Help us to forgive as You forgive us.** Pause. **In Jesus' name, amen.**

Focus

♥ Jesus wants us to forgive.

Materials

Activities for lesson 9, pencils (optional: timer)



Materials

card stock, scissors, markers, colored pencils, pencils, hole punch, twine (optional: laminating supplies)



Teaching Tip

Have kids who don't use backpacks think of other places they could use the tags.

Kidz Chat

Give each student a *Kidz Chat* to take home.

Be sure parents know about the *Faith & Family* pages available online to print and use with their children at home. Go to www.21stcc.com.

