

Year 3, NT PreK Lesson 5: God's People Forgive

Lesson Highlights:

- ✓ **Scripture References:** Matthew 5:38-48; 6:12, 14-15
- ✓ **Teaching Point:** God's people forgive others as they have been forgiven.
- ✓ **Unit Memory Verse:** *Matthew 6:21* – For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- ✓ **Alternate Memory Verse:** *Matthew 5:44-45* – But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
- ✓ **ABC Verse:** *Matthew 6:33* – Seek first the kingdom of God.

Lesson

Overview

Sometimes in Christianity, we can so long to preach the grace of God that we fail to give as much time to the commands of God. They cannot be obeyed apart from that grace...but it is equally true that they are not optional for those who call themselves His. One of those that Jesus teaches on repeatedly is forgiveness. Those who are given much are required to pour it out to others in that same spirit. Nothing is more true than with the forgiveness God gives because His wrath was poured out on His only Son. Pray with us that our kids would begin to see their need for such a gift and to become those who walk in their Savior's steps, forgiving as they have been forgiven.

Story (Some M&M's or other small candies are needed for this story.)

We've been talking a lot about something called God's kingdom. Kings usually have lots of money and land and power and lots and lots of stuff. But the kingdom of God that Jesus came to tell us about and to invite us to is different. Instead of wanting more for ourselves, we're supposed to be those who give and give and give. We're supposed to love others and to trust that God will take care of us. And last week we talked about how prayer shows that. God loves it when we pray because every time we go to God to pray, we're telling Him that we need Him...that we don't know how to do this life without Him...that we need Him to give us everything we need to live.

Jesus told us that when we pray we can call Jesus our Father. Just like a real dad, He will help us and give us what we need. Three of those are food, forgiveness and help so that we don't sin against God. Today, we're going to talk more about what it means to forgive others. Well, first we have to think about things that people do to us that hurt us. Have you ever had someone do something to you or say something to you that made you sad or angry? (*you may have to prompt them...mean words, not letting them play, taking things, making fun of them, etc.*) All of those things hurt us a lot. God knows it, and cares about us when we are hurt. But there's something He wants us to think about more.

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When your brother or sister or friend hurts you or takes away your toy or says mean things to you...do you ever want to hurt them back? Reach over and grab the toy back? Say mean things back to them? (probably so) Yeah...me, too. We want them to know that we're really upset and how wrong they are. That's really normal for us to feel...but it's not like Jesus wants us to feel because Jesus knows something else. He knows how many times we've hurt other people. And He knows something even worse. He knows how many wrong things we done to God.

Our God is the one who deserves the best of everything we can give Him, but sometimes we don't even think about Him. We don't love Him. We don't obey Him. We turn away from Him to get more for ourselves. And do you know what that means? We've all sinned. We've all turned away from God. Not one of us is good. Every one of us owes God. And do you know what the punishment is for our sins? The Bible says that **"the wages of sin is death."** (Rom. 6:23) But instead of taking our life, He sent His Son to die for us...in our place. His body was beaten. He was bruised. He was killed...because you and I owed God a debt. And God looked down at His Son...and He agreed. Jesus paid for every bad thing we've ever said or thought or done. Everything we owed to God was paid...if you repent and turn away from your sins and give your whole life to this new kingdom of heaven. And Jesus wants us to be so grateful for that so that we treat others the same way we were treated by God.

(NOTE: If you don't have time to do this during the lesson, you can use it as an activity later in your class time.) Let me see if I can show you what this is like...I need a volunteer who really likes chocolate. I happen to have just one piece of candy. Who would like it? *(choose one to come up to you)* Okay...now...here's my one M&M. Don't eat it yet. Okay. Who else liked chocolate? *(pick another)* Come on up. You are also welcome to have it. Just ask him for it. *(look at the first child with the M&M)* You can let him have it, but it's all I have. *(see if they are reluctant to give it)* Okay. That's not so easy. But what if I told you that if you give it to them, I would give you another one? Would it be easier to give it up? *(see what the first child says)* Okay...let's try this. *(hand the first child a whole bag of M&Ms)* Now is it easier to share that one M&M? *(hopefully so...thank them for helping and have them sit down after giving them each one M&M)*

That's the way it should be with us when others hurt us. God has forgiven us so much, we should be ready to forgive others easily...but that's not always true. When we get hurt, we get so mad at the others and we start thinking about all of the things they did to us. But Jesus wants us to stop and remember that we've been forgiven over and over and over. Then to turn to those who hurt us and say, "Of course I forgive you! God forgave me because of Jesus."

Everyone in the world likes their friends. But that's not what happened in God's kingdom. He didn't choose those of us who loved Him and were perfect. He chose those who hated Him and didn't even notice Him. He chose us. And even though we know Him and know what His Word is saying, we still disobey Him. But God still forgives us. And He still takes care of this world. He still sends rain to the earth when we don't deserve it. He still gives us sunshine even though we ignore Him. And those who are

really in God's kingdom have to act like that. We have to follow in Jesus' steps. We have to love those who hate us...just like He did for us. We have to take care of those who harm us...just like He does for us. If we are really in the kingdom of heaven, if we are really in His family, then we have to act like it. It's not something we can just do when we feel like it. God's people act like God...they forgive. It doesn't mean it's easy. It doesn't mean that it doesn't really hurt when they do bad things to us. What it means is that we see God and love Him more than we could ever say because He forgave us first. As we go to pray, let's ask God to make us into this kind of person...one who forgives just like we've been forgiven...one who is kind to those don't deserve it because we know that we have been given so much that we don't deserve.

Prayer Time

Before you pray, allow the kids time to share with you things that are happening in their lives. Be sure you write these down with their names for you to pray for as the week goes along. Ask individuals about how things went with the things they mentioned the previous week. As the leader, begin by opening and thanking God for this lesson:

- Praise Jesus for paying the debt to God that we owed by giving His life up for us.
- Ask God to make us people who forgive as they've been forgiven.

Pray for any specific requests named either by praying yourself or by opening it up to those who said they would pray.

Suggested Follow-up Activities

Teachers are free to choose the activities that they feel are best for their group. The idea is that as the children work and play, remind them of the truths they just learned.

Scripture Memory: Figure out your reward system for memorizing the Scriptures provided in this section. Give the children several opportunities to tell it to you either when they first arrive or at the end of class. **If using the ABC verses, a color page is provided as a take home page.**

Craft: Forgiven Much – Remind the kids that today we learned that those in God's kingdom must forgive others to be forgiven by God. Help them to remember that we are giving only a very small portion of forgiveness to others compared to the enormous debt that was paid by Jesus for us.

Copy the cards together front to back and cut one out for each child. Give each child a sandwich baggie and ask them to go over to a tub of sand and scoop some into their bag filling it about halfway. Have them also grab a paper plate and return to their seat to wait until everyone is finished filling their baggies. Now tell them that all they have to do is count the grains of sand they have. They will probably protest, but some will try it. Before they get too far, stop them and tell them the point is not to know how many there are but to realize that even this little amount is more than they have time to count. These little baggies are for them to see and remember God's forgiveness to us. Hand them copy of the verse. Have them hole punch the corner and close up the baggie by threading the card on a piece of cording using it to tie the baggie closed

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Younger Children: Fill the baggies prior to class and close them each with a twist-tie. Explain what the sand is to help them remember. Give them ribbon or cording and help them to hole punch the cards and tie them on.

Materials: cardstock copies of the verse; crayons or markers; sandwich baggies; sand; cording or ribbon; hole punch; paper plates

Activity: Sharing M&M's – Remind the kids that today we learned that those in God's kingdom must forgive others to be forgiven by God. Help them to remember that we are giving only a very small portion of forgiveness to others compared to the enormous debt that was paid by Jesus for us.

Ask for a volunteer who really likes chocolate. Tell them that you happen to have just one piece of candy. Choose one person to come up with you. Give them one M&M but tell them not to eat it yet. Then ask for another volunteer who also loves chocolate. Tell them that they can have an M&M but they have to ask the first child for it. Ask the first child if they really want to give it away or keep it. Ask them if it would be an easier thing to do if they knew that you would give them another one if they gave theirs away. Then pull out the whole bag of M&Ms and ask them if it would be easier to share if they had the whole bag in their hands. Thank them for helping you and give them an M&M for their help.

Tell them that it's hard to give things up when we don't have much...but it's a lot easier to give it away when we know we will have a whole lot left for ourselves. Or it's *supposed* to be. But when it comes to forgiveness, that's not always true. When we've been hurt we stop thinking about all of the people we've hurt, and we start thinking a lot about all of the bad things that people do to us. Just like when he was holding that bag of M&M's, he knew that he had so many, it wouldn't hurt to share...but when he thought he only had one, it was hard. We've been forgiven for so many sins...which means, we have a bag full of the millions of times God's forgiven us. But when others harm us, we forget about that...and act like they're trying to take our last M&M.

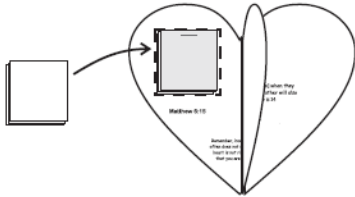
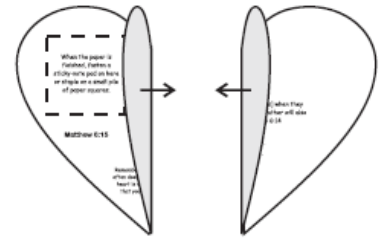
Sure, they really did harm you. They really are wrong. They really do owe you. That's all true. But it's also true that God really has forgiven you far more than you will ever forgive anyone else...ever. Those who are a part of God's kingdom must stay so grateful for that forgiveness that we forgive others quickly and with a great attitude.

Materials: M&M's in a bag

Craft: Forgiveness Heart – Remind the kids that today we learned that those in God's kingdom must forgive others to be forgiven by God. Help them to remember that we are giving only a very small portion of forgiveness to others compared to the enormous debt that was paid by Jesus for us.

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Give each child a copy of both of the craft pages along with a small stack of the small square pages. Have them cut out the hearts and color them as they'd like. Have them fold the hearts in half. Have them glue the pieces together on the back sides of the two pages as shown.



Have them staple a small stack of the papers over the square and then hand them a paper clip which will hold the heart together for them.



Materials: craft pages; scissors; stapler; paper clips; stick glue; crayons or markers