

Help Spread the Gospel: *Do You Forgive as Much as You Are Forgiven?*

LESSON AT A GLANCE

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sermon clips are available in the NAC USA mobile app <i>and</i> in the app web player (link in the list to the right) 	<p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How am I supposed to forgive? ➤ Why should I be forgiving? ➤ How does forgiving help spread the gospel? <p>I believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I must forgive and show mercy to others constantly. (Catechism Q&A question 649) ➤ God is the judge and takes an account of offenses. (Catechism Q&A question 58) ➤ Because God is gracious and forgives us, He expects us to likewise forgive those who have wronged us. The gospel is a message of reconciliation. We can demonstrate that by pursuing reconciliation with our neighbor. (Catechism Q&A questions 638 and 651) <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IGNITE Bible ➤ Catechism Q&A ➤ Chief Apostle sermon clip 19, <i>God Forgives but I Criticize</i>, https://subsplash.com/nacusa/media/mi/+1a90576 ➤ Balloons (not inflated) ➤ 1-inch wide slips of paper or Post-it notes ➤ Writing utensils (markers, pencils, pens, etc.) <p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Catechism Q&A questions: 58, 638, 649, 651 ➤ Bible: Matthew 18:21-35, Mark 11:25, Romans 12:18
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PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

	<p>Think of a time you may have hurt someone and were forgiven. How did it make you feel? This week for small group we'll be meeting at _____ and talking about forgiveness.</p>
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POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

<p>Facilitator Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please feel free to add local information and customize as necessary 	<p>Dear Parents,</p> <p>This week the "I Wonder...." questions are about the parable of the unforgiving servant: how are we supposed to forgive, why we should be forgiving, and how is forgiving spreading the gospel? Have a conversation with your student about times they did something as a small child to upset you as well as times you may have done something to upset them. Continue the conversation with why you decided to forgive each other and what came out of that forgiveness. Try to lead the conversation to a time you have upset God and He has shown forgiveness. As always, if you have questions about the topic, please feel free to contact us.</p> <p>Your Youth Leaders</p>
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SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week.

- What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?
- What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?
- So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?
- Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

HOOK (up to 15 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week.
- Prior to the start of the activity, make sure to have post-it notes or small pieces of paper (at least 10 per student).
- At the start of the activity, pass out 10 post-its and a writing utensil to each student. If students need/want more during the lesson, you can give them more.
- If someone in the group has a hard time thinking of or sharing an answer, use the following prompts: Have there been times in your life when you've been angry? What or who made you angry?
- If students cannot come up with an equal number of each, that is okay but it should be close.

- How are you and how are you feeling today?
- Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week?
- On post-its, have the students write down various times someone in their life has upset them. These people can include friends, family, classmates, or maybe someone they just encountered. On the post-its, have students also record on a scale of 1 (not too upset) to 5 (very upset) how upset it made them at the time. Give students 5 minutes to come up with as many as they can.
- On a separate post-it, have students write down times where they have upset someone in their lives and were forgiven or when they forgave someone else. Students should now place a number at the top of the post-it on a scale of 1 (not very good) to 5 (felt amazing) of how it felt to be forgiven. Urge students to try to come up with an even number of each instance.
- Once the 5 minutes are up, have students make 2 piles of their post-its – times they were made angry and times they were forgiven or have forgiven others. Tell the students they are going to read their post-its now and put themselves back into the mindset of the time this happened. Give each student a deflated balloon and tell them to read their first post-it of a time someone upset or wronged them silently to themselves. Once they have read it, ask the students to blow into the balloon for the number they posted at the top of their post-it (i.e. the number 2 would be for 2 breaths). Once every student has completed the first post-it, tell them to move on to the next one in that pile. *(This part of the activity should take no more than 3 minutes)*
- When students have finished their "angry pile," have them look at everyone's balloons. There may be various sizes around the room and some might have even popped their balloons by putting too much air in them (this will add to the point of the activity). Have a discussion with the whole group about what made them so mad (they do not need to explain the details of the instance but a summary of why it hurt them or made them angry will be beneficial). *(2 minutes)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asking students to share their answers, try not to force students to talk. If you're noticing students do not want to share with the whole group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Now have students start reading through their forgiven post-its. For each number at the top students should let that number of seconds of air out of their balloons. (2 minutes) ➤ When students have finished the activity, open up a discussion on things the students noticed and felt as they progressed through the activity. Some key points to draw out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did anyone have more post-its in one pile than the other? Why do you think that is? ○ How did you feel when you continued to blow more air into the balloon? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exhausted, scared it would pop, annoyed and more angered that we had to keep blowing, etc. ○ How did you feel when you started to let air out of the balloon? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relieved, relaxed, happy (maybe if they thought it was going to pop), etc. ○ Using our balloons as an example, what happens or could happen in our lives if we are angered more than we are forgiven and forgive others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When you forgave someone or they forgave you, did that take all of the air out of the balloon? Was it a one-time fix?
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SET THE STAGE (1 minute)

Facilitator Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preview the "I wonder" questions with the students. 	I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How am I supposed to forgive? ➤ Why should I be forgiving? ➤ How does forgiving help spreading the gospel?
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LESSON (up to 25 minutes)

Facilitator Notes: The Lord's Prayer: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.	Have students read through or recite the Lord's Prayer together. After, discuss the following questions with the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In the Lord's Prayer, what does it mean when we have a debt or say "our debts"? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have hurt someone in our lives. ○ Ultimately this means we have sinned. ➤ What does it mean to have a debtor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is the other who has hurt someone else. ➤ When we pray this in the Lord's prayer, what does it actually mean? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reference the Catechism Q&A question 638: "All human beings incur guilt on account of their sins. With these words, the believers acknowledge that they are sinners before God, and ask Him for forgiveness. Because God is gracious and forgives us, He expects us to likewise forgive those who have wronged us. Therefore, we will only be granted forgiveness if we ourselves are reconcilable and willing to forgive."
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- **Matthew 18: 21-35**
 (Not included due to length of the parable)

Example to emphasize this point:
 God does not say to forgive the person who has stolen \$20 from you, but you don't have to forgive the person who harms you physically.

- **Romans 12:18**
 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Student Question #1: Why does God want us to continue to forgive others even when they have wronged us numerous times?

- When we sin, wrong others, or do not forgive others, we are separating ourselves from God. In the Lord's Prayer, we are reminded that God wants us to constantly forgive as we have been forgiven.

Read together as a class The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in Matthew 18: 21-35. After reading, discuss with the students the key points of the parable, as well as the purpose of this story. Some important aspects to draw out are:

- When the Servant had his debt forgiven, why do you think he chose not to forgive the debt that was owed to him?
- This is a story Jesus used to show the importance of forgiveness.
 - When we sin, we are separated from God.
 - If we do not forgive others, that separation becomes larger and we need to erase the separation.
- Jesus said to not just forgive 7 times but 7 times 70.
 - Why is it often difficult for us to forgive someone even just once?
- How many times do you think God has forgiven us?
 - Do you think God's love for us lessens as we sin more? Why?
 - Do you feel that God ever gets tired of forgiving us when we sin?

How are we supposed to forgive?

- The Lord understands this is not easy for us. However, we should still try our hardest to forgive. This may not be a one-time fix. Forgiveness can sometimes take a while or a few times in order for it to truly take place and have true meaning (IGNITE Bible, Flashpoint, "Forgiveness" page 993).
 - Remember that God sacrificed His son so we can be redeemed and forgiven for the consequences of sin.
- God told us to forgive everyone always.
 - God does not look at different types of sin and say it is okay to forgive sometimes, but not other times.

Student Question #2: Why is it necessary to forgive others in God's eyes?

- Forgiving others even when it is difficult means we accept God's will as our own.
- When we make the choice to forgive others, we are allowing God to work within us because we are also dependent on forgiveness from Him.
- Forgiveness does not justify the reason behind the sin. Forgiveness instead gives us a chance to start healing ourselves.
- When we forgive others, we are helping to spread the gospel.
 - Reference Romans 12:18, when offenses have been forgiven and relationships reconciled, we're able to live peaceably with our neighbor.

Mark 11:25: And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

How is forgiving spreading and sharing the gospel?

- God has given us specific directions when it comes to forgiving.
 - Reference Mark 11:25.
 - When we forgive others, we are following the example Christ gave us.

We are spreading the gospel through the way we lead our lives.

Student Question #3: Thinking about the balloon hook activity, what effect does it have on our lives when we do not forgive others and when we are not forgiven?

Student Question #4: When you finally make the decision to forgive someone, what impact does it have on you, the other person, as well as God?

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 10 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- Our Vision is to create a church in which people feel at home and, inspired by the Holy Spirit and their love for God, align their lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thus prepare themselves for His return and eternal life.
- Sermon clips are available in the [NAC USA mobile app](#) and in the app web player (link in the list to the right)

Wrap up the lesson with why we must forgive, linking it to our vision and our eternal future with God.

- If there is time, watch Chief Apostle sermon clip 19, *God Forgives but I Criticize?*
 - <https://subsplash.com/nacusa/media/mi/+1a90576>

Close with the "I Wonder..." questions

- Ask a student to read an "I Wonder...." question, and invite another student to answer with an "I Believe...." statement in their own words.
- As you review each question and answer, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions.
- Remind the students that on their Confirmation day, they will or have already promised and committed to surrendering themselves to God.

I wonder...

- How am I supposed to forgive?
- Why should I be forgiving?
- How does forgiving help spread the gospel?

I believe...

- I must forgive and show mercy to others constantly. (Catechism Q&A question 649)
- God is the judge and takes an account of offenses. (Catechism Q&A question 58)
- Because God is gracious and forgives us, He expects us to likewise forgive those who have wronged us. The gospel is a message of reconciliation. We can demonstrate that by pursuing reconciliation with our neighbor. (Catechism Q&A questions 638 and 651)

Point to Ponder....What factors contribute to you NOT forgiving someone?

A Call to Action....Take time to think about someone who has wronged you recently and you have yet to forgive them. Pray to God for both the strength and kindness to forgive that person. Do your best to work on forgiving that person.

Weekly Reflections

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Help Spread the Gospel: *Do You Forgive as Much as You Are Forgiven?*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How am I supposed to forgive? ➤ Why should I be forgiving? ➤ How does forgiving help spreading the gospel? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I must forgive and show mercy to others constantly. (Catechism Q&A question 649) ➤ God is the judge and takes an account of offenses. (Catechism Q&A question 58) ➤ Because God is gracious and forgives us, He expects us to likewise forgive those who have wronged us. The gospel is a message of reconciliation. We can demonstrate that by pursuing reconciliation with our neighbor. (Catechism Q&A questions 638 and 651)
References: Catechism Q&A questions 58, 638, 649, 651 ; Bible verses: Matthew 18:21-35, Mark 11:25, Romans 12:18	

Read through the Parable of The Unforgiving Servant again and then answer the following questions:

1. Why does God want us to continue to forgive others even when they have wronged us numerous times?

2. Why is it necessary to forgive others in God's eyes?

3. Thinking about the balloon hook activity, what effect does it have on our lives when we do not forgive others and when we are not forgiven?

4. When you finally make the decision to forgive someone, what impact does it have on you, the other person, as well as God?

Point to Ponder: What factors contribute to you NOT forgiving someone?

Call to Action: Take time to think about someone who has wronged you recently and you have yet to forgive them. Pray to God for both the strength and kindness to forgive that person. Do your best to work on forgiving that person.