

## Sunday between September 11 and 17 – year A

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### Preparation

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Read [Matthew 18:21-35](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/propera19.htm>

[http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming\\_faith.cfm?id=247](http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm?id=247)

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/over-and-over-again.html>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/a/24-a/A-24-a.html>

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-awvx.htm#p24>: word puzzles

If it is the first Sunday back to Church school, take time to introduce each other. If you are teaching younger children, you probably want to give them simple guidelines to follow; and if you have an older group, you might want to spend some time deciding on group norms together.

### Gathering

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#### Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle and candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Green cloth
- Newsprint and markers

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you.

Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Light the candle.

Pray the following prayer together:

**Creator God you are here,  
Loving Jesus you are here,  
Holy Spirit you are here;  
Come and show us the way. Amen.**

Blow out the candle. Print up on a piece of newsprint: “**Day in the Family**”. With the children, write up all the things that happen in a day in their families, beginning with getting up in the morning and finishing with going to bed at night. Ask the children what happens when someone does something wrong in the family. (*Wait for their responses.*)

If they didn't come with someone saying sorry and being forgiven, then suggest that this happens in some families. Explain that in the story the children will hear Jesus talking about how we need to forgive others.

## Story Time

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### Instructions

- Go to [this website](#) and learn the American Sign Language sign for ‘forgive’. Teach it to the children before telling them the story. Invite them to use the sign every time they hear the word *forgive* in the story.
- Get comfortable with the children to share the story.

Jesus and his friends had been travelling all over Galilee telling people about the good news of God’s love and care for all. They were now back in Capernaum, the town they called home. While there Jesus spent time with his friends teaching them more and more about how God wants us all to be in the world.

Peter asked Jesus a very important question. “If someone does something wrong to me, how many times am I supposed to forgive (*sign forgive*) them? Seven times? (With the children count out 7 on your fingers, so they know how many that is.)

Jesus told Peter, “Not just seven times, you must forgive (*sign forgive*) seventy-seven times!”

Then Jesus told them this story to help them all understand what he was talking about.

The kingdom of God is like this. A king once had many servants. These servants worked hard for the king. Sometimes they had to borrow money from the king so that they could do everything that they wanted to do.

One day the king decided it was time to get the money back from the servants who had borrowed from him. The king called in the servants one by one.

One particular servant came in to see the king. This servant owed the king a lot of money. In fact he owed the king over \$10,000. The servant could not pay the king back at this time. The king got very angry with the servant and was going to throw him into jail until he paid back all the money that he owed.

The servant fell down on his knees. He said, “Please sir be patient with me. I will pay back everything that I owe you.”

The king decided then and there to forgive (*sign forgive*) his servant. The servant was not going to owe the king any more money.

That same servant, however forget the lesson of being forgiven (*sign forgive*). He went away from the king and came upon another servant of the king’s. He said to this servant, “You owe me \$100. You must pay me right away!”

The king heard what this forgiven (*sign forgive*) servant had done. He became very angry with this servant. He called the servant in to see him again. The king angrily said, “You are a wicked man. I forgave (*sign forgive*) you because you pleaded with me. You should have had the same mercy on your fellow servant! You should have forgiven (*sign forgive*) him the same way that I forgave (*sign forgive*) you.”

With that the king had the servant put in jail.

Jesus told his friends, “Remember this God wants you to forgive (*sign forgive*) as you have been forgiven (*sign forgive*). For if you do not forgive (*sign forgive*) others how do you expect to be forgiven (*sign forgive*)?”

## Response

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### Project Idea 1: Forgiveness Hands

*Children understand that their hands can be used for many different things. In this response they will learn the connection between forgiveness and hands.*

#### Materials needed

- construction paper
- scissors
- pencils and markers
- stickers

#### Instructions

Ask the children to shake each other's hands and say "**Peace of God be with you**". Explain that in church we often share the peace with each other in order to show that we have forgiven each other and are ready to be in God's company. Have the children choose two or three pieces of construction paper. Help them to trace out a hand at least three or four times. Assist the children that need help cutting out the hands and let those that can do so. For the non-printers, print "**Peace of God**" the middle of the hand, let those that can do this for themselves. Let the children decorate their hands with the stickers. Invite the children to think about who they want to share the 'Peace of God' with – it might be somebody they need to forgive or somebody they would like to ask to be forgiven. Encourage the children to share their forgiveness hands with those people.

### Project Idea 2: Forgiveness Poster

*If you are looking for a way to build community amongst the children you work with then this response will be a good choice. It will also be a good way for them to reach out to the rest of the church community.*

#### Materials needed

- poster board
- magazines
- scissors, glue sticks
- markers

#### Instructions

Print across the top of the poster board "**Forgive as you have been forgiven**". Have the children go through the magazines and cut out pictures of things that they want to be forgiven for or things that we as human beings need God to forgive us for (such as environmental issues, homelessness, food issues). Once they all have a couple of pictures have the children work together to make a poster together. They may want to write under the picture what needs to be forgiven. Once they are done choose a place together to put up the poster so that others in the church community can see it as well. If you have a larger group of children you may want to split the children up into groups of 4 or 5 to work on this project and then place their posters up in several different places for others to see.

### Project Idea 3: Prayer Card

*This response will be a good one with older children, especially the readers. It will give them a connection between today's parable and the prayer the church says on a regular basis.*

#### Materials needed

- newsprint
- magazines
- markers and fine line markers
- card stock
- scissors and glue

#### Instructions

Print the following up on the newsprint:

**“Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who are in our debt;  
Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
Forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

Explain to the children that these are the same line from the Lord's Prayer, just put into the language in different ways. Ask the children if they know what 'debt' means. Do the same for 'trespasses' and 'sins'. Explain that they mean the things that we have done wrong and that we need to be forgiven for. Give each child a piece of card stock. Have them print on the line from the Lord's Prayer that speaks the most to them. Then have them go through the magazines and pick out pictures of things that need God's forgiveness (let them choose what speaks to them the best). Have them cut them out and then glue them to the card stock as they want. Encourage the children to choose a place at home, perhaps their bedrooms, where they can put up their prayer cards to remind them to pray regularly for forgiveness and to forgive those who have wronged them.

### Closing

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Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**Creator God thank you for loving us,  
Loving Jesus thank you for teaching us,  
Holy Spirit thank you for helping us grow,  
Be with us in everything we do. Amen.**