

LESSON 3: JESUS FORGIVES HIS ENEMIES

Leader Guide for Ages 3-6

Classroom: Monkeys

 Luke 23:26-43

09/06/2020

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Luke 23:26-43
- In This Passage: Jesus is dying a humiliating death on the cross. As the soldiers torture him and gamble for his clothes, he extends forgiveness. They continue to mock him, but he doesn't condemn them. A criminal on the cross next to Jesus believes in Jesus, and Jesus extends forgiveness for his sins, too.
- Bible Point: Jesus forgives when it's hard...
- Application: ...so we forgive when it's hard.
- Summary Verse: "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus forgives when it's hard*. It's a lot easier to receive forgiveness than to extend it. Kids might wonder if others really deserve their forgiveness. Maybe the people who hurt them don't seem that sorry. Jesus' example shows that forgiveness isn't about being sorry or deserving it. We can forgive even when it's hard.
- Think About: What's a grudge you've been holding on to? Ask Jesus to help you let it go.

Dig In to Prayer

- Ask God to help your kids fully accept and fully extend God's grace and forgiveness.

Quick Tip

- Demonstrate forgiveness with your kids. It's easy to hold on to your view of kids based on their past behavior or what previous teachers have warned you about. Putting these labels on kids demonstrates a lack of forgiveness rather than giving them a fresh start. Instead of expecting certain behaviors from the "bad" kids, approach each week as a clean slate for kids.

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Preschoolers share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Preschoolers act out the story, ask God for help with forgiving others, and sing a song.

Supplies

- Bible
- tissues
- paper (1 sheet per child)
- cross



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Preschoolers sing a song and pray.



OBJECT LESSON

Preschoolers wash clean and sticky hands.

Supplies

- soap
- water
- paper towels
- wet wipes (optional)
- something sticky, such as syrup or jelly
- spoons (1 for each adult or teen helper)



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers flip over papers showing frowns so they show smiles instead.

Supplies

- paper (about 3 sheets per child)
- marker
- upbeat music
- music player

Easy Prep

- On one side of each paper, draw a simple frowning face. On the other side of each paper, draw a simple smiley face.
- Spread the papers out on the floor all over the room with the frown side faceup.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers try to do tasks while also holding paper wads.

Supplies

- scrap paper (2 sheets per child)
- crayons and a container to hold them (1 crayon per child)
- bulletin board paper
- painter's tape
- box of tissues

Easy Prep

- Ball up the scrap paper into wads that preschoolers can hold in their hands.
- Put a 10-foot length of bulletin board paper on the floor, and tape the ends down. Spread out the crayons on the paper.

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Preschoolers make reusable coloring sheets.

Supplies

- coloring sheets (1-2 per child)
- clear page protectors (1 per child)
- crayons
- tissues

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have preschoolers make a silly animal noise at two different friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having preschoolers say, "Long live [name of birthday child]!"
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we'll find out that Jesus forgives when it's hard. And we'll learn that we can forgive when it's hard, too. Let's start today by talking about something that's hard—carrying something heavy.**

Share

- Share about something heavy *you've* carried. Maybe you had to have help carrying a piece of furniture because it was so heavy. Or maybe you carried the groceries into the house all at once so you wouldn't have to make a second trip.
- In leader-led small groups, have preschoolers share about something heavy *they've* carried. They might share about carrying a box with a new toy in it or playfully carrying a smaller sibling.
- After small groups have discussed, have adult or teen helpers share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **It must've been hard to carry those things. You had to use your muscles! Lead kids to make muscles. Today we're finding out we can do something else that's hard—forgive. When someone hurts us, we can forgive and be friends with the person. Jesus shows us how because Jesus forgives when it's hard.**

Pray, thanking Jesus for forgiving us and others even when it's hard.

**Supplies**

- Bible
- tissues
- paper (1 sheet per child)
- cross

Act It Out

Say: Today we'll learn what it means that Jesus forgives when it's hard. We're going to read in the Bible about some terrible, awful things people did to Jesus. It will be very sad, but we'll find out Jesus forgave them. That means he didn't punish them for what they did. Let's look in the Bible to find out what happened.

Show the Bible. Say: **The Bible says some soldiers captured Jesus and took him away. Jesus hadn't done anything wrong at all, but they were still mean to him. They had a big, heavy, wooden cross that they were going to put Jesus on, and as they traveled with it, they made a man named Simon carry it.** Lead kids in pretending to carry a big, heavy cross around the room once.

Say: **The Bible says there was a large crowd of people following Jesus, including many sad women.** Give each child a tissue, and have kids pretend to cry and wipe their tears as they walk around the room once more.

Say: **When they arrived at the place where they were going to put Jesus on the cross, there were two other men who were also going to be nailed to crosses. Those men had done very bad things, so the soldiers were punishing them—but Jesus had never, ever done anything wrong. Even so, the soldiers put nails through Jesus' hands and feet to nail him to the cross. That hurt!** Lead kids to pretend to wipe their tears with the tissues again.

Say: **As Jesus hung on the cross, he asked God to forgive the people for all the mean things they'd done to him. Jesus forgives even when it's hard. Then the soldiers took Jesus' clothes and played a game to see who would get to keep his clothes.**

Share about a time someone took or messed up your things. Maybe they took a toy from you and played catch with it over your head, or maybe your sister borrowed your shirt and ruined it. Rip a piece of paper as you share, and then say: **It's no fun when people take our stuff or mess it up.**

Give each child a sheet of paper, and tell kids to think of a time someone messed with their things. Maybe a younger sibling broke one of their toys. Have kids rip their papers as they think of something, and then say: **When people mess with our stuff, we can forgive them even if it's hard. Jesus understands how it feels because the soldiers took his stuff.**

Say: **There were other people who made fun of Jesus. They said all kinds of mean things. Have each child make a fist and hold it. Jesus had to forgive them, too. When people say mean things to us, it hurts so much! It might make us want to make fists like we're doing now. But Jesus didn't do that. Jesus forgave the people for saying mean things even when it was hard.** Lead kids to open their hands. **Jesus didn't hold on to anger like we might want to—like when we make a fist. He forgave the people, and he loved them.** Lead kids to each give a hug to a nearby child.

Say: **Jesus even forgave the man beside him who had done bad things. Jesus didn't like the bad things any of the people had done (make a fist), but he let go and forgave them (open your hand), and we can, too.**

Talk About It

Say: **Let's think about some ways we can forgive like Jesus did in the Bible story. We might need to forgive someone who hits us, or we might need to forgive someone who says something mean. We might need to forgive when someone doesn't share, and we might even need to forgive when someone does something by accident that hurts us.**

Share about a time *you* were hurt when you were a child. You might share about how someone closed your fingers in the car door or when a brother said something mean.

Ask: • **Think of something that someone did to hurt you.** Invite kids to share about some things that hurt them, without sharing people's names.

Say: **Those are all really hard things. But we can forgive—Jesus helps us. Let's talk to Jesus about our hurts and ask him to help us forgive.** Lead kids in a prayer asking Jesus to help each child forgive those who hurt them.

Say: **When we forgive someone for hitting us, we don't need to stand close and be hit again, but we can still say "I forgive you" and choose to be kind back. We can do the same when someone says something mean. Jesus forgave when it was hard, and we can, too.**

Sing a Song

Say: **Let's learn a song that we can sing when we need to forgive someone for hurting us. It will help us remember to let go of being angry and choose to be kind back to that person the way Jesus did.** Lead kids in singing this song and doing the motions to the tune of "B-I-N-G-O."

Jesus forgives us when it's hard, *(clench fist, then release to an open palm)*

So I can forgive yo-u. *(point to someone)*

I will forgive you. *(hug someone)*

I will forgive you. *(hug someone new)*

I will forgive you. *(hug someone new)*

Even when it's very hard. *(clench fist, then release to an open palm)*

Repeat as time allows.

Say: **Jesus shows us we can forgive even when it's hard.** Holding on to anger won't help us any. This week, let's forgive the way Jesus did.



Sing and Pray

Sing

Have kids sit in a circle. Say: **Today we learned that Jesus forgives when it's hard, so we forgive when it's hard. We learned that forgiving others helps us and helps others. Let's sing our song again.**

Lead kids in singing this song and doing the motions to the tune of "B-I-N-G-O."

Jesus forgives us when it's hard, *(clench fist, then release to an open palm)*

So I can forgive yo-u. *(point to someone)*

I will forgive you. *(hug someone)*

I will forgive you. *(hug someone new)*

I will forgive you. *(hug someone new)*

Even when it's very hard. *(clench fist, then release to an open palm)*

Say: **Everyone messes up sometimes. Even I do wrong things.** Stand in the center of the circle. **I don't want to sin, but everyone sins. That's why Jesus died on the cross. He did it so we can be forgiven of all the wrong things we do. I'm thankful that Jesus forgives me when it's hard. And I hope if I do something wrong, you'll forgive me, too. Will you sing our song to me another time to let me know you'll forgive me?**

Lead kids in singing the song a second time with the following altered motions.

Jesus forgives us when it's hard, *(clench fist, then release to an open palm)*

So I can forgive yo-u. *(kids point to you)*

I will forgive you. *(kids hug you)*

I will forgive you. *(kids hug you)*

I will forgive you. *(kids hug you)*

Even when it's very hard. *(clench fist, then release to an open palm)*

Invite children to take turns standing in the center of the circle as you did to receive an affirmation that they can be forgiven by friends and forgive friends, too.

Pray

Say: **We can all forgive each other when we do something wrong. Jesus shows us how—and Jesus forgives even when it's hard. Let's ask Jesus to help us forgive others by following his example.**

Lead kids in a brief prayer.

Say: **Come back next week to learn more about Jesus and his great big love!**



OBJECT LESSON

A Clean Start

[10 min]

Supplies

- soap
- water
- paper towels
- wet wipes (optional)
- something sticky, such as syrup or jelly
- spoons (1 for each adult or teen helper)

Wash Clean Hands

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus forgives when it's hard, and we can forgive others, too.**

When we forgive someone, we give that person a clean start. Let's give our hands a clean start!

- If you have access to a sink, have kids take turns washing and drying their hands, or give kids wet wipes to wipe their hands.
- Have kids throw away used paper towels or wet wipes.
- Have kids give friends a high-five with their clean hands.

Wash Dirty Hands

Say: **That wasn't hard! It's easy to wash our hands when they're already clean. But what happens when we need to clean messy hands? Let's find out!**

- Have adult or teen helpers each use a spoon to place a small dab of something sticky on each child's hand.
- Have kids rub their hands together to create a sticky mess. Encourage kids not to touch their clothes or classroom furniture.
- If you have access to a sink, have kids take turns washing and drying their hands, or give kids wet wipes to wipe their hands. Have extra wipes ready in case kids need more than one.
- As kids clean their hands, comment about how sticky they are and keep offering kids more soap or wipes.
- Have kids throw away used paper towels or wet wipes.
- Gather kids in a circle when hands are finally clean.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What was it like trying to wash our dirty, sticky hands?**

Say: **It's easy to wash hands when they're already clean, but it's harder to wash sticky, dirty hands. When someone hurts us, it makes our hearts feel yucky and dirty. But Jesus forgives when it's hard. Sometimes we have to work hard to forgive, like you worked hard to clean your hands. But Jesus is with us, and he'll help us forgive our friends and give them a clean start.** Have kids give friends a high-five with their clean hands and say "We forgive when it's hard!"



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

No Frowns in Forgiveness

[10 min]

Supplies

- paper (about 3 sheets per child)
- marker
- upbeat music
- music player

Easy Prep

- On one side of each paper, draw a simple frowning face. On the other side of each paper, draw a simple smiley face.
- Spread the papers out on the floor all over the room with the frown side faceup.

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Turn Frowns Into Smiles

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus forgives when it's hard. Forgiveness can make a frowning face** (make a goofy frowning face, and have preschoolers frown, too) **turn into a happy one!** Give a big smile, and invite preschoolers to turn their frowns into smiles, too. **Let's play a fun game to turn frowns into smiles!**

- Have everyone line up along one wall.
- While music plays, everyone can run around the room turning the frowning faces over so the smiley faces show.
- Play a few rounds of different lengths of time. Pause the music between rounds, have everyone freeze, and count the smiley faces.
- Then have kids help you reset the papers to all frowns before you start the music again for a new round.
- Challenge kids to flip over more papers in the new round than they did in the last.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What made it hard to turn over more papers?**

Say: **Sometimes it's hard to forgive, too, and turn a frown into a smile in real life. I've had trouble forgiving when...** (share an example of a time you struggled to forgive, such as when a friend broke something that means a lot to you).

Ask: • **When is it hard for you to forgive?** Preschoolers might share about when a friend physically hurt them or said something that really hurt their feelings.

Say: **Forgiveness is hard sometimes, but forgiving is good for you and for the person you're forgiving. Jesus forgives when it's hard, so we can, too, and we can ask Jesus to help us forgive the way he does.**



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Hold On, Let Go

Supplies

- scrap paper (2 sheets per child)
- crayons and a container to hold them (1 crayon per child)
- bulletin board paper
- painter's tape
- box of tissues
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Ball up the scrap paper into wads that preschoolers can hold in their hands.
- Put a 10-foot length of bulletin board paper on the floor, and tape the ends down. Spread out the crayons on the paper.

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Try to Do Things While Holding On to Paper Wads

Say: **We read in our Bible story about how Jesus forgave people who were hurting him. It must have been hard to forgive them after they hurt Jesus so badly, but Jesus had forgiveness in his heart. Sometimes it's hard to forgive, and we hold on to sad or angry feelings when others hurt us. Let's play a game to see what happens when we hold on to those feelings.**

- Give each child a couple of paper wads to hold.
- You'll give everyone some simple tasks to do, but kids must do them while holding on tightly to the papers in their hands. The papers cannot be dropped.
- Call out the following tasks, and allow a minute or two for everyone to try to accomplish the task without letting go of their papers:
 - Take off your shoes.
 - Put your shoes back on.
 - Use a crayon to draw a circle on the paper.
 - Grab a tissue, and blow your nose.
 - Pick up a crayon, and put it in the container.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids attempt each task.
- Have kids continue holding on to their papers while you gather everyone up for a quick discussion.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Why did holding on to the papers make things hard?**

Say: **We make things harder on ourselves when we don't forgive—when we hold on to sad or angry feelings.** Hold up your paper wads and then let them fall to the floor. **Let's see what happens when we let go.**

Have everyone drop their papers and then do one of the previous tasks with free hands. **That was much easier! When we forgive, we let go of sad or angry feelings. It not only is good for the person we forgive but for us, too. Someone I need to forgive is** [share a preschool-friendly example of someone you need forgive, such as a friend who forgot your birthday].

Ask: • **Who do you want to forgive?** Preschoolers will likely share about friends or siblings they need to forgive for saying mean things or not sharing toys, or a parent who didn't keep a promise.

Say: **It might not always be easy to forgive, but Jesus forgives when it's hard, and he'll help us so we can forgive when it's hard, too.**



CRAFT

Clean-Start Coloring

[20 min]

Supplies

- coloring sheets (1-2 per child)
- clear page protectors (1 per child)
- crayons
- tissues

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Tip

- You might provide 2 coloring sheets per child if you want kids to have an extra they can start over with. Just have kids place the 2 coloring sheets back to back inside the page protectors.

Make Reusable Coloring Sheets

Say: **In our Bible story, we heard how Jesus forgives when it's hard, and we can, too. When we forgive someone, it's like we get a clean start. Let's make a craft to help us think about that. Show the sample craft.**

- Give each preschooler one or two coloring sheets and a page protector.
- Help kids put the coloring sheets in the page protectors.
- Set out crayons, and allow time for preschoolers to color their coloring sheets on the outside of the page protectors.

Reuse

Say: **Forgiving is like giving someone a new start. It's like a clean coloring page that you can start all over. Let's make our coloring pages clean and new!**

- Set out tissues, and have kids use them to rub the crayon off the plastic. (Don't use water; doing so will actually prevent this from working.)
- Allow time for kids to recolor their coloring sheets in a new way.

Wrap Up

Say: **The cool thing about your coloring page is that you can give it a new start all the time.**

Ask: • **What did you like about being able to start over coloring your picture?**

Say: **Anytime you want to try coloring those pictures again, you can just erase the crayon you used and start over. Jesus is like that, too. Anytime we do wrong things, he erases them and lets us start all over again. Jesus forgives when it's hard.**

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