

LESSON 3: JESUS FORGIVES HIS ENEMIES

Leader Guide for Grades 1 & 2

Classroom: Adventure

 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

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids touch scars, draw, and write mean things.

Supplies

- Bible
- dot stickers
- paper
- markers
- nametags (1 per child)
- pens
- cross or picture of a cross

Easy Prep

- Put the cross near or on a wall.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids sing a song and pray.



OBJECT LESSON

Kids' fingers get stuck in finger traps.

Supplies

- finger traps (1 per child) (can be purchased at party supply stores or online)



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids 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

Kids 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
- upbeat music (optional)

Easy Prep

- Ball up the scrap paper into wads that kids 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.

- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Kids 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.



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids make a mosaic in the shape of a person.

Supplies

- Bible
- clear contact paper
- permanent marker
- tissue paper in various colors (one 6x6-inch square per child)

Easy Prep

- Cut a piece of contact paper about 3 feet long. Use the permanent marker to draw a basic outline of a person on the non-sticky side of the contact paper. You'll want the piece of contact paper and outline of the person to be large enough so each child will be able to stick several small pieces of tissue paper inside the human outline. Kids will be creating a mosaic of tissue paper pieces.
- Peel off the backing, and hang the contact paper where kids can reach it, sticky side out.

**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 kids link arms with a partner and swing each other in a circle.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids shout this birthday cheer: "Two, four, six, eight, it's birthday time, let's celebrate! Gooooo, [name of birthday kids]!"
- 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 small groups, have kids 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 a few kids 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! 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
- dot stickers
- paper
- markers
- nametags (1 per child)
- pens
- cross or picture of a cross

Easy Prep

- Put the cross near or on a wall.

Touch a Scar

Say: **Our Bible story today is a very serious and sad one. We're going to learn about Jesus dying on the cross.**

Ask: • **Where have you seen crosses?**

• **Why do you think churches have crosses?**

Say: **Crosses are symbols of where Jesus died, which seems sad. But Jesus died to forgive us, and then he came back to life! That's why Christians use the cross as a symbol of something good. Let's find out more about what happened on the cross. As we think about what Jesus experienced on the cross, let's try to stay quiet.** If possible, lower the lights to help create a solemn atmosphere.

One thing Jesus experienced was pain in his body.

Read Luke 23:33.

Say: **Think of a time you got hurt. Perhaps a sibling pushed you or you got in a fight with a bully at school. Put stickers on all the places you remember being hurt.**

Distribute stickers. Put on your own stickers, too.

Say: **We've all been hurt. Probably none of our hurts were as painful as being nailed to a cross. But listen to what Jesus said when people hurt him and nailed him to a cross.**

Read the first sentence of Luke 23:34.

Say: **Let's forgive like Jesus did. As you take off your stickers, silently ask Jesus to help you forgive the people who have hurt you.** Allow time. (During this time, if kids mention any physical abuse from parents or other adults, be sure to report that to your children's ministry director.)

Say: **Jesus forgives when it's hard, so we forgive when it's hard. It's hard to forgive when other people hurt us. Forgiving doesn't mean that we let someone keep hurting us. But it does mean we don't hold a grudge for what they've done in the past.**

Put your hand on one of the places you had a sticker. Now imagine walking around like that for the rest of your life. Pause. We wouldn't want to walk around literally holding on to that painful place, because we wouldn't be able to do a lot of things! In the same way, we don't want to hold on to grudges in our hearts. Doing that just holds us back.

Draw Pictures

Say: **The people not only hurt Jesus but also messed with his stuff.**

Read the rest of Luke 23:34.

Distribute paper and markers. Say: **Draw a picture of a time someone messed up your stuff. Maybe someone lost your favorite pencil or broke your iPad. As kids work, draw your own picture.**

Say: **Jesus forgives when it's hard, so we forgive when it's hard. It can be hard to forgive someone for messing up our stuff. What the soldiers did with Jesus' stuff didn't ruin it, but it was embarrassing. But Jesus still forgives. Let's show we forgive the people who messed up our stuff by tearing up our pictures. As you tear your picture, ask Jesus to help you forgive.**

Have kids tear up their pictures and put the scraps in the garbage as you do the same.

Write Mean Things

Say: **After Jesus' body had been hurt and his stuff had been gambled away, people started saying mean things to him.**

Read Luke 23:35-39.

Distribute nametags and pens.

Say: **Think of the mean things people have said to you. Write them on your nametag, or draw a picture that reminds you of the mean things. Then stick that nametag on the palm of your hand. Put your hand over your heart. That way no one else can see what you wrote, but we'll see that everyone has mean words others have said to them.**

Allow time for kids to write or draw, and make your own nametag, too.

Say: **Jesus forgives when it's hard, so we forgive when it's hard. Jesus died on the cross to forgive everyone in the whole world. That includes the people who were making fun of him. *And* it includes the people who've made fun of you. It's hard to forgive people for saying mean things to us. But it hurts *our* hearts to hold on to that grudge. So let's forgive.**

Take off your nametag as you pray for Jesus to help you forgive the people who said those mean words. Then have kids do the same.

Say: **Forgiving is hard. But we don't have to forgive on our own. Jesus is here to help us. He forgives us when we do bad things, and his forgiveness can flow through us to other people. Let's look at one more thing Jesus forgave.**

Bring Sins to the Cross

Read Luke 23:40-43.

Say: **We don't know what this criminal had done. But we know it was pretty bad based on his punishment! Even though he'd done really bad things, Jesus forgave him and promised him a place in heaven.**

Jesus forgives when it's hard. That means he forgives *us* even when it's hard. Even when you feel like what you've done is too big to be forgiven.

Distribute more paper, and have kids spread out and face a wall, where no one will see what they write or draw.

Say: **On your paper, write or draw some of the things you've done wrong. That's called *sin*. Sin hurts others, and it hurts God. Without forgiveness, sin keeps us apart from God. When you're done, crumple your paper.**

Allow time. Write your own list and crumple it, too.

Say: **Jesus forgives when it's hard. There is nothing, *nothing* on your list that Jesus won't forgive. When he died on the cross, he took the punishment for everything on all our lists. He wants us to be his friends, so he forgives us. He wants us to be in heaven where everything is perfect, so he took away our sin by dying on the cross.**

Let's bring our sins to the cross to show that we want Jesus to forgive us and we want to be his friends. Remember, do this quietly as you think about what Jesus did for you. Set your crumpled paper at the foot of the cross, and then have kids do the same.

When everyone is sitting back down, pray: **Jesus, thank you that you forgive when it's hard. Thank you that there's no sin of ours too big that you won't forgive it. Thank you that you know what it's like to forgive when people hurt you, mess up your stuff, or call you mean names. Help us forgive when people do those things to us. In your name, amen.**

Say: **This was a very sad story. Jesus went through a lot of hard things and ended up dying on a cross. But here's the best news ever: Jesus isn't dead now! Three days after Jesus died on the cross, he came back to life! He's alive today, and he's here with us now. Let's high-five about that! High-five with kids.**

Say: **Jesus forgives when it's hard. We've all gotten to experience Jesus' forgiveness. And when we really experience the joy of forgiveness, Jesus helps us pass that on to others! When you're mad at someone, remember: Jesus died to forgive that person. If Jesus forgives everyone, so can we!**



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 learn a song that will remind us to forgive others.**

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

Stuck

[10 min]

Supplies

- finger traps (1 per child) (can be purchased at party supply stores or online)

Experiment With Finger Traps

Say: **Forgiving others isn't always easy. We may feel like we're trapped between knowing that we should forgive someone and still feeling hurt and anger because of what that person did to us. Let's experiment with something that'll trap us and make us feel stuck.**

- Give each child a finger trap. Show kids how to place a pointer finger in each end of the tube.
- Have kids try to remove their fingers from the trap. They'll find that they're stuck in the tube.
- Give kids about five minutes to play with the finger traps and experiment to find the best way to release their fingers. Encourage kids to try using different fingers, too.



Talk About It

Ask: • **What was the best way to get out of the traps?**

- **How is trying to get your fingers out of these traps like struggling to forgive someone?**

Say: **It's hard to forgive on our own. The more we struggle with hard feelings and unforgiveness, the more we're stuck with hurt feelings and tense friendships. But Jesus forgives when it's hard. When we're friends with Jesus, we can relax and let go of our hurt. He'll help us forgive even when it's hard.**

Ask: • **Tell about a time someone forgave you. Do you think it was hard for that person? Why or why not? Share your own example first.**

Say: **Jesus forgives when it's hard. We can give our hurt to him, and he'll help us find freedom when we stop struggling and give grace and forgiveness to others.**



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 frowns turn into smiles! 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?** Kids 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 kids 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 person 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 an example of someone you need forgive, such as a friend who forgot your birthday].

Ask: • **Who do you want to forgive?** Kids 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 child 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 kids 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.**



Supplies

- Bible
- clear contact paper
- permanent marker
- tissue paper in various colors (one 6x6-inch square per child)

Easy Prep

- Cut a piece of contact paper about 3 feet long. Use the permanent marker to draw a basic outline of a person on the non-sticky side of the contact paper. You'll want the piece of contact paper and outline of the person to be large enough so each child will be able to stick several small pieces of tissue paper inside the human outline. Kids will be creating a mosaic of tissue paper pieces.
- Peel off the backing, and hang the contact paper where kids can reach it, sticky side out.

Rip Tissue Paper

Say: **Today we learned that Jesus forgave his enemies when they treated him so badly. And we found out that Jesus forgives us, too, for all the wrong things we do. Jesus loves us so much! Sometimes it can be really hard to forgive others—especially when they hurt us. But Jesus shows us we can forgive even when it's hard.**

Share one or two things people do that hurt others. For example, you might say when people hit others it hurts their bodies. Rip off a small piece of tissue paper. Say: **When people hurt us or do something wrong, it's like they broke or ripped our hearts. Wrong things hurt!**

Give each child a tissue paper square.

Ask: • **What are other things people do that are wrong or hurt others?** Lead kids in ripping off a small piece of tissue paper for each example given. Have kids keep their ripped pieces in front of them, and continue until every child has several small tissue paper pieces.

Make a Mosaic

Pick up a pile of tissue pieces, and then let them fall from your hand onto the floor. Say: **Look at all these ripped and broken pieces. Wrong things and sins hurt us and make us feel broken! But when we forgive people, it can make something beautiful. It can help us be even better friends with people when we forgive them. Jesus forgives when it's hard, so we can forgive when it's hard, too.**

If someone gets mad and grabs something from my hand, it hurts me. But if I say "I forgive you" (press a ripped piece of tissue paper to the sticky side of the contact paper inside the human shape) and I remember everyone messes up, my friend will feel better, knowing I forgave him. Lead kids to each add a ripped piece of tissue paper inside the human shape.

Say: **Look, it's already starting to be beautiful with all those colors, after just one example of forgiveness.** Review some of the examples kids shared about ways people hurt others and a way forgiveness can be a good thing. Have kids each add a piece of tissue paper for each example you share. Continue until the human shape is filled with colorful tissue paper and you have a mosaic.

Hang the mosaic in a window, and point out how the light shines through. Invite kids to tell what they like about it.

Say: **Look at this beautiful person. He's full of ripped pieces of tissue paper—sort of like the things we do that hurt others and the things others do that hurt us. But Jesus teaches us to forgive. And when we forgive others, it makes something beautiful. That's why Jesus forgives when it's hard, and we can forgive when it's hard, too.**

