

3-6 | July 19

Bible Story: The Servant Who Had No Mercy • *Matthew 18:21-35*

Bottom Line: God's kingdom grows when you forgive.

Monthly Memory Verse: *God's kingdom is not about eating or drinking. It is about doing what is right and having peace and joy. All this comes through the Holy Spirit.* • Romans 14:17 NIV

1. Opening Activity

What You Need:

- ☐ Offering container

What You Do:

- Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Encourage kids to select a partner.
- Partners will stand, facing each other, with their hands behind their backs.
- Say: "On your marks, get set, SHOW!"
 - On "SHOW!" each kid is to hold up one to five fingers on one hand.
 - The other hand is to remain behind their back.
- Pairs will add up the two hands (one from each player). If the total for both is seven, that pair is out and must sit down.
 - For example: If one kid holds up three fingers and their partner holds up four fingers for a total of seven, the pair is out.
- Repeat with remaining pairs, calling out: "Ready, Set, SHOW!" for each round, as time and interest allow.

What You Say:

"What number were you trying to avoid? (*Pause for responses.*) Yes! The number seven. Pay close attention to our Bible Story today to find out why seven is the wrong answer."

2. Video on Jellyfin

Lead the children in worship to one song and then watch today's video lesson.

3. Pray

What You Say:

“Every single one of us has sinned against God. We have done and said things that go against God and His ways—including against the rules He gave because He made us and loves us and knows the best way for us to live. God is so amazing that any sin creates a giant debt, like the money the first servant owed the king in the Bible Story. But Jesus loves us so much that He paid our giant debt we owed because of sin. Let’s open up today in prayer and thank God for His forgiveness and ask Him to help us forgive others.”

Prayer:

“Dear God, thank You for forgiving us when we mess up. It feels so good to be forgiven. Please help us to be like You and forgive others when they hurt us. Help us smooth out our hearts and let go of the angry feelings. We want Your kingdom to grow. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

4. King for a Day

What You Need:

- ☐ Bible marked at Matthew 18:21-35
- ☐ Paper crown

What You Do:*During the Activity:*

- Open the Bible, and review today’s story.
- Share these main points:
 - Peter asked Jesus how many times he needed to forgive someone.
 - Jesus answered, then He told a story to share how God’s kingdom works.
 - In the story, a king decided to get everyone who owed him debts to pay him.
 - One servant had a huge debt and begged and begged the king for time to pay.
 - Instead of making the servant pay back the humongous debt, the king forgave it! Completely!
 - But that same servant had another servant who owed him a little debt.
 - Instead of forgiving the servant who owed him, like the king had forgiven him, that servant put the other servant who owed him in prison and demanded that he pay him his tiny debt.
 - The king heard what the forgiven servant had done, and he was so upset. He threw the servant in jail until he could pay his huge debt.
 - Jesus said that we should forgive people who hurt us because we have been forgiven of so much.
- Say: “We are going to make our own crowns and pretend to be king for a day.”

- Have the kids use the materials provided to decorate their crowns.

What You Say:

“Your crowns look amazing! Why was the king sad at the end of the story? (*Because the first servant wouldn’t forgive!*) That’s right. The king had shown great mercy and forgiveness, and he wanted the servant to do the same.

“Jesus told this story to teach us that because God forgives us, we should forgive others. When Peter asked Jesus how many times we should forgive someone, Jesus said, *‘I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times’* (Matthew 18:22 NIV). Now, do you think Jesus meant you should forgive someone exactly 77 times, and then refuse to forgive the 78th time? No way. Jesus simply meant that we should always forgive.

“Jesus taught His followers that God’s kingdom doesn’t look like kingdoms on earth. It doesn’t grow by sending soldiers to conquer other nations. Instead, God’s kingdom grows as we show the love of Jesus to other people, and they decide to follow Jesus because He is just so good! And one of the ways we can show God’s love is by forgiving others! **[Bottom Line] God’s kingdom grows when you forgive.”**

5. Counting Forgiveness

What You Need:

- ☐ Beach ball

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Invite the kids to stand with you in a circle.
- Start tossing the ball back and forth between you and the kids.
- Each time the ball is caught, count one number higher. “One!” “Two!” “Three!”
- When you get to the number ten, stop the game.
- Say: “Okay, we counted to ten. Should we stop forgiving people after they’ve made ten bad choices?” (*No!*)
- Start the game again, but this time, try to count as high as you can before someone drops the ball.
- Keep it fun, and celebrate how high you can count.
- Challenge: use different ways to get the ball around (ex. Rolling, bumping it like in volleyball, one handed bumps, using your head to bump the ball)

What You Say:

“God is like the good king in the story who completely forgave the huge amount of money. When we trust that Jesus paid for our sin on the cross and choose to follow Him, God wipes out

our sin debt. We were completely tied up in our sin ... but now, we're free! It's incredible. Because God has forgiven us of such a giant sin debt, He wants us to pass that forgiveness on to the people around us. Like Jesus told Peter, we can continue to forgive without putting limits on it.

"Forgiving someone doesn't mean what they did was okay or you should let them keep doing it. It doesn't even mean you have to keep being friends with them. If someone hurts you or makes you uncomfortable, tell a grown-up you trust!

"Forgiving someone says that you're trusting God to make things right. And when you forgive, it frees *you* from staying angry and becoming hard and bitter. Forgiveness isn't a feeling, it's a choice. And when you ask God for help and choose to forgive, you are showing your world God's good heart of forgiveness. And God will do great kingdom things when you choose to forgive. **[Bottom Line] God's kingdom grows when you forgive.**"

EveryChild Pro-Tips

- *Play this game from a seated position if that's better for the group.*