

Focus: Forgiving others brings peace.

Materials:

- CD: Bible Songs for Kids-Vol 1
- Gospel: Children's Everyday Bible
- Construction paper heart
- Safety scissors
- Tape
- Bag of rice

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about being peace in the world. Today we will hear Jesus tell us how many times we are to forgive others.*

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

Let us pray.

Loving God, thank you for your forgiving love.

Help us to be forgiving too.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Song/Movement

Praise Him, Praise Him, All Ye Little Children, track: 29, from Bible Songs for Kids Vol. 1

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

Praise Him, Praise Him
All ye little children
God is love, God is love

Praise Him, Praise Him
All ye little children
God is love, God is love

Replace Praise Him, Praise Him for
verses 2-4 and repeat Praise Him on
the final verse.

Love Him
Serve Him
Thank Him
Praise Him.

Alternate Creative Movement

Have kids form two equal lines facing each other, or a big circle. To the beat of the music have them take four steps toward each other and clap the hands of the child facing them (or their own), then take four steps back and clap their hands together. Repeat.

Memory Verse

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

Forgive your friends, because I forgave you.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *Everyone needs forgiveness sometimes. If we want to be forgiven when we ask, we have to be willing to do the same for those who ask forgiveness of us.*

Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *"Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

Read: Children's Everyday Bible, pp. 266--See NOTE below, *The Bad Servant*

NOTE: read this before you start the gospel as an introduction:

>Peter asked Jesus how many times he needed to forgive someone. He wondered if 7 times would be enough. Jesus told him that he should forgive 70 times—a very big number a number so high you can't count it. Then Jesus told this parable:

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *What story does Jesus tell?*
- *How does the king treat the slave who owes him a debt?*
- *How does the slave treat his fellow slaves?*
- *What does Jesus' story teach about forgiveness?*
- *When do you forgive?*
- *Why is it important to forgive those who hurt you?*
- *Do you ask for forgiveness when you do something wrong?*

Reflection on Reading:

In today's gospel Jesus teaches about the importance of forgiveness. Peter asks Jesus about how many times we should forgive someone who wrongs us. With his answer seventy-seven times, Jesus makes the point that forgiveness should have no limit. Jesus tells his followers that it is important for them to share with others the gift of forgiveness that God has given them. The story that Jesus tells about a king and an unforgiving slave

teaches that we are to forgive one another because God has forgiven us. Today's passage closes with a firm warning to forgive as God forgives.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

The Heart of Reconciliation

Show everyone the large heart cut out of construction paper. Explain that peace (which comes from forgiveness) is like a large heart in which everyone lives in love and happiness. Hurting someone is like cutting away a piece of the heart. As you say this, cut a small wedge out of the heart with safety scissors.

Pass the heart to one of the children, asking them to cut a small piece from the heart and mention something that hurts others and cuts away at the peace in which we all live. Pass around to the older kids until the heart looks like Swiss cheese. Ask the children what happens to the peace if people are hurting each other. Point out that everyone has less peace, because we all share the whole heart.

Invite the children to help you tape the heart back together as you name ways to make up and ask forgiveness. (The younger children can help here.) Mention that even when we make up, there are scars. It's best not to hurt each other in the first place.

Activity 2:

Carrying a Heavy Burden

(There will be a heavy sack of rice next to the supply cabinet)

Not being able to forgive someone and staying angry is a heavy burden. What does this mean? (Give a child the heavy sack to hold). Explain how it is like not forgiving...it gets in the way of everyday things. It can stop you from doing things that you would enjoy. Let the children pass the heavy sack around so they can feel the weight of not forgiving and the burden it brings...imagine trying to go down the slide or swing on a swing with this burden...imagine trying to brush your teeth or eat a meal!! Encourage the children to think of a time when they were angry with someone and how it made things difficult. Here are some examples of when we can forgive others:

- Your mother is late picking you up from school. How can you show you forgive her?
- You made a big mess in the kitchen. What should you do?
- Your brother repeatedly takes something of yours without asking?
- A friend lost her temper at you and later apologized.
- Your friends say they want to play with someone else.
- Your sister calls you a naughty name.
- Your dad promised he would play ball with you, but he had to work late.
- You got mad when your friend beat you in a game.
- You lost your temper when your sister wouldn't listen to you and you yelled at her

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "We Believe!")

Ask: *Do we believe in God, who forgives us when we do wrong?*

Do we believe in Jesus, who teaches us to forgive one another as God has forgiven us?

Do we believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to be at peace with ourselves and with one another?

Sending Forth

Say: *If you find yourself angry or mad at someone, remember that we should forgive them, even though it is very hard. We want to spread peace so we should try to be friends again.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*His Banner Over Me is Love.*" track 15 from Bible Songs for Kids Vol 1 while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.