

PK-2<sup>nd</sup>

*Living the Word*

*Teaching Kids God's Story*  
*Narrative Lectionary, Year 1*



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## Teacher's Guide

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Lesson #1-22

The Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:15-35

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## Lesson #1-22

# The Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:15-35

**Key Verse:**

Matthew 18:22

**Story Themes:**

Peter asks Jesus how many times we must forgive. Jesus tells him “seventy-seven times.”

Jesus tells a story about a king who forgives his servant, but the servant does not forgive his friend.

Jesus reminds us that we should forgive and love each other just as God forgives and loves us.

**Bible Basics:**

Parables

**Spiritual Practice:**

Fellowship

**Lesson Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- † Define a parable by comparing parables to stories with lessons and to answering three main questions.
- † Summarize the parable of the Unforgiving Servant by reenacting the story using props and simple dialogue.
- † Demonstrate the spiritual practice of fellowship by linking arms and moving as a group.

# Activities a la Carte

## Activities

## Supplies

### Story Centers (PK-K)

15 min.

#### Forgiveness Flowers

Color flowers with seven petals.

- † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.A
- † Crayons and markers
- † Googly eyes

#### Erased!

God's forgiveness is like an eraser.

- † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.B
- † Pencils
- † Erasers

#### Walk in Someone Else's Shoes

Experience life from a different perspective.

- † Variety of shoes

### Into the Story (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>)

#### Seven Stickers

Decorate seven pointed crowns with stickers.

5 min.

- † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.C
- † Assorted stickers

### Bible Nuts and Bolts (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>)

#### What Is a Parable?

Discover the definition of a parable.

5 min.

- † Nothing

### Learning the Story (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>)

#### The King, the Servants, and the Gold

We should all both give and receive forgiveness.

10 min.

- † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.D
- † Empty duffel bag
- † Empty sandwich bag

# Activities a la Carte

## Living the Story (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>)

**Linked Arms of Forgiveness**  
Forgiveness brings us together.

15 min. † Nothing

## Additional Activities

**Healed Hearts (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>)**  
Fixing broken hearts with bandages of forgiveness.

10 min. † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.B  
† Scissors  
† Adhesive bandages

**Spider Web (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>)**  
Connected by kindness and fellowship!

10 min. † A large ball of yarn

**Student Bible Book: The Unforgiving  
Servant (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>)**  
Students continue their own Bible story book!

10 min. † Each student's binder  
† Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.E or #1-22.F  
† A three-hole punch  
† Pens  
† Markers and/or crayons  
† A sample page (See below)

## Singing the Story (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>)

**Happy All the Time**  
Traditional children's Bible song.

5 min. † Nothing

## Closing Prayer

5 min.

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# Background for Teachers

## Forgiveness and Mercy

Last week your class learned about Transfiguration (Matthew 16:24-17:8). This week, your class will learn about forgiveness through the parable of the Unforgiving Servant as told by Jesus in answer to a question from Peter (Matthew 18:15-35).

In this passage, Jesus's answer to Peter's question about how many times he must forgive someone else has been interpreted as seventy-seven times. It has also been interpreted as seventy times seven times. While Jesus's intention is often understood to mean "forgive as many times as necessary," it is important to remember that this is not exactly what Jesus said.

Jesus goes on to highlight his point by telling a parable involving a king and two servants. At the end of the passage, Jesus reminds Peter that just as God forgives us, so too should we forgive each other.

## Bible Nuts and Bolts: Parables

This week you will introduce the meaning of the word "parable" to your students. Your students will learn that Jesus sometimes taught lessons by telling stories about familiar people and places and that these lesson stories are called parables. But, parables are not just any stories. Parables are a specific genre of stories that sets up a comparison between something outside the story to something going on inside the story (e.g. "The kingdom of heaven is like..."), uses common situations, and contains a surprising twist. While some of Jesus' parables seem easy to interpret, many are difficult and that's okay! The surprising twist causes the listener to take time and mull the parable over.

## Story Themes

Any passage of Scripture has innumerable themes and lessons for the student. However, a single lesson cannot cover everything. The following themes are the focus of this lesson.

Peter asks Jesus how many times we must forgive. Jesus tells him, "seventy-seven times." As the passage of the day opens, Peter is asking Jesus how many times he must forgive someone for something they have done wrong to him. Jesus tells him "seventy-seven times." Jesus then goes on to tell a parable that teaches a lesson about forgiveness.

Jesus tells a story of a king who forgives his servant, yet the servant does not forgive his friend. The parable of the Unforgiving Servant teaches the lesson of forgiveness, illustrating the point that we are all equally deserving of both granting and receiving forgiveness.

Jesus reminds us that we should forgive and love each other just as God forgives and loves us. Your students will learn the most important point of this message: Just as God forgives our sins over and over again, we need to forgive each other as many times as necessary.

## Spiritual Practice: Fellowship

The "Living the Story" activity has students linking arms and moving as a group in the spirit of forgiveness and togetherness, showing the common bonds and community spirit that define the essence of fellowship.

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# Lesson Plan

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## Story Centers (PK-K; 15 minutes)

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Story Centers are mini-activities designed specifically for preschool and kindergarten students. Depending on the size of your class, you can set these up as centers for in-class rotations or do them as a whole class one after another. In most preschool and kindergarten classes, these centers along with a snack, the “Learning the Story” activity, and the “Living the Story” activity will fill the education time, but feel free to choose any activity you think would be fun and appropriate for your class.

### Forgiveness Flowers

Make copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.A and provide an assortment of crayons and markers for the students to color their flowers. After the flowers are colored, encourage children to add a googly eye in the middle (to represent “I forgive”).

### Erased!

Make copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.B and have an assortment of pencils, and large erasers — enough for each student to have one. Depending on age and ability, have the students draw pictures or write words to show mistakes they may have made. (For example: I spilled my milk at breakfast. I forgot to feed the dog. I wasn’t nice to my little sister.) After drawing or writing a few examples, have the students pick up their erasers and erase all their mistakes, wiping their hearts clean just like God does when he forgives!

### Walk in Someone Else’s Shoes

Gather an assortment of shoes in various sizes and styles — from small to large to everything in-between. Have students take off their own shoes and put on a pair from the pile and try walking around the room for a while. Encourage the students to try a variety of shoe sizes in order to experience a wide range of viewpoints, something that might help later when trying to understand why someone did or said something wrong and might then make it easier to say, “I forgive you.”

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## Into the Story (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>; 5 minutes)

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### Seven Stickers

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Decorate a seven-pointed crown with stickers.

*You will need:*

- † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.C
- † Assorted stickers

*During class:*

1. All students will be given Activity Sheet #1-22.C on which is a seven-pointed paper crown with the letters FORGIVE preprinted on the points.
2. Students will choose stickers from an assortment in a bucket or pile in the middle of the table and encouraged to decorate their crowns.
3. Say: **In the story today, Jesus tells Peter to forgive someone else seventy-seven times.**
4. **Jesus then tells Peter a story of a forgiving king and an unforgiving servant to explain the idea even more.**
5. **Look at the crowns you have in front of you. Count the points — how many are there? [Seven!]**
6. **See the letters on the points? Those spell the word “forgive.”**
7. **Let’s decorate this kingly crown with stickers!**

## Bible Nuts and Bolts (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>; 10 minutes)

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### What Is a Parable?

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Discover the definition of a parable.

*You will need:*

- † Nothing

*During class:*

1. **Do you like to listen to stories?**
2. **Do you like to tell stories? [Yes!] Jesus liked stories too!**
3. **People liked to listen to Jesus’ stories. What kinds of stories do you like to listen to? [Answers will vary.]**



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4. **What do you like best about stories?** *[Answers will vary but may include: they can be fun and funny, they can be interesting, they can teach me things about people, places, and things.]*
  5. **When Jesus was on earth, he sometimes told stories to teach people something. He liked to use lots of examples and usually put in a surprise too!**
  6. **Those stories were called parables. Parables were simple stories that taught a lesson and often had surprises in them that might make the listener gasp!**
  7. **Can you remember all of that? Let's see if you can answer me when I count to three.... Ready?**
  8. **What were Jesus's stories called? 1... 2... 3 —** *[Parables!]*
  9. **A parable is a story that teaches us a: 1... 2... 3 —** *[Lesson!]*
  10. **What did Jesus's parables have in them that sometime made people gasp? 1... 2... 3 —** *[Surprises!]*

## Learning the Story (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>; 10 minutes)

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### The King, the Servants, and the Gold

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We should all be able to grant forgiveness and to be forgiven.

*You will need:*

- † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.D
- † Empty duffel bag
- † Empty sandwich bag

*During class:*

1. **To teach Peter about forgiveness, Jesus told him a story about a king and two servants. Let's learn that story together!**
2. **We will pretend that the king's name is Bob, the servant's names are Clyde and Fred, and the money they borrowed was given to them in two very different bags. Hold up the empty duffel and sandwich bags.**
3. **Listen to my words and do what I do as I tell you the story of the Unforgiving Servant.**
4. **Follow the script found on Activity Sheet #1-22.D using dialogue, actions, props and prompts as indicated.**
5. **After the story, say: Jesus told this parable of the Unforgiving Servant to teach a lesson about what?** *[Forgiveness!]*
6. **Who was the first person to forgive someone else in the story?** *[King Bob!]*
7. **Who did not give forgiveness when he was asked?** *[Servant Clyde!]*

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8. **Did anything surprise you in this story?** *[Answers will vary but may include: That the king's servant didn't show forgiveness right after he was forgiven!]*

## Living the Story (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>; 15 minutes)

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### Linked Arms of Forgiveness

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Forgiveness brings us together.

*You will need:*

† Nothing

*During class:*

1. Students will stand in a circle and link their arms together.
2. Following teacher cues, students will move as a group in a clockwise direction then a counterclockwise direction, followed by moving together into the middle and then moving back out to form the original circle again.
3. After the original circle is back in place, you will move around the circle and gently unlink the arms of the students while saying: **I am the Unforgiving Breaker-Upper. I'm here to get in your way!**
4. The students may protest and complain, but you will continue unlinking the student's arms and say: **The Unforgiving Breaker-Upper is always trying to break things up and get in the way. But there is one thing that sends the Unforgiving Breaker-Upper away... Forgiveness!**
5. Try saying, "I forgive you," and see if you can send the Unforgiving Breaker-Upper away! *[I forgive you!]*
6. You then raise your hands in surrender. **You did it! You win! You brought your circle back together again!**
7. Lead the students in re-linking arms and then leads the group in a repeat of the movements from earlier. (see Step 2).
8. **Forgiveness brings us back together even after things like the Unforgiving Breaker-Upper try to pull us apart. Let's remember to forgive each other and be friends in fellowship together!**

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## Additional Activities

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### Healed Hearts (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>; 10 minutes)

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Fixing broken hearts with bandages of forgiveness.

*You will need:*

- † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.B
- † Scissors
- † Adhesive bandages

*Before class:*

1. For younger students or to save time in class, you may cut out the hearts from Activity Sheet #1-22.B before class.

*During class:*

1. Have students cut out the heart on Activity Sheet #1-22.B and then cut or rip the heart into multiple pieces.
2. **When someone does or says something mean to us, it might feel like our heart is broken.**
3. Show the pieces of the broken heart.
4. **It looks hard to fix, doesn't it? But it's easy with these wonderful words: "I forgive you!"**
5. Say the words while you use the bandages to fix your broken heart.
6. **Forgiveness is like putting bandages on our hearts — it can fix what is broken and help the healing begin!**
7. **Just like God makes our hearts happy with his never-ending love and forgiveness, we can make our hearts happy by forgiving other people when they say or do something wrong to us.**

### Spider Web (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>; 10 minutes)

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Connected by kindness and fellowship!

*You will need:*

- † A ball of yarn

*During class:*

1. Sit with your students in a circle on the floor.

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2. Holding one end of a large ball of yarn, roll it to a student across the circle from you while saying one nice thing. **I like the way you smiled when you came into the room today.**
  3. Tell that student to hold their part of the yarn ball while rolling the rest of the ball to another student and saying something nice about that person.
  4. When the next student receives the yarn ball, he or she will do the same thing (hold, roll, say something nice).
  5. The game will continue until all students are holding a part of the yarn ball.
  6. After the game is finished, say: **Look at that — just by saying nice things to each other, we're now all connected! Forgiveness and fellowship look like this too — they connect us just like this yarn connects us, in a web of love and kindness.**

### Student Bible Book: The Unforgiving Servant (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>; 10 minutes)

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Students create their own Bible story book!

*You will need:*

- † A three-ring binder for each student (See Note)
- † Copies of Activity Sheet #1-22.E or #1-22.F on 8.5" x 11" cardstock or plain paper
- † A three-hole punch
- † Markers and/or crayons
- † A sample page (See below)

*Before class:*

1. Create a sample page using the instructions below to demonstrate to students approximately what their page could look like.

*During class:*

1. Hand out a copy of the Student Bible book page (either the coloring sheet or the student drawing sheet) and markers/crayons to each student.
2. Show students the sample page you made before class.
3. Say: **This year in class we are going to create our own Bible books of the stories we will cover.**
4. Read the bottom of the activity sheet aloud, reminding students of what they learned in the lesson.
5. Have them color the provided picture or draw a picture related to today's story in the middle of the page.
6. When students are finished, have them put their names on the back and collect the pages. Three-hole punch the papers and put them in individual binders for each student. Binders are to be kept at church until the end of the year.

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## Singing the Story (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>; 5 minutes)

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### Happy All the Time

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Traditional children's Bible song. The tune can be found online.

I'm inright [point in], outright [point out],  
upright [point up], downright [point down]  
Happy all the time [clap with each word]  
I'm inright [point in], outright [point out],  
upright [point up], downright [point down]  
Happy all the time [clap with each word]

Since Jesus Christ came in  
And took away my sin I'm...  
I'm inright [point in], outright [point out],  
upright [point up], downright [point down]  
Happy all the time [clap with each word]  
[Repeat faster and faster each time]

## Closing Prayer (PK-2<sup>nd</sup>; 5 minutes)

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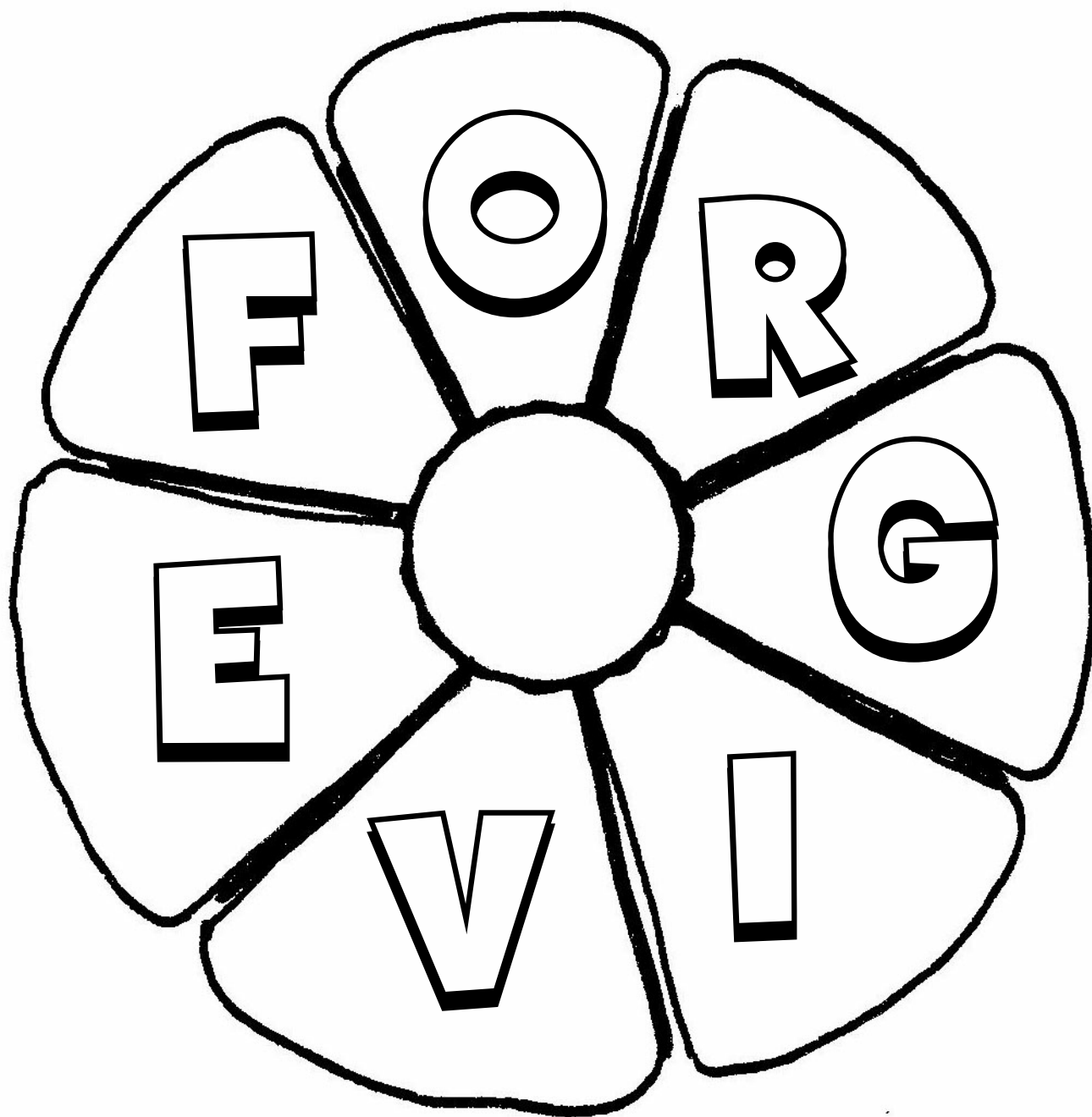
### Prayer

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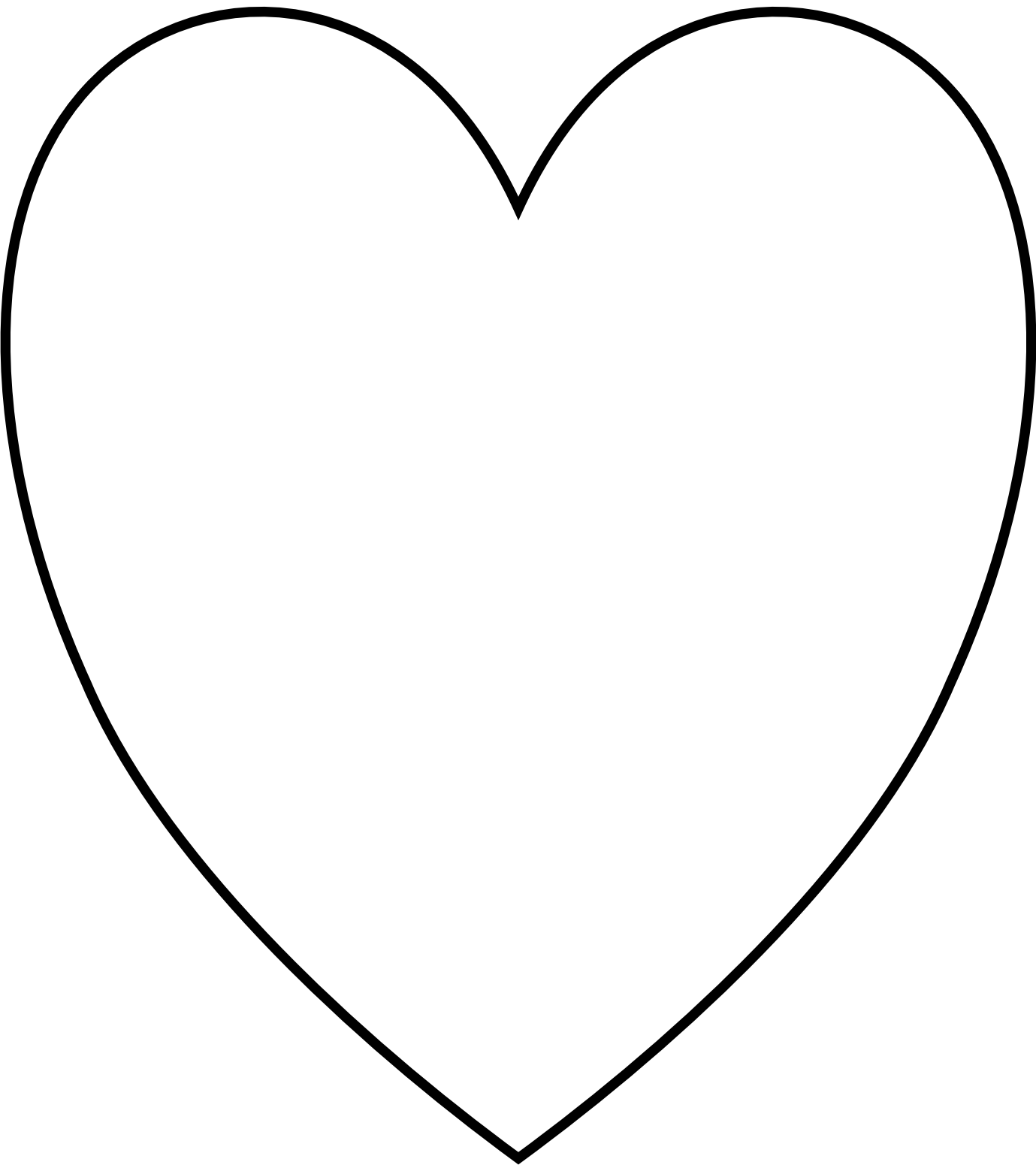
Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

***Dear Jesus,  
Sometimes other people do or say things that make us angry or confused.  
Sometimes we do and say things like that too. Help us to learn how to say,  
"I'm sorry," and how to listen when others apologize. Help us to let  
go of our grudges and say, "I forgive you." Help us to remember  
that just as God forgives us, we must forgive others as well. In Your  
name we pray. Amen.***

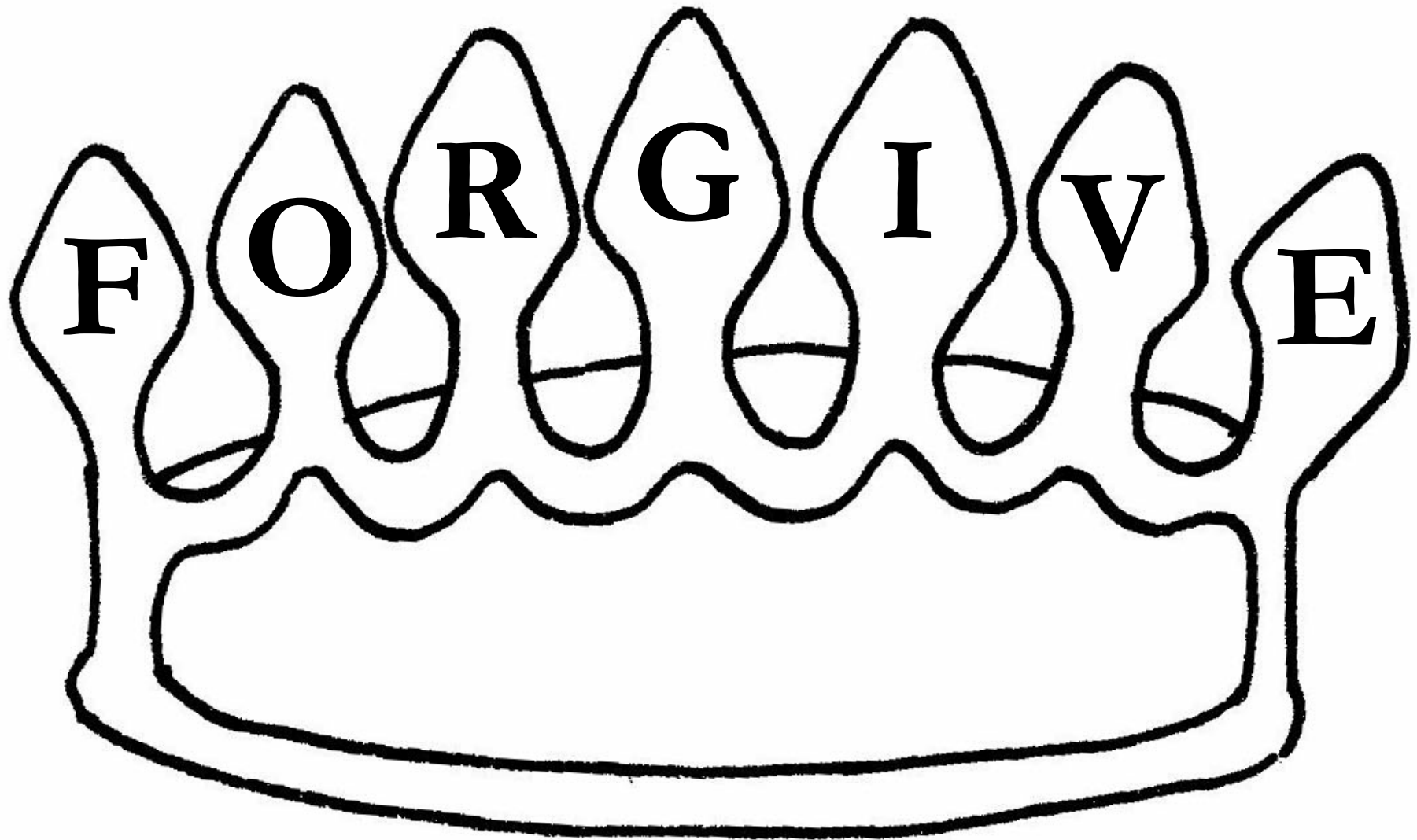
# Forgiveness Flowers



# Heart of Forgiveness



## Seven Stickers





# The King, the Servants, and the Gold

## *A Read-Aloud Story with Actions*

**Props:**

Empty duffel bag

Empty sandwich bag

Once there was a king named Bob who lent a lot of money to his servant, Clyde. It was so much money, Clyde had to use a great big bag to carry it all!

*[Hold up the duffel bag.]*

But one day, King Bob decided it was time for Clyde to pay him back. “Clyde! Hey, Clyde!” King Bob called. “Come here, and bring that bag of gold I gave you!”

*[Lead students in an exaggerated ‘come here’ gesture and possibly a unison cry of, “Clyde, hey, Clyde!”]*

When Clyde heard the king call, he grabbed his great big bag and hurried to the castle.

*[Lead students in running in place while pretending to be carrying big bags.]*

“Here I am, King Bob!” Clyde said. “I came as soon as I could!” “Thank you, Clyde,” King Bob answered. “Did you bring back my money?” “Oh, King Bob, I’m so sorry! I spent all your money. I don’t have any left.” Clyde opened his great big bag and turned it upside down, showing King Bob how empty it was.

*[Hold up the empty duffel bag, turn it upside down and shake it. Lead students in imitating the shaking motion, perhaps even passing the duffel bag around for students to shake as well.]*

King Bob sighed and shook his head.

*[Lead students in big sighs and exaggerated headshakes.]*

“You borrowed a lot of money,” King Bob said to Clyde. “If you don’t pay me back, I have to send you to jail.” “Don’t send me to jail, King Bob!” Clyde begged. “I said I’m sorry. Can’t you forgive me?” King Bob rubbed his chin as if he were thinking hard, and then he said, “You know what, Clyde? I’ve decided I will forgive you. You don’t need to pay me back after all.” “Hooray!” Clyde shouted. He jumped up and ran out and left his great big empty bag behind.

*[Lead students in a cheer of “Hooray!”]*

Right outside the castle, Clyde saw his friend, Fred. “Fred owes me money,” Clyde said to himself. “And I need money right now.” Clyde called out to Fred. “Fred, hey, Fred, come here!”

*[Lead students in an exaggerated ‘come here’ gesture and possibly a unison cry of, ‘Fred, hey, Fred, come here!’]*

“Hi, Clyde,” Fred said. “What’s up?” “I want my money back,” Clyde said. He held out his hand and waited.

*[Lead students in holding a hand out, palm up, as if waiting to be paid.]*

“Your money?” Fred turned red. “I don’t have it. I spent it. See?” Fred showed Clyde a small empty bag.

*[Hold up the empty sandwich bag up for all the class to see.]*

“I’m so sorry,” Fred said. “Please forgive me.” “Sorry?” Clyde said. “That does me no good! I want my money back right now. Pay up, or else you have to go to jail.”

*[Lead students in again holding out a hand palm up, perhaps adding a tapping foot as if impatient and annoyed.]*

“Don’t send me to jail, Clyde!” Fred begged. “I said I’m sorry. Can’t you forgive me?” “No!” Clyde shouted. “It’s off to jail with you!” And just like that, Fred was taken away and thrown in jail. Clyde was satisfied, but someone else wasn’t very happy. “Clyde!” King Bob said. “What have you done? How could you do this to your friend?” Clyde tried to explain. “Fred refused to pay me back!” But King Bob wouldn’t listen. “I showed you mercy for that big bag of money,” King Bob said to Clyde.

*[Lead students in pointing to the empty duffel bag.]*

“But you threw Fred in jail for that little bag of coins.” King Bob pointed at Fred’s empty bag.

*[Lead students in pointing to the empty sandwich bag.]*

“Clyde,” King Bob said, “I think you need to learn a lesson. I think it is you who needs to go to jail.” And just like that, Clyde was thrown in jail, all because he didn’t forgive the way he had been forgiven.

# The Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:15-35



## I learned that:

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- † Peter asks Jesus how many times we must forgive. Jesus tells him “seventy-seven times.”
- † Jesus tells a story about a king who forgives his servant, but the servant does not forgive his friend.
- † Jesus reminds us that we should forgive and love each other just as God forgives and loves us.

# The Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:15-35

## I learned that:

---

- † Peter asks Jesus how many times we must forgive. Jesus tells him “seventy-seven times.”
- † Jesus tells a story about a king who forgives his servant, but the servant does not forgive his friend.
- † Jesus reminds us that we should forgive and love each other just as God forgives and loves us.



PK-2nd

# The Story @ Home

***Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story***  
Narrative Lectionary, Year 1

**Lesson #1-22**  
**Matthew 18:15-35**

## **Forgiveness and Mercy**

Last week your child learned about Transfiguration (Matthew 16:24-17:8). This week, your child learned about forgiveness through the parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:15-35).

In this passage, Jesus's answer to Peter's question about how many times he must forgive has been interpreted as seventy-seven times. It has also been interpreted as seventy times seven times. While Jesus's intention is often understood to mean "forgive as many times as necessary," it is important to remember that this is not exactly what Jesus said.

Jesus goes on to highlight his point by telling a parable involving a king and two servants. At the end of the passage, Jesus reminds Peter that just as God forgives us, so too should we forgive each other.

## **Bible Nuts and Bolts: Parables**

This week your child was introduced to the meaning of the word "parable." Your child learned that Jesus sometimes taught lessons by telling stories about familiar people and places and that these lesson stories are called parables. But, parables are not just any stories. Parables are a specific genre of stories that sets up a comparison between something outside the story to something going on inside the story (e.g. "The kingdom of heaven is like..."), uses common situations, and contains a surprising twist. While some of Jesus' parables seem easy to interpret, many are difficult and that's okay! The surprising twist causes the listener to take time and mull the parable over.

## **Story Themes**

Any passage of Scripture has innumerable themes and lessons for the student. However, a single lesson cannot cover everything. The following themes were the focus of this lesson.

Peter asks Jesus how many times we must forgive. Jesus tells him, "seventy-seven times." As the passage of the day opens, Peter is asking Jesus how many times he must forgive someone for something they have done wrong to him. Jesus tells him "seventy-seven times." Jesus then goes on to relate a parable to teaching the lesson that forgiveness should be freely given.

Jesus tells a story of a king who forgives his servant, yet the servant does not forgive his friend. The parable of the Unforgiving Servant was the focus of this passage. This is a parable that teaches the lesson of forgiveness, illustrating the point that we are all equally deserving of both granting and receiving forgiveness.

Jesus reminds us that we should forgive and love each other just as God forgives and loves us. Your child learned the most important point of this message: Just as God forgives us our sins over and over again, so too should we forgive each other the sins and mistakes of everyday life as many times as is needed.

## **Spiritual Practice: Fellowship**

The "Living the Story" activity had your child linking arms with other students and moving as a group in the spirit of forgiveness and togetherness, showing the strength of the common bonds and of community spirit that define fellowship.

# Try it @ HOME

## Lesson #1-22

### Matthew 18:15-35

#### Last Week/ Next Week

Last week we learned about Transfiguration (Matthew 16:24-17:8). This week, we focused on forgiveness through the parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:15-35). Next week we will hear another parable when we look at Matthew 20: 1-16 and hear the story of the Workers in the Vineyard.

#### Family Devotions

Forgiveness is not always easy to give or receive, but through our faith in God and the knowledge that God forgives us everything, we too can find the strength to forgive. In your family devotion time, pray for mercy and strength to both give and receive forgiveness. Perhaps a different person could end each daily devotion by saying, "With God's help, I will forgive." And the family could respond with a rousing, "Amen!"

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Matthew 6:14-15	Matthew 18: 21-22	Luke 6:37	2 Corinthians 2:5-8	Mark 11:25	Matthew 6:14-15	Ephesians 4:32
We all do things wrong sometimes. Raise your hand if you've ever done something wrong. Did you apologize and ask for forgiveness?	Jesus says to forgive over and over and over again - seven times seventy or seventy-seven times. Try sharing seventy-seven hugs as a family.	In order to forgive, we must remember that we are all equal in the eyes of God. Make a promise not to judge others, and finish with a family pledge to forgive and be forgiven.	Show forgiveness through an act of love such as a smile or happy word. Learn the sign language sign for love and practice as a family.	Try standing and praying for forgiveness as a family, going around the table with each person offering a personal prayer for a minor wrongdoing.	Practice forgiving each other for things that were said and done in moment of weakness over the last few days. Practice saying the words "I forgive you" to each other and including the words in the final prayer as well.	Who do you need to ask forgiveness from? Who do you need to give forgiveness to? Close your eyes and visualize the person you want to forgive and then offer a prayer for the strength to do so in the coming week.