

REFLECTION IDEAS – FORGIVING ISN'T EASY

Matthew chapter 18 verses 21 to 35

This assembly presentation looks at forgiving each other whilst acknowledging that it is not always easy. We all get things wrong, so it is important to forgive others as well as receiving forgiveness ourselves.

In Matthew 18 Jesus and his disciples discuss forgiveness; Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone: "How many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" According to Jewish traditions of that time, you should forgive a person who has wronged you three times, so Peter thinks he's being very generous. Jesus responds by saying you should forgive someone 'seventy times seven', 490 times –implying there's no limit to forgiveness. Jesus then illustrates this point with a story, known as the parable of the unforgiving servant. Christians believe that forgiveness should not be limited, but like the king's forgiveness in the narrative, it should be generous and abundant to everyone, just as God's grace and forgiveness is to us.

Reflection

In the Bible it says that God forgives everyone who asks Him and that we need to forgive others as well. When we forgive someone, we are not saying that what they did was right but we can stop being angry about their wrong actions and let go of our hurt. Christians believe that God is the one who will judge those who do wrong. Instead of paying back wrong for wrong, we should be kind and compassionate, even though this can be hard.

- Do you think we all deserve to be forgiven? What do Christians believe about this?
- Would you like to be forgiven when you get things wrong and say sorry?
- Is there anyone you can show forgiveness to?

Links

Here are some links related to the story of the Unforgiving servant:

<https://youtu.be/ED3fzkS-bhA>

<https://youtu.be/y7c976lrlek>

A song version of this parable: https://youtu.be/_VDYn8L-c0w

The song 'Forgiving isn't easy' by John Hardwick can be found here: <https://youtu.be/Lmt8QNzr30s>

A song entitled 'You forgive me' – is about God forgiving us: <https://youtu.be/LO-2fm7IKcU>

Please check that these are suitable for your group.

Inspire Prayer Space Activity – Fizzy Forgiveness

Equipment

Clear jug, jar or large bowl, water, Vitamin C tablets

Instructions

Sometimes we feel hurt by the things other people say or do to us. Holding onto those hurts can make us feel sad, or angry. Forgiveness is about letting go. Take a piece of tablet and think about your hurt feelings. When you feel ready, drop it into the water. Watch as it dissolves and imagine the hurt disappearing. You may want to pray as you do this, asking God to help you forgive.

inspire
prayer spaces



Adapted from a Prayer Spaces in Schools resource

See below for activity ideas

Turn HATE into LOVE

Try changing only ONE letter each time and make the transformation in 5 moves!

HATE

_____ not on time

_____ can't walk

_____ green and fruity

_____ broadcasting now

LOVE

Make forgiveness biscuits

When we say sorry for hurting someone, or we forgive someone else, the Bible says that this must involve the heart; we must mean what we say! These [cherry shortbread heart biscuits](#) from the BBC Good Food website are a good way of helping to say **sorry** or **I forgive you**.

100g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
200g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
50g cornflour
50g ground almonds
250g pack cold butter, cut into cubes
50g glacé cherries, finely chopped
½ tsp almond extract
8 tbsp cherry jam, sieved



1. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Sift the icing sugar, flour and cornflour together into a bowl. Stir in the ground almonds and butter, then rub in the butter until smooth. Stir in the chopped glacé cherries and almond extract and bring together to form a dough.
2. Roll out on a lightly floured surface, then stamp out biscuits using a heart-shaped cutter. Keep re-rolling the trimmings until all the dough is used. Carefully transfer the biscuits to baking trays lined with parchment and bake for just 8-10 mins until just pale golden.
3. Using an upturned bottle top or similar, press gently into the centre of each biscuit to make a round indent. Spoon in a little jam and return to the oven for 2 mins. Remove and cool on a wire

The Unforgiving Servant

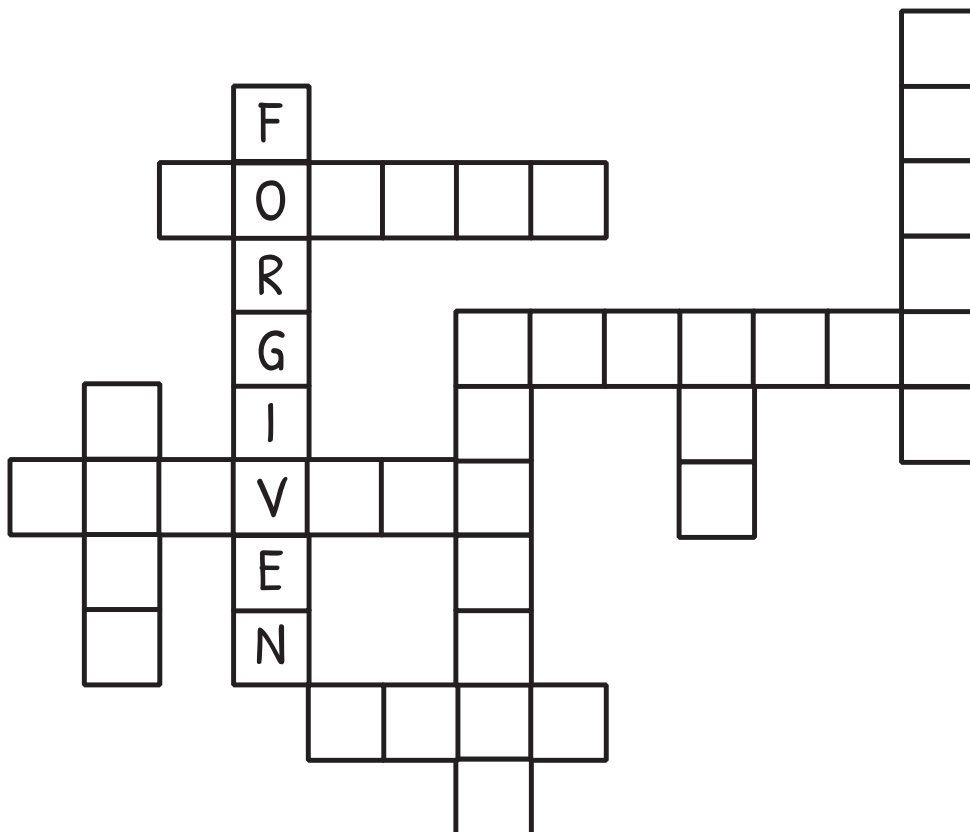
Read the parable of the two debtors told by Jesus in Matt 18:23-33 .
Then put the **green** words from the parable into the crossword puzzle.

One of the king's servants owed the king a great deal of money. However, he did not have the money to pay the **king**, so he asked the king to be **patient** and give him more time to repay the **debt**. The king felt bad for his servant and told him he did not have to repay the money. The entire debt was **forgiven**.

Once the **servant** left, he went looking for a worker who owed him a very small amount of money. The **worker** begged him to be patient. But the servant, who had just been forgiven by the king, had this man thrown in **jail**.

When the king heard how unkind his servant had been to the worker, he was angry. He told his servant, "Shame on you for treating your debtor this way, after all I did for you. Now you will go to jail, and you will pay me everything you owed me."

What good lessons we can learn from this **parable**. First, to treat others the way we would like to be treated, and second, to have a **loving** and forgiving heart.



Forgive Others

