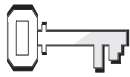


Seventy Times Seven



References

Matthew 18:21–35;
Christ's Object Lessons,
pp. 243–251



Memory Verse

“Forgive your
brother from
your heart”
(Matthew
18:35, NIV).

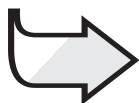


Objectives

The children will:
Know that God
wants us to treat
others with the
same mercy and
forgiveness that
He has shown us.

Feel a desire to
show mercy and
forgiveness to
others.

Respond by
being ready to
forgive others.



The Message

God wants me to
forgive others from
my heart.

Monthly Theme

We treat each other as God treats us.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

In a parable Jesus told, a king forgives one of his servants an impossible debt, more than the servant could ever earn in a lifetime. Unmindful that he owes his freedom to the king, the servant goes out and demands repayment from a man who owes him a minor debt and has him put in prison.

This is a lesson about community.

Even though God's people are part of His family, they are still human. They will make mistakes and others will hurt them. God desires that His children forgive each other unconditionally and without limit—as He has forgiven them. Even though it is naturally difficult to forgive unconditionally again and again, God will enable His children to do so.

Teacher Enrichment

Jewish law required a person to forgive another three times. See Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11; 2:1, 4, 6. Peter probably thought he was being generous by suggesting that one should forgive another person seven times.

The first servant owed his master 10,000 talents (see Matthew 18:24). One talent equaled 6,000 denari, so he owed his master 60,000,000 denari. This indicates that he must have been a high official in the government.

The fellow servant owed the first servant a denarius, which was equal to 100 denari or about one day's wage (see Matthew 20:2). Therefore, the first servant owed his master 600,000 times as much as his fellow servant owed him.

Room Decorations

Place the caption “We Treat Each Other As God Treats Us” in front of the room. Put a picture of one child bothering another child on the left side. Make a “meter” with a place that shows numbers. Label it “Mistake Meter.” Make some high numbers show on your “Mistake Meter”—such as 450.

Show the same two children on the right side of the “Mistake Meter” smiling and shaking hands, with Jesus smiling nearby. Place other pictures around of children helping each other in various ways, such as visiting a sick child, helping another child with school work, etc.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Ten Hearts</i> B. <i>Forgiveness Acrostic</i>	10 paper hearts (see page 140), Bible chalkboard and chalk or large newsprint paper and marker, Bible
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> heart-shaped container with pictures of people helping others none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes, "accounts book," "swords," "throne" for king, "prison gate," small pieces of paper, yarn, small box Bibles Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Eraser Board</i> B. <i>Forgiveness Circle</i>	whiteboard and marker or chalkboard and chalk, eraser, Bibles Bibles
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Share-A-Heart</i>	paper hearts (see page 140), liquid glue and glitter, art supplies, pens or markers, scissors

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Give directions for the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity that is most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- 10 paper hearts (see page 140)
- Bible

A. Ten Hearts

In advance, place the ten hearts on four walls in the following way: One heart on one, two hearts on another, three hearts on the third, and four on the last. Four corners of a large table or a group of chairs would also work.

Say: **I am going to say different things that people do that hurt others. Think about what I say and then decide whether it would be easy or hard to forgive someone who did that to you. One heart means harder to forgive, four hearts means easier to forgive. When you decide, go stand at the place of your choice.** Read the following:

cutting in line
lying
breaking a promise
leaving someone out of a party
keeping someone off your soccer team
saying unkind words
hitting or hurting someone physically

You may want to add others that are relevant for your group.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Why is it easier to forgive some things than others? How do you feel when you have to say you are sorry? How do you feel when you forgive someone? Is it easy to forgive others? Is it easy to ask for forgiveness?**

No matter what we do, God is always ready to forgive us if we are truly sorry. And He wants us to be ready to forgive others. Let's read Psalm 103:1–3. Allow time to find and read the text together.

Ask: **How many of your sins does God forgive? See verse 3. How does that make you feel? Can God help you to forgive even in hard-to-forgive situations? Our message today reminds us:**



GOD WANTS ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM MY HEART.

Say that with me.

B. Forgiveness Acrostic

Create an acrostic that says "FORGIVE" by writing the word vertically where all can see. Ask children to think of something for which they might need forgiveness that starts with each letter of the word and write it beside that letter. (For example, F could stand for "fighting.")

You Need:

- chalkboard and chalk or large newsprint paper and marker
- Bible

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How many different things do we need to be forgiven for? How do you feel when you have to ask someone to forgive you? Is it easy to forgive others?**

Read aloud Ephesians 4:32. Ask: **Will God ever quit forgiving us? What does that tell us about how we should forgive others? What do you think about that? No matter what we do, God is always ready to forgive us if we are truly sorry, and He wants us to forgive others. Today's message reminds us:**



GOD WANTS ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM MY HEART.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Redeemed!" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 68)
- "I'm So Happy" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 65)
- "We Are the Church" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 141)
- "We Are His Hands" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 129)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Help the children identify forgiveness and compassion in the story.



Offering

Remind the children that we show compassion by bringing an offering so others can learn about God.



Prayer

Ask the children to think of something wrong someone said or did to them recently. Remind them that God wants them to forgive others. Give them time to pray silently, then close by asking God to help all forgive others from their hearts.

You Need:

- heart-shaped container with pictures of people helping others

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- “accounts book”
- safe “swords”
- “throne” for king
- “prison gate”
- small pieces of paper
- yarn
- small box

Experiencing the Story

Characters: A rabbi, a child, Peter, some disciples, Jesus, first servant, second servant, third servant (using the word “servant” allows the teacher to involve girls), several guards, king
Props: Bible-times costumes, a book of accounts for first servant, swords for guards (optional), throne for king, prison gate (optional)

Assign the parts and, while assistants help the main characters get dressed, tell the rest of the class that every time they hear you say *forgive*, *forgiven*, or *forgiveness* they are to say, “Have mercy!” Practice this.

Read or tell the story.

In Jesus’ time the priests and rabbis taught that you only need to **forgive** (*Have mercy!*) a person three times. [*Beckon the rabbi to stand by you.*] Suppose you were running to tell your friend something [*Beckon the child to come.*] and you accidentally stepped on the rabbi’s toes. [*Child steps on rabbi’s foot.*] Ouch! That hurts. But the rabbi says, “I **forgive** (*Have mercy!*) you, child.”

By mistake you tread on his toes again. Oooh! That hurts! But the rabbi knows the rules, so he says, “I **forgive** (*Have mercy!*) you, child.” As you turn to go, you do it again. You quickly tell him you are sorry, and again he says, “I **forgive** (*Have mercy!*) you, child.”

You know you have reached your limit of **forgiveness** (*Have mercy!*) with the rabbi. You want to get out of there. As you run to the door, your arm hits him in the stomach. The rabbi doesn’t have to **forgive** (*Have mercy!*) you any

more! So you had better run. [*The two scurry back to their seats.*]

So when Peter asked Jesus, “How many times shall I **forgive** (*Have mercy!*) someone who sins against me?” Peter thought seven was a really generous number.

But Jesus said, “Not seven times, but seventy times seven.” That’s 490 times. That’s more times than you should *try* to keep track of. Jesus meant that there’s no limit to how many times you should **forgive** (*Have mercy!*) someone.

Jesus told this story to show what He meant:

A servant works for a king, managing the king’s money. [*First servant comes forward and works busily with the book.*] One day the king sits down to look at his accounts. [*The king takes the book and begins checking through it.*] He discovers this man owes him millions, far more than the man could ever repay. [*The king writes on a piece of paper and gives it to the servant.*]

The king is angry. “Guards!” he yells, “Take this man, his wife, his children, and everything in his house. Sell it to repay the debt.” [*The guards grab the man.*]

The man falls on his knees and begs for mercy. “Please! Give me time,” he pleads. “I will repay everything I owe.”

The king knows that if the man saves everything he earns for the rest of his life, he could never repay half of the debt. But even so, the king feels sorry for the man. The king takes the paper and writes across it: *anceled*. The servant goes free.

As soon as the king’s servant leaves, he meets another servant who owes *him* money. Now this second servant owes him a denarius, about a day’s wage (Matthew 20:2). The first servant grabs the second by the neck and begins choking him. “Pay back the money you owe me,” he demands.

"Please be patient with me," begs the second servant. "Give me time and I will pay back everything I owe you."

But the first servant refuses. "Pay up now," he growls. And he has the second servant thrown into prison. "Stay there until you can pay me," he yells.

A third servant of the king, seeing the whole thing, runs and reports it to the king. *[The servant whispers in the king's ear and points to the wicked servant.]*

"Bring that wicked servant to me," the king demands. *[The first servant comes forward.]* "You wicked servant," the king storms. "I took mercy on you! I canceled millions in debt for you. Couldn't you have shown mercy to your friend and **forgiven** *(Have mercy!)* him the little bit that he owes you?" And the king had the first man thrown in prison. *[The guards lead him to prison. The king then walks by the prison and wags his finger at the man.]* "You stay there until you can repay every penny."

"And that," said Jesus, "is what happens to those who do not **forgive**." *[Have mercy!]*

Jesus was telling His disciples that they should forgive others just as God forgives them. And He wants us to do the same. Remember our message:



GOD WANTS ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM MY HEART.

Debriefing

Write each question that follows on a small piece of paper and tape (or tie) the paper to a piece of colored yarn. Cut the yarn to different lengths and leave one end of each piece hanging out of a small box. Allow a child to choose a piece of yarn and pull it, then either read the question or choose someone else to read it.

1. Does God really want us to count how many times we forgive?

2. How was the first servant like you and me? (He was forgiven a lot; he

refused to forgive; he forgot that God wants us to forgive out of love.)

3. How do you think the king felt after he forgave such a big debt?

4. Did the king forgive out of love? How do you know?

Memory Verse

Say: **This is the Bible verse we want to remember today: "Forgive your brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:35 NIV).** Show the signing for this verse as you say it again. Repeat. Have children repeat several times. Brush your right hand over your left, palms together, then say: **Why do you suppose this sign is used for forgiveness?** (It is like erasing something from your memory.) **Let's remember today's message:**



GOD WANTS ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM MY HEART.

Bible Study

Say: **The Bible has many verses about forgiveness. Let's read a few of them.** Have all the children find the same verse, one verse at a time. Adults assist as needed. Have each verse read aloud, then discuss it to be sure the children understand its meaning.

Matthew 6:12, 14, 15 Mark 11:25
Luke 6:37 Luke 17:3, 4

Say: **Why should we forgive others? One reason is that Jesus has forgiven us. Let's read about this in the Bible.** Assign the texts below and have them read aloud. Be sure the children understand what each text teaches.

Psalm 85:2 Ephesians 1:7
Colossians 1:13, 14 Colossians 3:13
1 John 1:9 1 John 2:12



You Need:
• Bibles



Debriefing

Say: **These texts tell us that Jesus is always willing to forgive us when we do wrong, if we are really sorry. What do you think about that? How does knowing this affect us when others ask us to forgive them?** (Knowing that Jesus forgives us makes it easier for us to forgive others.) **How many times should we for-**

give others? (As many times as they ask us to. Just as there is no limit to God's forgiveness, we should have no limit.)

Remember our message:



GOD WANTS ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM MY HEART.

Say that with me.

3

Applying the Lesson

A. Eraser Board

Ask the children to name as many things a child their age might do for which they would need forgiveness. List them one by one where all can see.

List the first one, then erase it and write the next one. Keep writing and erasing until you have listed at least ten things.

Debriefing

Discuss the significance of starting clean, sinning, and being forgiven, thus having their sins "erased" as they seek forgiveness. Remind them that God is always ready to forgive them when they ask Him to, no matter what the sin is or how often they seek forgiveness.

Read and discuss Isaiah 1:18 together. Ask: **How often can you ask God to forgive you for something?** (As often as you feel the need.) **How does this help us when we need to forgive others?** (Because God forgives us, we should be willing to forgive others.) **Let's remember our message:**



GOD WANTS ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM MY HEART.

Say that with me.

B. Forgiveness Circle

Have the children sit or stand in a circle. (Large class, form several circles.)

Ask them to ask forgiveness of the person on their right for a made-up transgression. For example, "I'm sorry I kicked you. Please forgive me." Or "I'm sorry I yelled at you. Please forgive me." Go around the circle at least twice.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when you were asking for forgiveness?** (Strange asking for forgiveness for something I hadn't done; OK; etc.) **How did it feel to be forgiven?** (OK; good; all right; etc.) Find and read Matthew 18:21, 22 together.

Ask: **What did Jesus mean when He said "seventy times seven"? Does that mean that we should count the number of times we forgive someone?**

Be sure the children understand that Jesus meant an unlimited spirit of forgiveness. **Should we forgive someone but remember their wrong?** (No. We should forgive them from our heart, and that means forgive and forget.) **Let's say our message together:**



GOD WANTS ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM MY HEART.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- whiteboard and marker or chalkboard and chalk
- eraser
- Bibles

You Need:

- Bibles

4

Sharing the Lesson

Share-a-Heart

Give each child a large paper heart (see page 140) and art supplies. Have the children cut out the heart, decorate it, write the memory verse on one side, and on the other side write "God loves us and forgives us." As the children work, ask them to think of someone with whom they would like to share their paper heart.

Debriefing

Say: **Have you thought of someone with whom you want to share your paper heart? Take it home with you and share it with them sometime this week. Tell them what forgiveness means to you.**

Is there someone you need to talk to this week? Someone from whom you need forgiveness or someone you need to forgive? Think about it, then pray about it. God will help you. Let's say today's message together once again:



GOD WANTS ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM MY HEART.

Closing

Have the children stand in a circle. Ask God to help them to be ready to forgive others who may wrong them, and to help them say they are sorry when they do something wrong. Thank God for always being ready to forgive us.

You Need:

- large paper hearts (see p. 140)
- scissors
- art supplies
- liquid glue and glitter
- pens or markers

Seventy Times Seven

References

Matthew 18:21–35;
Christ's Object Lessons,
pp. 243–251

Memory Verse

“Forgive your brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:35, NIV).

The Message

God wants me to forgive others from my heart.

Have you ever been so angry at someone that it was hard to forgive them? How many times should you forgive someone who does the same thing over and over? Think about it as you read this Bible story.

One day, Peter asked Jesus, “How many times shall I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?” In Jesus’ time the priests and rabbis taught that people only had to forgive a person three times. So Peter thought he was being generous by suggesting the number seven.

Not seven times, Jesus said, but seventy times seven. That’s 490 times. More times than you can keep track of. More times than you should try to keep track of. Jesus meant that we should not count the times we forgive someone. Then Jesus told a story to make His point.

A certain man worked for a king, managing the king’s money. One day the king sat down to look at his accounts. He

discovered this man’s account was millions in debt, far more than the man could ever repay. The king ordered the man, his wife, and his children to be sold. And everything he owned was to be sold. All the money would help repay the debt.

The man fell on his knees and begged for mercy. “Give me time,” he said, “and I will repay everything I owe.” The king knew the man could never repay so much money. But the king felt sorry for the man. So he canceled the debt and let his servant go.

The king’s servant was so relieved he rushed away. On his way out, he met another servant—one who owed him some money. It was just a little bit, about a day’s wages. The king’s servant grabbed the second man by the neck. He began choking him. “Pay back the money you owe me,” he demanded.

“Please be patient with me,” begged the second man. “Give me time and I will pay back everything I owe you.” But the king’s servant refused. He had the second man thrown in prison until he could pay the debt.

Other servants of the king saw the whole thing. They immediately reported it to the king. The king called the first servant back. “You wicked servant,” he stormed. “I canceled millions you owed me. Shouldn’t you have had the same mercy on someone else? Someone who owed you so little?” And the king had his servant taken away to prison.

We are like the king’s servant. He owed more money than he could ever repay. We can never be good enough. But just as the king forgave his servant, God has forgiven our sins. And since God has forgiven us, He asks us to treat others with mercy. With kindness and forgiveness. Seventy times seven. Four hundred and ninety. More times than we can keep track of.



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Play quiet music as you and your family read the lesson story together. How much is seventy times seven?
- Think of something for which you need forgiveness. Then think of someone you need to forgive. Talk about it together and decide what to do.
- Read the memory verse together.
- Pray for someone who has been unkind to you.

Sunday

- During worship today, read Matthew 18:21–35. Act out the story.
- Ask your parents to show you the bills they get each month. Think about the money the king's servant owed. Hold up your parents' smallest bill. Think about the amount the second man owed the king's servant. Who owed more?
- Ask God to help your family use money wisely.

Monday

- Before worship time, draw pictures about the lesson story. Then use the pictures to tell the story to your family during worship.
- Discuss together: When someone asks you for forgiveness, is it easy to forgive? What if you have to keep forgiving for the same thing? Read and discuss Matthew 18:21, 22 together. Say the memory verse to three different people.
- Pray that God will help you to forgive others.

Tuesday

- Before worship cut out a small heart from an empty plastic bottle. Punch a hole in the heart and thread a 6-inch (15 cm) length of yarn through it. Put the heart in an ice cube tray with the loose end of the yarn staying out of the tray. Add water. Put the tray in the freezer. Save this for worship tomorrow.
- During worship read Matthew 18:23–27 together. Draw a face that shows how you feel when you forgive someone. Draw a face that shows how

you feel when you ask for forgiveness.

- Say the memory verse together. What word could be used instead of "heart"?

Wednesday

- During family worship, discuss: Why is it often hard to forgive someone? Read Matthew 24:12 together.
- Take the ice cube tray with the frozen heart out of the freezer. Sin makes our hearts (our attitudes, our lives) cold. People with cold hearts don't want to forgive or treat others well. What could melt this cold heart? (Use a paper or cloth towel. Try to melt the ice and free the heart.) Only Jesus can thaw our cold hearts. As we let Him live in our hearts, we will be forgiving and caring.
- Draw the memory verse with pictures instead of words.
- Pray for a kind, forgiving heart.

Thursday

- Read Matthew 6:12, 14 for family worship. What was Jesus doing when He said these words? Pray for people who have wronged you. Pray that you will forgive from your heart.
- Imagine that you are the king in your lesson. What would you say to the servant who couldn't pay? Compare your answer to Matthew 18:27.
- Play, sing, hum, or listen to "He Has Shown Thee (Micah 6:8)" (*He Is Our Song*, No. 125).

Friday

- For worship do a charade of the lesson story.
- Write or draw about something wrong you have done. Pray now and ask Jesus to forgive you. Jesus forgives you and gives you a new heart (a new attitude).
- Make a small red paper heart. Add or draw a picture of Jesus as a symbol of the new heart He gives you. Read Ezekiel 11:19 and Ephesians 4:32 together.
- Pray for kind hearts that will always be ready to forgive others.