

# A Forgiving Heart

## Lesson Overview

The choice is ours: We can go around angry, holding grudges from years past and walking around with chips on our shoulders, along the way paying for it in our bodies with increased stress, high blood pressure and compromised health. Or, if we want healing, both spiritual and physical, we can learn to forgive. It's tragic that, instead of experiencing Christ's forgiveness and extending Christ's forgiveness to others, anyone would choose to take his or her grudges to the grave. Why would anyone do this?

Thankfully, Jesus took all the sins of the world—all the deepest hurts and wounds we messed-up humans inflict upon each other, and all the righteous and holy anger of God upon those sins—upon his own body on the cross (see Romans 3:23). Forgiveness is why the eternal Son of God became a man; forgiveness is what Jesus the Son of God does best. Even in Jesus' most awful hour on the cross, while the soldiers divided up his clothes, He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34, *NIV*).

What an example to us! It shows us, once and for all, that no terrible thing we do is beyond the reach of God's forgiveness. When we experience that kind of unconditional love, who are we to withhold forgiveness from others? With Jesus' help, we, too, can forgive, no matter how difficult. Use this lesson to help kids to be able to say: ***I will forgive because I've been forgiven.***

## Going Deeper

A popular Christian song goes, "Forgiven. Now I have a reason for living. Jesus keeps giving and giving." That pretty much sums up today's Bible Lesson. Before going any further, confess any sins the Holy Spirit brings into your mind, both your own and those committed against you. This is the first step toward healing and restoration through Jesus Christ.



## Power Point

I will forgive because I've been forgiven.

## Scripture Memory Verse

"Forgive our sins, as we forgive everyone who has done wrong to us."

—Luke 11:4a

## Bible Lesson

The parable of the servant who was forgiven his large debt but then went out and wouldn't forgive the small debt owed to him.

—Matthew 18:23-35

## Everything You Need

**Note:** For a listing of basic supplies to keep on hand, see page 13.

**Game #1:** Descriptive signs in designated areas.

**Game #2:** 2 large hula hoops.

**Praise and Worship:** *Bible & Praise DVD*

**Lesson Introduction:** Credit card.

**Scripture Memory Verse:** Lesson 6 Scripture Memory Verse from *Leader Resources CD-ROM*.

**Acting God's Word:** Lesson 6 Acting God's Word script from *Leader Resources CD-ROM*.

**Bible Story:** Bible, \$20 bill.

**Object Lesson #1:** Hypothetical plus/minus chart on white construction paper (show debt on one side and assets on the other).

**Object Lesson #2:** 2 poster board sheets, marker.

**Today's Life Story:** Lesson 6 Today's Life Story from *Leader Resources CD-ROM*.

## Welcome

Start your service with high energy as you welcome the kids and open in prayer. See page 18 in this *Leader's Manual* for helpful welcoming tips.

## Game #1

### Boom's Coming Over

#### Review Questions

(Have children answer the following review questions.)

- ▶ Complete last week's Power Point: What can God help us overcome? (*Peer pressure.*)
- ▶ What Bible characters from last week withstood peer pressure? (*Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego.*)

**Props:** Descriptive signs (see below) in designated areas.

**Preparation:** Place signs in designated areas.

**Participants:** All children.

### Playing the Game

Let's pretend we are on a sailing ship. Listen to the Captain! The sail is attached to the main mast and a long boom sticks out over the deck. The boom often crosses over the deck to enable the ship to catch the wind and move forward. When the boom comes over it is important for the crewmembers to lay flat on the deck or they will get knocked off into the ocean. Sometimes during a storm all the crew moves to one side or to the end of the ship to shift the weight on the ship so it won't capsize. If the Captain hollers "Port," all of the crew must run to left side. If he yells "Starboard," they run to right. If he yells, "Bow," they run to the front. If he yells "Stern," they run to the back. In wartimes, the Captain would yell "Bombs away" and the crew would drop to their knees and cover their heads. If a submarine attacked, the Captain would yell "Submarine" and everyone would fall to the deck and stick one leg up in the air.

The front of the room is the bow, the back of the room is the stern, the left side is the port and the right side is starboard. (*Point to the signs hanging in designated areas of the room.*) As I yell out the commands, make sure you move immediately to do the actions required by the command. (*Review the actions again.*) Yell out various commands. Start the game slowly, but eventually speed up and mix up the commands. Play for about five minutes.

## Game #2

### Hula Hop

#### Review Questions

(Select one boy and one girl who answer the following review questions to choose three more participants each to take part in Game #2.)

- ▶ What did King Nebuchadnezzar want Daniel and his friends to do? (*Eat foods they were forbidden to eat.*)

- How did Daniel and his friends look after 10 days? (*They looked healthier than the others who ate all the foods and drank all the drinks.*)

**Props:** 2 large hula hoops.

**Participants:** Eight children (two teams of four children each), two adult helpers.

### Playing the Game

Have the players form two relay lines next to each other. Explain that in order to participate in this relay the first person in line will need to place, with both hands, their hula hoop on the ground as far out in front of them as they can. They must then jump into the center of the hula hoop, lift it over their head and repeat the action of placing it down, with both hands in front of them and jump into it again. Have the children hop through their hoops until they reach their destination then have them turn around and repeat the hopping actions all the way back until they reach the line. Have both teams race each other. Supervise the race to make sure the children continually hop through the hoop. Have audience members cheer for their favorite team! If the race results are close have two opposing team members face off with their hula hoops to see who can twirl the object around their hips the longest. The one who can twirl the longest, wins for her team.

### Praise & Worship

Lead the children in a powerful time of entering God's presence using the worship songs from the *Bible & Praise* DVD.

### Lesson Introduction

**Props:** Credit card.

#### Presentation

Have you ever borrowed money from someone? (*Invite response.*) Did you pay them back? (*Invite response.*) Do your parents allow you to borrow money if you need it? (*Call on a few children to share their answers.*) How much time do you usually have to pay them back? (*Invite response.*)

Borrowing money from a friend, sibling or parent usually isn't a big deal because it typically is paid back within a short time and you aren't usually charged interest. Does anyone know what interest is? (*Call on children to answer.*) Interest is a certain percentage of money that is added on to whatever is owed. This amount usually goes up the longer it takes for a person to pay the money back. (*Show the group your credit card and ask the children if they know what it is.*) This is my credit card. Credit card companies allow you to borrow money to either buy things or get cash. When you owe money, it's called debt. Although it seems like an easy way to borrow money, credit cards can cause lots of trouble, especially if people can't pay back the money. Credit card companies aren't in the habit of forgiving debt.

Today we will look at forgiveness. Jesus tells a story involving money borrowed and debt owed. Jesus will help us see why He wants us to be able to say the Power Point: ***I will forgive because I've been forgiven.***

### Scripture Memory Verse

**"Forgive our sins, as we forgive everyone who has done wrong to us."**  
—Luke 11:4a

**Props:** Lesson 6 Scripture Memory Verse from *Leader Resources* CD-ROM.

#### Practice it

(*Display the Scripture Memory Verse.*) Use hand motions to help your children learn today's Scripture Memory Verse. Hold up two hands and show 4 fingers on each hand, invite all of the children to do the same motion. Next have the children flip their hands over to show an outstretched palm (*to indicate giving*). Have children practice this move a few times so it is a fluid-one motion process. **Forgive** (*4-give*) **our** (*point to self*) **sins,** (*shake head back and forth*) **as we forgive** (*cross arms over heart*) **everyone** (*point to others in the room*) **who has done wrong** (*jump up and down*) **to us** (*point to self*). Repeat until children know the verse.

## Understand it

Why does Jesus teach us to ask God for forgiveness? (*Invite response. We can be rid of guilt and can live for God without being bogged down by our sins.*) Why should we forgive others? (*Invite response. We don't want to live life with bad feelings towards others. Forgiveness helps us heal, etc.*) Jesus forgives you and me, and He wants us to do what our Power Point says: ***I will forgive because I've been forgiven.***

## Live it

Receiving forgiveness from God involves three things: 1) "Honesty"—admitting to God the truth that we've been foolish, we've been rebellious against God, and that we have done nasty, cruel things. 2) "Trust"—deciding that since God has forgiven us in Christ, we can forgive ourselves for having been foolish, rebellious and mean. If Jesus died on the cross for you, then condemnation for those things is over (see Romans 8:1). You don't have to beat yourself up about those things any more. God is in you and He's in the process of transforming you. 3) "Others"—allowing the forgiveness we've received through Christ to flow through us to others. Take a few minutes and encourage children to pray silently, asking Jesus to forgive them and also allowing them to forgive others who may have hurt them.

## Bible Lesson

**The parable of the servant who was forgiven his large debt but then went out and wouldn't forgive the small debt owed to him.**

—Matthew 18:23-35

## Acting God's Word

Use the Acting God's Word puppet script on the *Leader Resources* CD-ROM before you begin the Bible Story as a visual way to introduce the point of today's lesson. You can act the segment with puppets, use a drama team, or use the CD audio script with either approach.

*Dr. D. Seaver finds a locket that one of the kids lost while they were working on his house. He decides to pawn it. After he has done this, he finds Mindi*

*Lee waiting for him at his house. She tells Dr. D. that she lost her locket while working on his house and asks him if he's seen it. She told him it was an antique that had been in her family for many generations. Dr. D. admits pawning it, and Mindi Lee overreacts at first, but then forgives him. Dr. D. asks her how she could forgive him so easily. Mindi Lee explains that as a Christian, Jesus forgives her and teaches her to forgive others.*

Ask the questions below to discuss the puppet segment.

- ▶ What was Mindi Lee missing? (*A locket.*)
- ▶ What had Dr. D. Seaver done with the locket? (*He pawned it.*)
- ▶ Why did Mindi Lee forgive Dr. D. Seaver? (*Because Jesus forgives her and wants her to do the same to others.*)

Mindi Lee forgave Dr. D. Seaver for pawning her valuable locket that had been in her family for a long time. Today, Jesus tells a story about some people who have opportunity to forgive each other. Let's discover why Jesus tells this story about forgiveness.

## Bible Story

**Props:** Bible, \$20 bill.

**Preparation:** Select two girls and one boy volunteer and explain that they will be acting out actions for today's skit. Practice the skit beforehand.

*(Have the volunteers come forward. Have one girl stand aside and wait. Give the other girl a \$20 bill. Narrate the following skit.)* Jeremy needs that toy! It is the only one left. He sees Juliet and asks if he can borrow \$20 from her to buy the toy. *(Have the boy approach the girl with the \$20.)* He promises to pay it right back!

After begging for the money *(have boy beg)*, she agrees to give it to him. *(Have girl hand \$20 to the boy.)* Jeremy rushes to the toy store and buys the last toy left. Yeah! *(Boy pretends to buy the toy.)*

After buying it Jeremy realizes he isn't going to be getting any allowance for three months. He's grounded. He won't be able to pay Juliet back!

He approaches her to tell her this. (*Have boy approach girl.*)

Instead of getting mad, Juliet agrees to let Jeremy just have the money. He doesn't owe her anything. It is her gift! WOW! (*Have Jeremy thank Juliet and jump up and down.*) Jeremy walks away.

As Jeremy walks home he remembers that Annette owes him \$5! Jeremy runs to her front door and knocks frantically. (*Have boy knock on a pretend door.*) Annette opens the door (*have other girl volunteer pretend to open the door*). "I need my \$5 dollars. Give it to me now." (*Jeremy shakes his fist at Annette.*) "Uh, I don't have it. I'll have to give it to you next week when I get my allowance from my parents..." (*Annette looks worried.*) "I'm going to tell everyone at school that you stole my money. I can't believe you won't pay up. How dare you! Jeremy slams the door on her. (*Boy slams pretend door.*) Hey, there's Julie, I bet she won't be friends with Annette when she hears about what a thief she is..." (*Jeremy runs off.*)

(*Thank the volunteers, have boy return the \$20 to you and have them return to their seats.*) Seems silly, doesn't it? Juliet was kind enough to just give Jeremy the money but he couldn't give Annette a week's break to pay him back the \$5 she owed him. Well...it's easy to point fingers but sometimes we do similar things. God has forgiven us so much... yet we sometimes have trouble forgiving others, don't we?

We just acted out a story similar to one Jesus told in the Bible in Matthew 18:23-35. In the story, the money amounts were much greater. A man owned a king 10,000 talents, which would be millions of dollars in today's world, an amount that could never be repaid in one lifetime. But the king forgave the man his debt! He owed nothing! But then this man had a servant who owed him a small amount of money, but this forgiven man refused to forgive the small amount owed to him by his servant. When the king found out, he had man who refused to forgive punished.

Jesus told this story to show us what He did for us: We have all offended a holy and righteous God; we have broken his commandments; we have not lived up to what we could and should be. We can't fix ourselves or reform ourselves on our own power.

It's like we owe God a huge debt we can never repay. BUT, through Christ's sacrifice, God has forgiven our great debt. Christ has paid it! .0 It is only because of Jesus and His work on the cross that we are able to have forgiveness of our sins. Let's not forget this, boys and girls. Also we need to be quick to forgive others as well! That is what our Power Point reminds us to do: ***I will forgive because I've been forgiven.***

## Object Lesson # 1

**Props:** Hypothetical plus/minus chart on white construction paper (show debt on one side and assets on the other).

**Preparation:** Prior to beginning, create on a large piece of white construction paper a hypothetical plus/minus chart (debt on one side and assets on the other).

### Presentation

(*Show the hypothetical chart to the group.*) Explain that in order to buy a house, the company that will be lending you money needs to see if you can really pay your mortgage (the amount of money you'll need to come up with monthly to pay for a house). Explain that this is what really takes place before an adult can get a loan for a home. A plus minus chart is created.

The plus side is everything that you own that can be considered a plus, such as a home to sell, a paid-off car, income you receive from a paying job, money you have in your savings account in a bank, etc. The minus side is everything that you owe, such as college loans, car payments, credit card balances, etc. If the minus side is larger than the plus side there is a very good change the bank or money lender will say, "Sorry, you owe more than you make. No home for you!" Bummer.

Today's Bible Lesson talked about a man whose minus side was WAY larger than his plus side. He not only couldn't qualify to buy a house... he would end up in jail as a result of not paying what he owed. Instead of going to jail, he was forgiven his debt. What a great thing! His plus side suddenly became much greater than his minus side. Unfortunately he wasn't thankful for the

forgiveness of his debt that was shown to him. He went out and found someone who just owed him a little bit and he demanded the payment and then threw the man who couldn't pay into jail. What this man couldn't understand was the concept of forgiveness. As a result he went to jail and was punished for what he owed even though it had originally been forgiven of him.

We can learn a lesson from this man. We all have many things that Jesus has forgiven us for. As a result, we shouldn't be so quick to judge others. Instead we should readily forgive them as well. After all, we all sin and we are all equally forgiven by God through Jesus. Isn't that great!

## Object Lesson #2

**Props:** 2 poster board sheets, marker.

**Preparation:** Write the letters F-O-R-G-I-V-E-N vertically along the left edge of the poster board.

### Presentation

Show children the poster board with the word F-O-R-G-I-V-E-N spelled out across it. Have children call out as they think of them things that they have been forgiven of that start with each of the above letters. Some examples might be:

F—Fighting, O—Ordering people around, R—Rejecting people, G—Getting even, I—Ignoring God's Word, V—Violence, E—Egos, N—Negative attitudes.

Mention that Jesus has forgiven us of all of these things and more! Next write the word J-E-S-U-S on the poster board and have children come up with things they are thankful to Jesus for. J—Justice, E—Evangelism, S—Savior, U—Unconditional love, S—Security in heaven.

*(Allow children to come up with their own words but use words provided to help if they become stuck or to get them started. Remind the group that we have been forgiven because of Jesus! There is nothing greater in this world than that.)*  
Remember today's Power Point, ***I will forgive because I've been forgiven.***

## Today's Life Story

### Forgiven to Forgive

Illustration 6-1



► Jenny Newheart had two friends Sarah and Emily. They were not ordinary friends, Jenny said they were, “my best friends in the whole world!”

The three girls did everything together, they were always together in school and during recess. Jenny, Sarah and Emily went to the same church, they joined the kid's choir together and they kept finding ways to do more things together. Their moms helped the girls arrange sleepovers at each other's homes—their activities together were nonstop.

They hung out so much together that people were beginning to mix them up—and the girls were beginning to look like triplets. Jenny and Sarah had picked up Emily's giggle and Emily, and Jenny had just naturally begun to walk the same way that Sarah did. They all wore their hair in ponytails, and recently they had begun dressing similarly.

**Illustration 6-2**



► Jenny, Emily and Sarah were having one of their “what’s cool” discussions at Emily’s house. One of the girls blurted, “I saw the most amazing T-shirt yesterday at the mall, it’s just like the girls on the ZRock Kids TV show. You’ve just got to see these T-shirts—they are so cool!” Another one of the girls said, “wouldn’t it be great if we all went to the store and got matching shirts.” “Let’s do it!” Jenny added, “I’m sure our moms will let us.”

**Illustration 6-3**



► Jenny hurried home and ran through the house looking for her mom. Mrs. Newheart was busy in the kitchen making dinner when Jenny came flying in the kitchen and yelling, “I’ve got to get one! Mom! We’re all want to get the T-shirts.” “Slow down Jenny,” Mrs. Newheart said, “and tell me what you’re talking about.” “OK mom, I’ll try to slow down, but I’m soooo excited!” Jenny explained, “Emily, Sarah and I want

to get ZRock Kids T-shirts. The shirts are exactly the same as the girls were on the TV show and Emily knows a store at the mall that sells them—but we’ve got to hurry, they’re selling fast.”

After some more discussion, Jenny’s mom agreed to go shopping with the girls and see if the T-shirts were appropriate.

**Illustration 6-4**



► When they got to the store, Mrs. Newheart discovered the T-shirts were black. “Jenny you know I prefer that you don’t wear black,” Mrs. Newheart told Jenny. “Ahhh Mom all the other girls are going to get one and I want the same one T-shirt.” While Emily and Sarah grabbed black T-shirts in their size, Mrs. Newheart found a white one in Jenny’s size and handed it to her.

Mrs. Newheart realized that Jenny wasn’t too excited and she tried to reason with her, “it’s the same ZRock Kid’s logo but its white Jenny. This one will look good on you and you know I don’t approve of you wearing black clothing.” Jenny was really mad at her mom, but she kept it inside. “Why does she treat me like a child. I’m not five years old anymore!” Jenny fumed under her breath. But she realized she’d better not make her mom too mad, or she wouldn’t get a shirt at all. “Oh well” said Jenny, “I really wanted a black one but a white one is better than no T-shirt at all.”

**Illustration 6-5**



► The next day Jenny, and Sarah, and Emily wore their ZRock Kid's T-shirts to school. "It's kind of like a club" whispered Sarah in school that day. "Let's meet at my house after school and make some plans." The girls were excited and Sarah had forgotten about the black T-shirt issue. That was until some other girls came up to Jenny and noticed her shirt. "Look! it's a ZRock shirt," one of them said. But another said, "Yeah, but the black ones are way more cool!" "Let's go get some black ones!" The first girl excitedly said, as they took off.

All the excitement of Jenny's plans with her friends disappeared as she was reminded about her white T-shirt. "I'm *not* going to forgive my mom for making me buy this dumb white shirt!" Jenny said loudly as she left school.

Kids, we all face situations where we need to forgive others. Jenny needs to forgive her mom. Jenny may not agree with her mom's decision, but she still has no reason to stay mad at her. You also have the ability to forgive others who you think have wronged you. Forgiving isn't always easy, but it's what Jesus wants us to do.

**Illustration 6-6**



► After school Jenny arrived at Sarah's house, and they made plans for their "girls-only ZRock Kids' club." Sarah noticed that Jenny was unusually quiet. "What's up?" Sarah asked her friend. "Some girls saw my white shirt and said they liked the black ones way better!" Emily asked, "Are you bummed your mom wouldn't let you get the black shirt?" Jenny admitted she was. "That's silly, girl." Sarah playfully teased her friend. "White looks great with the black ones, anyway." Jenny felt better after talking to her friends and they agreed to meet every Thursday after school for their ZRock club.

While Jenny was riding home from Sarah's, she was thinking about what she had said earlier: "I was wrong to say I wouldn't forgive my mom. It's only a T-shirt!" While she thought, she hadn't been paying attention to her riding. Suddenly a big rock was in front of her and she served to avoid it. But she lost control and went sailing down an embankment. Jenny had experienced little bike accidents in the past, but this was no little accident—It was far more serious than Jenny imagined.



**Illustration 6-7**



► Jenny couldn't get up—she tried, but the pain was too great. All she could do was pray and hope that someone would find her. It was starting to get dark and Mrs. Newheart called Sarah's house, discovering that Jenny had left 30 minutes earlier—something was wrong. Mrs. Newheart rushed to her car and prayed, "Lord, I pray you keep Jenny safe and help me find her."

Mrs. Newheart did find Jenny laying in the ditch—thanks to Jenny's bright white T-shirt. Mrs. Newheart carried her daughter to the car and took her to emergency care. Her knee was badly bruised and sprained, and thankfully it just required time to heal.

**Illustration 6-8**



► That night as Jenny nursed her bumps and sore knee, the day's events flew before her eyes. All of a sudden an overwhelming sense of gratefulness flooded over her as she realized how blessed she was that her mother had seen her in the dark. "If I would have

had my way, I would have been wearing a black T-shirt and my mom would have had a hard time finding me," Jenny said to herself. "And to think I wasn't going to forgive my mom for this black shirt silliness."

Jenny called her mom into her room and told her that she was sorry for being mad at her and asked for her forgiveness. Her mom said "Of course I forgive you, Jenny. I know you don't always know why I make decisions for you or even agree with those decisions. But what is much more important is the ability to forgive others, just like you've done. Things much more important than the color of a T-shirt will come up in your life. Following Jesus' example to forgive as He has forgiven us is the greatest thing you can do."

## Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for your forgiveness. We don't deserve it but we are so thankful that we can receive it. Help us to be forgiving of others even when they don't deserve it because we have been forgiven of so much. Like our Power Point today says, **I will forgive because I've been forgiven.** Most importantly Lord Jesus, thank You that we can look forward to heaven because our sins have been forgiven. We love you!

In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Small Group Lesson

Using the *God Encounters Small Group Lessons* (see page 10 in this *Leader's Manual*), divide your children into one of three elementary-age groups: ages 6-7, ages 8-10, ages 11-12. These groups allow deeper exploration of the Power Point and life application.

Instruct small-group leaders to hand out this week's Take-Home Challenge.

