

I Don't Want to Miss a Thing

Bible Story: I Don't Want to Miss a Thing (Father and Older Brother) • Luke 15:21-32

Bottom Line: When you don't forgive, you miss out.

Memory Verse: *Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive just as the Lord forgave you.* Colossians 3:13 (NIRV)

Life App: Forgiveness—Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay

Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (Small Groups, 15 minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Ask God to help your few understand that forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting what's happened to you and ignoring its consequences. But it does mean that if you hold on to those wrongs, you'll miss out on relationships with others. Pray that God would give kids the courage to forgive the wrongs that have been done to them.

1. Early Arriver Idea

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Offering container, paper, pencils

What You Do:

- As kids arrive, welcome them by name and encourage any who have brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Pass out paper and a pencil to the kids and ask them to draw five or six blank Tic-Tac-Toe grids for the next activity.
- Encourage them to draw the boards as neatly as possible and to pay attention to the size of the boards relative to how much space they have on the page.
- As the kids are working, ask questions about their week.
 - Did anything crazy or silly happen this week?
 - If you could go back and relive one day or event from this past week, what would it be and why?
 - Tell me about a time this week when you forgave someone. What happened?

2. Tic-Tac-Toe Tournament

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Tic-Tac-Toe grids from Early Arriver, pencils

What You Do:

- Have the kids pair up to play Tic-Tac-Toe.
- Whoever LOSES from the pair stays in the tournament to go on to the next round. (Kids can play another game if their first one results in a stalemate.)
- Allow the loser to find another opponent for the next round and play again.
- Continue for subsequent rounds, advancing only the losers each time until you have a final "winner."

What You Say:

"Normally in Tic-Tac-Toe, the goal is to win! But in our tournament, losing was the goal. **[Transition]** In our Bible story today, we'll hear about an older brother who lost out on something really awesome because he refused to forgive. Let's go!"

3. Just for Fun

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: Offering container, two sets of “FORGIVE” cups, 14 bouncy balls, masking tape

What You Do:

- **Invite** kids to put their offering in the offering container as they arrive.
- **Divide** the group into two teams.
- **Create** a line on the floor with masking tape and **tell** teams to stand behind the line.
- **Line up** a set of FORGIVE cups in front of each team, about seven feet from the line.
 - Cups should be set upright and in order so they spell “FORGIVE.”
- Each team tries to bounce one ball in each of the cups.
- If a ball misses the cup, kids retrieve it while their teammate takes a turn. There should be a continuous flow of ping pong balls bouncing towards the cups as teams try to be the first team to land a ball in each of the 7 cups.
- To increase the chaos level, more than one teammate can be bouncing a ball at a time.
- *Note: Depending on the skill level required, you may need to **adjust** the distance of each team to the cups.*

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (Small Groups, 25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Blocking the Fun

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building and designing

What You Need: Large stackable items such as Mega Bloks® or LEGO® blocks

What You Do:

- **Please make this a simple, quick activity. If some kids don't want to participate because of the physical touching happening, they don't have to.**
- Set out your stackable items and invite the kids to pair up.
- One partner will hold their arms out while the other partner stacks blocks onto their arms. Stack the blocks not too heavy, but heavy enough to where it is a little tricky to move.
- Play some music and tell the kids holding blocks to try and dance.
- Give them a few minutes to try and dance holding the blocks.
- Switch partners and give them a chance to stack the blocks and dance.

What You Say

“It is kinda tricky to hold the blocks and dance at the same time, right? In our story today, the older brother couldn't celebrate forgiveness because he was too busy holding things against his younger brother. It is just like the older brother was holding lots of heavy blocks so they got in the way of him celebrating! When we choose to forgive others, it is like dropping all of this heavy weight. When we choose not to forgive, the heavy stuff keeps us from celebrating or simply having a good day.

“Let's think about some times this might happen to us. Maybe you're so mad that your little brother tore up your favorite book that you scream at him, get in trouble with your parents, and miss out on a play date with your best friend. Or maybe you're so upset that your mom forgot she had a meeting when she had promised you would have family movie night tonight, and you spend the whole evening pouting and thinking mean thoughts about her instead of simply enjoying spending time with the rest of your family. Or what if you don't get that really expensive gift you wanted for your birthday, so you refuse to play with the toys you DID get and won't talk to anyone at your party? Remember that **[Bottom Line] when you don't forgive, you miss out.**”

[Make It Personal] (Tell a child-appropriate story about a time when you missed out on celebrating because you didn't forgive. Share about how that made you feel and how you eventually came around.)

2. Three-Legged Relay

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body.

What You Need: Streamer roll, "Memory Verse Phrases" (Activity Page)

What You Do:

- Pair kids up. If you have an odd number of kids, choose someone to be your "Special Helper."
 - If there's a child in your group with some gross-motor physical limitations, they would be a great choice for this role.
- Tell kids to stand side by side with their partner, with their "inside" legs touching.
- Use the streamer roll to tie their inside legs together, just above the knee. Wrap the streamer around several times (so it hopefully won't break), and tie off the ends.
 - If you have a Special Helper, she can help with this step.
- Divide the pairs into two teams. If one team has one more pair than the other, that's okay.
- Line the teams up at one end of your space. Place each set of Memory Verse Phrases on the ground opposite each team.
- Kids will relay to retrieve all of the phrases.
- Once a team has all the pieces, they have to put the verse together. The first team to put their verse together wins!
- If you have time, play again. You can switch out the Special Helper, if you have one, and mix the teams up.

What You Say:

"Great job working together to put the verse together! When you have to work together with someone else to get something done, or even when you're playing a game, sometimes the other person might do something that makes you not accomplish your task or even lose a game. When that happens, we need to remember to forgive. Say the verse with me. *Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive just as the Lord forgave you, Colossians 3:13 (NIV).* When things happen that we don't like, we need to forgive. Because **[Bottom Line] when you don't forgive, you miss out.**"

Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need:

What You Do:

- Gather the kids in a circle on the floor.
- Ask kids to call out things we can celebrate about God.
 - Kids may need some prompting at first. You can start by saying a few things yourself, such as: He made us, He loves us, He forgives us, etc.

What You Say:

"Let's pray and thank God for all that He does for us and then we can celebrate! Dear God, thank You so much for forgiving us no matter what and teaching us to forgive others. We love You so much. Amen!

"It is so amazing that God forgives us, and I think it's also amazing that He gives us the ability to forgive others. This week, remember **[Bottom Line] when you don't forgive, you miss out.**"

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to blow their party blowers and tell them their favorite thing we can celebrate about God.