

I Don't Want to Miss a Thing

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

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

Key Question: What do you lose if you don't forgive?

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, NIV

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 sometime to prepare for small group through prayer, both for your time together as a group and for each student in your group individually. Pray that the concept of forgiveness has been made fresh and new in their minds and hearts this past month.

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. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: Bibles, wrapped candy, cotton balls

What You Do:

- **Review** the story.
- **Ask:**
 - What was the father’s response to the younger brother’s return?
 - How would you describe the older brother when he found out his father threw a party celebrating the younger son’s return? *(If necessary, read Luke 15:28-29. Answers could include: angry, bitter, jealous, ungrateful)*
 - What was the older brother missing out on by choosing to hold onto his negative emotions toward his brother?
 - What was the father’s response to his older son? *(Luke 15:31)*
- Even though what his younger brother did was wrong, the older son had a choice to make. The older brother could decide to let go of his anger and bitterness or he could hold on to it and decide his younger brother should pay.
- **Place** a wrapped piece of candy in front of each kid and **give** each kid a cotton ball.
- **Give** kids time to think of something they may be holding against someone. Maybe someone treated them unkindly or unfairly. Maybe someone flattened a tire on their bike or broke their favorite toy. Maybe they are angry at someone for not doing what they said they would do. Or prompt kids to think about how the older brother was holding onto his anger and resentment.
- **Explain** that the cotton ball represents something you’re holding against someone.
- **Tell** kids hold on to the cotton ball with both hands and squeeze as tightly as they can.
- While squeezing the cotton ball with both hands, **challenge** kids to unwrap the candy using only their hands.
- **Tell** kids to open their hands so the cotton ball is resting on their palms.
- Just like you cannot grab onto the candy while focusing on squeezing the cotton ball, when you are holding on to grudges and focusing on how you may have been wronged, you could miss out on a lot. *(e.g. friendships, good times with others, joy, a party [like the older brother missed out on], etc.)*

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 (NIRV).* When things happen that we don’t like, we need to forgive. Because **[Bottom Line] when you don’t forgive, you miss out.**”

3. Discussion Questions

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- What can it cost you to hold a grudge? For example, what might you miss out on if you decided to hold a grudge and not forgive a friend?
- What if a friend says something unkind to you and they never say they are sorry? Do you still forgive them? Do you only forgive someone if they ask you?
- Is forgiveness always fair? How does it make you feel when it’s not fair? **[Make it Personal] (Be prepared to share about a time when someone treated you unfairly or when you were mad at someone for how they treated you. Did you forgive them right away? Did it take you time to forgive them? How did you feel when you decided to forgive them? Did you miss out on something because you wanted to make them pay?)**

4. Make it Personal with Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Cotton balls from “Bible Story Extension” activity

- **Remind** kids of the activity from earlier where they held onto cotton balls and couldn’t open their candy wrappers.
- **Give** kids a moment to think about a time recently when they held onto a grudge or resentment toward someone for something they did. For those who are still holding grudges, encourage them to begin to let go of them and move toward forgiveness.
 - *Note: Some of your few might have serious situations they’re dealing with at home or at school. Some kids might be trying to forgive hurts or wrongs that are much bigger than an annoying sibling or a non-loyal friend. As much as possible, be mindful of those kids in particular and avoid “minimizing” or “simplifying” their situations.*
- **Pray** with the kids:

What You Say:

“God, Thank You for Your forgiveness and Your love. We want to show others Your love! God, please give us Your power and Your strength to forgive others. Help us to let go of anything we may be holding against others so we don’t miss out on the joy of Your forgiveness. Amen!”