

# City SG-March 14th-15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Bible Story:** Step by Step (Jesus Teaches on Forgiveness) • *Matthew 5:1-2; 23-24*

**Bottom Line:** Take the first step to forgive others.

**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)*

## 1. Balancing Act

**What You Need:** Pens

**What You Do:**

- Gather the kids to stand and spread out as much as possible in your small group area.
- Give each child a pen to balance on their head.
- Play upbeat instrumental music on your phone, or sing a silly song.
- As the music plays, kids must walk around your small group area balancing the pens on their heads.
- If a pen falls, they must freeze and cannot move again until another friend picks up their pen for them. **(The friend who helps may hold his own pen in place while helping.)**
- Stop the music at regular intervals to allow kids to reset their pens.
- Play as time and interest allow.

**What You Say:**

“If you dropped the pen in this game, what happened? *(Pause for responses.)* Yes! You couldn’t move until someone stepped up to help you. **[Transition]** In our Bible story today, we learned about how stepping up can make a big difference in our relationships with others.”

## 2. Who, What, When, Why?

**What You Need:** Bible, “Who, What, When, Why?” Pages(1 per child), pens

**What You Do:**

- Look up Matthew 5:23-24.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the verses aloud to the group, or read it aloud to the group yourself if leading a group of 1<sup>st</sup> Graders.
- Pass out an Activity Page, and a pen to each kid.
- Discuss the verses and ask the questions below.
- As you answer them together, encourage the kids to write down their own answers on the Activity Page in the appropriate spot on the page.
- WHO: Who is this verse talking about? *(Us)*
- WHAT: What are these verses saying? *(Forgive first and be quick to forgive)*
- WHEN: When and where should we do this? *(BEFORE anything else)*
- WHY: Why is this an important truth to apply to our lives? *(Because forgiveness fixes the relationship)*

**What You Say:**

“When you read your Bible, it’s important to ask questions like these. Who is this written to? What is it saying? When or where should I do this? Why is it important? Today’s verses remind us that forgiveness fixes things. Why is it hard sometimes to ask for forgiveness or to forgive someone else? Do you sometimes just want to stay mad? How does choosing to stay mad hurt your relationship with others? *(Allow a few moments for kids to respond.)*

“Before we do anything else—even before we worship God—we should make things right. When we’ve hurt someone, the first thing we should do is to ask for forgiveness.

When someone hurts us and wants forgiveness, we should give it! Jesus tells us that forgiveness comes first. Refusing to forgive or make things right not only hurts our relationship with others, it also hurts our relationship with God. He loves you and He's forgiven you. Let's **[Bottom Line]** take the first step to forgive others."

**[Make it Personal]** (Tell your few about a time when you chose to forgive someone instead of holding onto your anger. If you could share an example from around the time you were the age of the kids in your group, that would be ideal. Either way, make sure your example is age-appropriate.)

### 3. One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

**What You Need:** 20 half sheets of cardstock (5 different colors, 4 of each color), a die, "Forgiveness Scenarios" cards (1 set per group)

#### What You Do:

- Divide kids into two teams.
- Use the half sheets of colored cardstock paper to create a life-sized game board, laying out the 20 half-sheets of paper in a serpentine pattern.
- Write "START" on the first page at one end and "FINISH" on the last page at the other end.
- Shuffle the "Forgiveness Scenarios" and keep them facedown.
- Select the child with the closest birthday to today to go first.
- The first player will roll the die and move the appropriate number of spaces on the board.
- Then that player will select a card, read the scenario, and move forward or backward, depending on what the card says.
- Continue, allowing kids from each team to take turns rolling the die, moving that number of spaces, drawing a card, and moving forward or backward accordingly.
- Encourage kids to make room for everyone as they move through the board. There will likely be a few times when kids end up on the same space in the game.
- The first team to get one player to the finish line is the winner!

#### What You Say:

"Why do you think you had to move backward when the scenario was an example of someone refusing to forgive? How is moving forward in this game like a picture of what happens when we take steps to forgive? In each of these scenarios, something happened that either wasn't fair or was hurtful. It's natural when we're hurting to want to hurt the other person back or to stay angry. But that won't fix it. Jesus tells us that forgiveness comes first. Do just ONE thing to help fix the relationship—to 'take a step' toward the other person. That can mean you save them a seat at lunch, even though they said they would be your reading partner today but then they picked someone else. Or it can mean you let your brother borrow a few LEGO® pieces even though he lost them last time. Let's make sure we **[Bottom Line]** take the first step to forgive others so we can protect our relationships with the people around us."

### 4. Freeze Dance

**What You Need:** No Supplies Needed. *Optional: Music on Your Smartphone*

#### What You Do:

- Play some upbeat music and encourage kids to dance however they want to.
  - **NOTE: If you don't have a phone, just clap and stomp your feet, cheering on the kids' dance moves.**
- After about 15 seconds, stop the music/clapping and tell kids to freeze!
- Once the kids are frozen, call out one way that we can take a step toward forgiving others or showing others that we have forgiven them.
- Challenge kids to quickly perform that action before the music starts back up.
- After a few rounds, feel free to let your kids create some action steps of their own!

Example Action Steps:

- High five your neighbor.
- Smile to the person on your right.
- Wave to the person across from you.
- Say hello to the person to your left.
- Give the person behind you a compliment.

**What You Say:**

“That was a great game of freeze dance! Jesus wants us to **[Bottom Line] take the first step to forgive others**. All of the actions we just did when we froze are great ways to take a small step toward fixing a relationship. When somebody does something wrong to us, or when we do something wrong to someone else, it hurts our relationship with that person. What does it feel like when you don’t have a good relationship with your mom or dad? *(Let a few kids respond.)* What about when you don’t have a good relationship with a friend? *(Let another few kids respond.)* Right! It doesn’t feel good when a relationship is broken. That’s why, even if you weren’t the one who did something wrong, it’s always a good idea to try to do SOMETHING to help fix the relationship.”

***[Make It Personal] (Tell about a child-appropriate time when you were brave and took a step toward forgiveness with a friend. Maybe that friend left you out of a group somehow, but you decided to text him, “Good luck,” anyway, when you knew he had a big test coming up. Share how it made you feel and how it affected the relationship.)***

## 5. Pray and Dismiss

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Gather the kids to sit in a tight circle together with their knees bent and feet flat on the floor in front of them.
- Encourage the kids to put their hands on their shoes as you pray that God would help them to **[Bottom Line] take the first step to forgive others** this week.

**What You Say:**

“Let’s pray. God, thank You for loving us and for always choosing to forgive us, even when we don’t deserve it. When we’re tempted to stay mad or refuse to forgive, help us to make the wise choice and choose to fix the relationship instead of just being right or making a point. We want to be a good friend and to love others the way You love us. So this week, help us to **[Bottom Line] take the first step to forgive others**. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.”

**BEFORE DISMISSAL: AT “COMMUNION CALL”**

**HAND OUT “GOD TIME” CARDS TO EACH CHILD AND ALLOW THEM TIME TO BEGIN WORKING ON THE WEEKLY ACTIVITY IF CHILDREN BRING THEM BACK THE FOLLOWING WEEK, THEY RECEIVE A PRIZE!**