

City SG-March 28th-29th, 2020

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)*

1. Ice Breaker

What You Need: Paper, pens

What You Do:

- Pass out paper and a pen 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

What You Need: Tic-Tac-Toe grids from Ice Breaker, pens

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 heard about an older brother who lost out on something really awesome because he refused to forgive. Let's not miss out! Let's forgive!"

3. Party Hats

What You Need: Paper party hats (1 per child), markers, and stickers

What You Do:

- Pass out a party hat to each child.
- Encourage the kids to decorate the hat using the stickers and markers.
- As kids finish, let them put on their hats!

What You Say:

"The older brother missed out on a super fun party. Why? Because, unlike his father, he refused to forgive. What could we miss out on when we refuse to forgive? (*Pause for responses.*) Refusing to forgive could cause you to miss out on a friendship! One thing that's super important to remember is that NO one is perfect. We all mess up sometimes. We all say things we don't really mean or do things that hurt others. Hopefully when that happens, like in the story Jesus told, the other person apologizes. And in that case, we should offer forgiveness for sure. Remember, **[Bottom Line]** when you don't forgive, you miss out."

[Make It Personal] (Tell kids about a time when you refused to forgive someone as a kid and you missed out. What happened as a result of choosing to stay mad?)

4. Party Time!

What You Need: Party hats; Bible

What You Do:

- Encourage the kids to wear their party hats.
- Talk about the choices the older brother in our story made today.
 - How did the father react when his son returned? (*He forgave him and threw a huge party to celebrate his son's return*)
 - Where was the older brother when the younger son returned? (*Working in the field*)
 - How did the older brother react when he found out that the party was for his younger brother who'd returned home? (*He was angry*)
 - What did the older brother say to the father? (*"All these years I have worked, I've obeyed. You've never thrown me a party."*)
 - Why do you think the older brother was SO mad? Can you relate to this?
 - Why do you think the father celebrated in such a big way?

What You Say:

"I can relate to the older brother in this story. He's right; he was the one who had stayed, the one who worked hard and honored his dad. But he missed out. Because he thought it was more important to be right than to forgive, he missed the opportunity to celebrate his brother's return. Sometimes we do the same thing. We want to make a point or prove that we're right and the other person is wrong. But in the end, your friendship is WAY more important than winning an argument. We need to offer forgiveness when someone apologizes and means it. Because ***[Bottom Line] when you don't forgive, you miss out.***"

5. Make Me Laugh

What You Need: "Make Me Laugh" Page (1 per group)

What You Do:

- Tell the kids you are going to tell some jokes, but they have to try not to laugh.
- Guide kids to form a straight line facing you.
- Read the jokes from the Activity Page.
- If kids laugh, they are out. The last serious kid standing is the winner.
- Play again if time allows, and see if the kids have any jokes of their own.

What You Say:

"Those were so hilarious! It is so hard being serious when everyone else is laughing and having fun. It almost feels like you are missing out on the joke. ***[Transition] Let's not be so serious that we forget that God is fun, and loves to see us happy!***"

6. Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: Party hats from earlier

What You Do:

- Close in prayer as the kids hold their party hats.

What You Say:

"These hats are a good reminder that ***[Bottom Line] when you don't forgive, you miss out.*** But forgiving someone when we've been hurt—even when the other person is clearly sorry—is still hard. Let's pray and ask God to help us forgive so we don't miss out this week.

“Heavenly Father, thank You for always offering forgiveness to us, just like the father in this story Jesus told. When we feel like holding onto anger like the older brother, would you please help us choose to forgive instead? We definitely need Your help to do that. We love and trust You, God. 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!**