

ALLEY SG – March 25-27, 2023

Today's Bible Story: Homecoming (The Story of the Lost Son) • *Luke 15:11-32*

Today's Key Question: When is it hard to ask for forgiveness?

Today's Bottom Line: God will always forgive you.

Monthly 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. Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Three plastic cups labeled 1, 2 and 3 (2 sets per group) ping pong ball (a few per group), "Ping Pong Trivia" Activity Page (1 per group)

What You Do:

- Divide the group into two equal teams.
- Set the cups up in a line, so that the cup labeled "1" is closest to the group and the cup labeled "3" is farthest. The cup labeled "2" should be somewhere in the middle.
- Explain that players from each team will take turns trying to toss the ping pong ball into a cup.
- If they make the ball into a cup, they will be asked a trivia question from the "Ping Pong Trivia" Activity page.
- The number on the cup will determine the level of difficulty for the question (one being easiest and three being most difficult).
- Players can collaborate with their team before giving their final answer to the question.
- If they get the answer correct, they will receive the number of points that matches the level question they answered—one, two, or three. The next team will then take a turn.
- If they answer the question incorrectly, the opposing team will have a chance to answer and receive points before taking their turn.
- Play until all the questions have been asked, and then have each team count their points. The team with the most points wins!
- Lead kids to take turns sharing their thoughts about how the two sons in the story were different from each other.
 - Point out how each of us are created and wired so differently.
 - God has given each of us different skills and talents and strengths. But this also means we are all prone to mess up in all different ways.
- Assure kids that God offers forgiveness to ALL of us, regardless of what we may view as a bigger or smaller wrong.

2. Verses to Take with You

What You Need: "God Always" Activity page, Bibles, pens or pencils

What You Do:

- Put kids in pairs.
- Give each pair of kids a copy of the "God Always" Activity Page, a Bible, and a pen or pencil.
- Tell kids to work with their partner to look up each verse listed on the sheet and complete the sentence next to the verse.
- After everyone has finished looking up the verses and filling in the blanks, let kids share the answers they came up with.
 1. Isaiah 41:10
God always helps us, does what is right.
 2. Joshua 1:9
God always goes with you.

3. Jeremiah 29:11
God always has a plan.
 4. Colossians 3:13
God always forgives us.
- Ask:
 - When have you experienced God doing one of the things we just talked about?

3. Discussion Questions

Ask:

- Are there some people in your life who are easier to always forgive than others?
- Do you ever feel like you don't deserve to be forgiven? If so, why?
- When is it hard to ask for forgiveness?
- Why does God always forgive us?

4. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: "Forgiveness Re-Write" Activity Page

What You Do:

- Invite kids to sit in a circle.
- Place the stack of "Forgiveness Re-Write" cards in the middle of the circle and choose one kid to draw the top card on the stack.
- Ask the kid to first read the scenario on the card.
- Then choose a volunteer who wants to give an alternative ending to the scenario, where the character chooses forgiveness and works to figure out how to mend the broken relationship.
- Allow kids time to discuss their ideas for different endings, encouraging them to think about how each person in the situation could do something to work toward fixing the relationship through forgiveness.
- Continue until you have worked through the stack of cards or until everyone has had a chance to share their ideas.
- Explain that when we believe God will always forgive us, we should be willing to always forgive others.
- Ask the following questions:
 - Does it encourage you to know that God will always forgive you?
 - Should we feel free to go through life carelessly, knowing that God will always forgive us no matter what?
- Take time to make sure kids understand that none of the wrong things we do are too big or awful or terrible for God to still love us and forgive us. Read Romans 8:38.
- Also explain that while God does promise to forgive us, regardless of what we do, God still wants us to treat others with love and see them as people who were created by God.

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Invite kids to share any prayers requests they have.
- Pray for the group and the prayer requests that were given,
- Encourage kids to remember to pray for each other through the week. Remind kids that God always listens to us and cares about the things that matter to us.