

CITY SG – March 18-20, 2023

Today's Bible Story: Mercy, Mercy Me (The Story of the Unmerciful Servant) • *Matthew 18:21-35*

Today's Bottom Line: Forgive others because God forgives 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. Modern-Day Parable

Bible Story Review

What You Need: "Modern-Day Parable" Activity Page

What You Do:

- Tell kids they get to help you *rewrite* the parable of the unmerciful servant as if Jesus was telling it today!
- Read the parable on the "Modern-Day Parable" Activity Page through once.
- Then, read one line at a time, pausing after each, and guiding the kids to rephrase that line in a modern way.
- If going through the story line-by-line gets kids stuck, give them one of the modern-day prompts and let them run with it, telling the story completely in their own way.
- Be prepared to ask prompting questions to get them thinking in the right direction.

What You Say:

"When Jesus taught, He often told parables, or stories, to help people understand things about God. These lessons are still true for our lives today, just like we showed with our modern-day parable! We were able to see that God's forgiveness can, and should, change us. We've learned that you can **[Bottom Line] forgive others because God forgives you.**

Note: Make sure kids understand that if someone keeps hurting them in the same way, such as in a bully situation or an unsafe situation at home, that requires more help and involvement than what they're able to handle on their own. If you ever suspect a kid is in an unsafe situation at home, talk to your staff coordinator immediately.

2. Memory Verse Moves

Memory Verse Activity

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up Colossians 3:13 and say the entire memory verse out loud with the navigation tips below **IF you feel your group can do this. If not, read the verse to them.**
- Ask if any kids can remember the first part of the verse: *Put up with one another.*
- Then, ask if any kids can remember the second part of the verse that you learned last week: *Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone.*
- Then, ask if anyone can recite the final part of the verse: *Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you.*
- Repeat the verse in its entirety a few times out loud.
- As a group, talk through the verse and lead kids to come up with hand motions to correspond with the words.
- Allow the kids to open their Bibles and refer to them as necessary.
- Practice several times together, using the same hand motions.

What You Say:

“We’ve all done things that are wrong—some big things, some small things. But when we ask for forgiveness, God forgives them all! And when you remember everything that God has forgiven you for, you can **[Bottom Line] forgive others because God forgives you.**”

3. Forgive or Don’t Forgive*Application Activity*

What You Need: “Forgive” and “Don’t Forgive” signs (a set per group) and painter’s tape

What You Do:

- Tape each sign on the floor on one side of your Small Group space.
- Read the first scenario from the list below.
- Ask kids to move to one sign or the other based on whether or not it would be difficult for them to forgive in that situation.
- Scenarios:
 - Your older sister calls you a big baby. You hate it when she calls you that.
 - Your little brother breaks your art project. He feels really bad and says so.
 - Your friend passes out invitations to his birthday. You don’t receive one.
 - Your mom is frustrated by the big mess you made, and she raises her voice. Later, she apologizes for yelling.
 - A classmate in PE keeps stealing the basketballs and keeping them in a corner of the gym.

What You Say:

“This week, when you find yourself upset and want to stay mad, remember that God forgives you. Ask God to help you choose to forgive. You can **[Bottom Line] forgive others because God forgives you.**”

4. Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: Sticky notes (a few per kid) and pens

What You Do:

- Set out the sticky notes.
- Give each kid a pen.
- Invite the kids to think of something they’re concerned about or want prayer for.
- Direct the kids to write down or draw their prayer request on a sticky note.
- Invite the kids to add their prayer requests to the Sticky Note Prayer Wall.
- Ask kids to put their prayer request in front of them and ask if anyone wants to share theirs.
- Encourage them to take this sticky note home to remind them to continue praying.

What You Say:

“God, thank You so much for every person in this room. We pray for each of these prayer requests in this circle. Thank You for Your forgiveness and Your grace. Thank You for the ability to have healthy relationships with others. Help us remember Your forgiveness when we do things that are wrong. And please help us forgive others when they hurt us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen!”