



Date: _____

Series: Prayer Walk Mall
Fall Year 2, Lesson 24

Forgiveness Unlimited— Praying for Pardon

Take Home Point: Forgive others as God has forgiven us. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Matthew 18:21-35

Key Verse: Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ."

We will help kids know:

- The price of our forgiveness is Jesus' death in our place.
- God has forgiven us much more than we will ever be called to forgive another.
- It takes God's power for us to forgive others even as we have been forgiven.
- It is an intentional process to release debts and injuries that others have given us into the hands of God.




We will help kids feel:

- Assured of their forgiveness.
- Convicted of their need to forgive others.

We will help kids do:

- Imagine what a videotape (or DVD) of their sins would look like.
- Pull out an actual videocassette tape piece to represent grudges against the sins of others and hand it over to God.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids will picture in their minds and discuss a time when someone has hurt them and how it made them feel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none
Large Group 	3 7 10	<p>Overview</p> <p>Store Introduction and Sketch: Presenter welcomes guests to the Forgiveness Unlimited store where he will describe his invention, The Debtinator. Three groups present scenarios followed by a Debtinator demonstration.</p> <p>Audience Participation Drama and Teaching: Students will help the presenter tell the story of the rich young servant. Teaching will focus on how Jesus commands, through prayer, that we forgive the debts of others in the same way that God will forgive ours when we ask.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer Walk Mall map • Lord's Prayer text • box labeled "Forgiven" • sign labeled "The Debtinator" • video camera hooked up to a television and videocassette recorder • stack of old videotapes and DVDs • scenario cards (p. 14) --- however many needed for the number of actors chosen • oversized button-like nametag for store clerk • jewelry, big hair, hand bags, and cell phone • Bible with giant play money sticking out • football • nametags labeled "shirts" and "skins" • robber costume • real or toy microphones • giant cardboard knob or lever labeled "volume – high, medium, low"
Small Group Application 	4	Kids will pull out a portion of videotape from a videocassette (or break a DVD) as they discuss the things others have done to hurt them. Prayer goals and journaling provide closure of this lesson.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one old videocassette • one videocassette box or case decorated with a cross • Optional CD or DVD with case • scissors • prayer journals

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

As kids gather: Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.

Begin discussion with the following.

Close your eyes and think about a time when someone hurt you physically or hurt your feelings. Maybe it was a time when someone took something from you or said a bad thing about you. Everyone think for a moment and we'll share our stories.

Allow thinking time and then sharing time.

When you close your eyes and think about when that hurtful thing happened, how do you feel inside? Angry, frustrated, confused...? Discuss.

Today we will talk about how, when we are hurt by others or when others sin against us, it's easy to keep a videotape of that event in our minds. The picture can become so vivid and we may replay it again and again. However, when we do this we can get angry and bitter each time and our bitterness grows.

Today we will learn what to do with that videotape so that it doesn't keep on making us feel angry and bitter. We will learn to **forgive others as God has forgiven us.*

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Store Introduction and Sketch: Presenter welcomes guests to the Forgiveness Unlimited store where he will describe his invention, The Debtinator. Three groups present scenarios followed by a Debtinator demonstration.

Audience Participation Drama and Teaching: Students will help the presenter tell the story of the rich young servant. Teaching will focus on how Jesus commands, through prayer, that we forgive the debts of others in the same way that God will forgive ours when we ask.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?/ Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Have kids refer to Matthew 18:21-35 in their Bibles and read Matthew 18:21-22. Then ask:

Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who kept sinning against him. He thought seven times might be a generous amount. What did Jesus tell him? *(Not just seven times, but seventy times seven.)*

Do you think Jesus meant he should forgive a person only 490 times? *(No, but to continually forgive them, not keeping track. Note: the number seven in the Bible stands for completion. I.e., God rested on the seventh day.)*

In this parable, who does the master represent? *(God.)*

Who does the servant represent? *(Believers. When we have experienced how much God has forgiven us, yet we refuse to forgive someone else.)*

How much did the servant owe the master in comparison to how much the other servant owed the first servant? *(Millions vs. one hundred dollars.)*

What do you think the amounts of money represent? *(Sins done against us by others are small compared to how much we have wronged God, and how much he forgave us in sending his only Son to die for us.)*

Read Matthew 18:34-35.

Why do you think the consequences for “not sincerely forgiving other believers” is so severe? *(Because, in effect, we discount the forgiveness of God and its cost---the death of Jesus on the cross, when we hold onto our unforgiveness.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Our key verse from Ephesians 4:32 says, “Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ.”

According to this verse, is forgiving others an option? What if someone severely harmed us, like abuse? Should we still forgive them?

The key phrase is “as God has forgiven you.” Did Jesus suffer severe abuse?

If we give it to God, do we still have the hurt? *(We may, but we will not hold on to the bitterness associated with unforgiveness that can hurt our spirits even more.)*

Forgiveness is a choice we have to make even if we don’t feel like it. It is very hard to forgive someone who has hurt us. But, we can remember all that Jesus went through for us, and we can remember that God will take vengeance for us. *(See such verses as Proverbs 20:22, Romans 12:17, 19, 21 about God’s vengeance. Note: Forgiveness does not mean allowing continued destructive behavior or not reporting it. It means not trying to get even, but allowing God to inflict the consequences.)*

How can we accomplish forgiveness? *(Through prayer and continually turning our hurt over to God.)*

Application Activity:

Supplies needed: an old videocassette and videocassette box or case decorated with a cross, (option: use a CD or DVD and case or envelope) scissors, prayer journals

Hold up the videotape cassette and its box. Then say:

Sometimes we replay the hurt someone has inflicted on us over and over like playing a video in our mind over and over.

This box (or DVD envelope) symbolizes the covering of Jesus’ forgiveness that erases all of our sins and sins against us like The Debtinator.

I will pass the videotape cassette around to each of you. Think about some of the injuries and hurts that people have done to you. Please share with us some of those hurts if you feel comfortable. While you

do this, peel out a few yards of old tape from this videocassette, cut it, hang onto it and pass the cassette to the next person to do the same thing. (Option: Using a permanent marker, kids can write a word describing their sin on the DVD or CD.)

Pass the video and scissors around the group. After everyone has pulled out and cut a piece of the tape and had the chance to talk about their hurts, say:

This tape, if you will use your imagination, is just one scene of a thousand that God has seen for all the wrong things you have ever done. Right here it is recorded live and in color. What do you think he wants to do with this tape or DVD? *(He wants to take this and throw it in the deepest sea or completely erase it.)*

If using a DVD or CD, break it into pieces.

He can erase this tape because when he looks at it, he sees not just you, but Jesus who is the one who gave his perfect life for you. He took the punishment for you. So your sins are erased.

Now, what are you going to do with the scraps you are hanging onto? Let's just place it all in the center of our circle, in or on top of the forgiveness box. Remember **forgive others as God has forgiven us.*

Closing Prayer:

Have kids write a short prayer in their journals asking God to take their hurt and to help them forgive someone who has hurt them. Have them confess their wrongdoing and thank God for the price he paid to free us from those debts. Then close with:

God, we offer these tapes up to you. They represent our hurts and sins. Forgive our sins and help us to forgive the sins of others against us. Thank you for letting us give it all to you. Holding a grudge takes time and energy, and is destructive to us. But because you are all powerful, we are able to enjoy the freedom that comes with handing over such weight on our lives. Be with us this week as we practice and perfect our ability to let go. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Visiting Forgiveness Unlimited in Prayer Walk Mall

Props:

- any props that help picture a store called *Forgiveness Unlimited*, such as a sign, cashier's table, or shelves
- presentation sized map of *Prayer Walk Mall* with stores labeled (from previous weeks)
- presentation sized text of the Lord's Prayer
- videocassette recorder, hooked up to a television and video camera on tripod
- a box big enough to hold a few videocassettes, and decorated with a cross and labeled "Forgiven"
- a sign to hang on the videocassette recorder labeling it "The Debtinator"
- stack as many videocassettes as needed on a store-like shelf
- scenario cards
- large paper grocery sack filled with money and labeled "10 Million Dollars - \$10,000,000"
- small paper grocery sack filled with money and labeled "Seven Hundred Dollars - \$700"

Characters:

- store clerk, Dewey Fern Givvum, needs an oversized button-like nametag
- outfit the "Gossipy Girls" with play jewelry, big hair, handbags, and cell phones
- provide the "Victim Boy" with a Bible and giant play money sticking out
- other characters have a football, four large nametags (two printed with "shirts" and two printed with "skins"), and a stereotypical robber outfit of a black trench coat and black hat or pantyhose pulled over the head
- real or toy microphones for the "Adult Sabotage" scene with a giant cardboard knob or level labeled "Volume – High, Medium, Low"

Choose volunteer actors in advance, preferably as kids arrive before Small Group Warm-Up. Give them scene cards to practice role playing and show them appropriate props and costuming to enhance their performance.

Name and Store Introduction

Kids, welcome to Prayer Walk Mall where you can receive a closer walk with God especially when you are able to forgive others! My name is Dewey... Fern... Givvum. You heard me right, (say the name quickly) Dewey Fern Givvum.... Hey, it's a family name. I'll forgive 'em.

Anyway, we're here at the grand opening of the Forgiveness Unlimited store where we will look around and discover the debts, or

grudges, we hold against other people for hurting us. Debts are something you owe to someone for doing something, either good or bad, to you. Forgiveness is being able to relieve someone of what they owe you for doing something hurtful to you.

I have some professional actors with me today who will act out three scenes of some bad stuff people can do to each other. You, my beloved audience and closest fans, will guess what it is they're doing that is so hurtful to someone else. These scenes will be recorded on our closed circuit surveillance camera (motion toward camera set-up) that I myself, Mr. Dewey F. Givvum, have invented and given the name, The Debtinator. The patent on this is pending, so folks, don't get any ideas about copying my idea here to sell yourself. It's going to be a hot item here at Forgiveness Unlimited once people discover its power in making lives easier and more joyful, which of course, will leave more time and energy to praise God!

Bring volunteer actors onto stage one group at a time.

Scene 1: Gossipy Girls

Two girls gossip about another girl who is reading the Bible. They talk about how, "She just thinks she's so much more holy than the rest of us." They say things like: everyone else does homework, prays and studies the Bible, too, but we don't have to do it in front of everybody else and act so "big" about it.

Presenter leads the audience in applause when scene concludes. Have actors return to seats in the audience.

Who might have had her feelings hurt in this scene?

Invite answers.

Scene 2: Victim Boy

A boy has his offering dollars tucked into his Bible. He has been using them as a bookmark for the memory verse he has been trying so hard to remember for his small group shepherd. On his way to church, he has some extra time and sets his Bible down on a bench at the playground to join some friends in a quick game of touch football. Another kid at the busy playground sees the money sticking out of the Bible, pulls the money out and puts it in his pocket.

Presenter leads the audience in applause. Have actors return to seats in the audience.

Who was hurt in this scene?

Invite answers.

Scene 3: Adult Sabotage

The musicians and singers in the church praise band have exceptional talent and have even recorded some original works in a professional studio. One member of the group never misses a practice and has been singing in worship services for the last 50 years. Everyone in the congregation appreciates her dedication to the church and her spirit-filled attitude. Unfortunately, over the years, she has lost some of her ability to sing on key or to hear when she is off key. To keep the group sounding a certain way during Sunday services, the media technician decided to turn down her microphone volume to its lowest level from the sound booth during praise band songs each week.

Presenter leads the audience in applause. Have actors return to seats in the audience.

Who could have had hurt feelings in this scene?

Teaching Point:

Hold up the videotape cassette taken from the videocassette recorder used to film these three scenes. Walk over to the videocassette recorder.

I'd like to show you my invention here. This is what I call "The Debtinator." Inside it is the videocassette that contains our video recording of the three scenes just performed. After each scene, you told me which person was hurt in that scene. Now, to help those people let go of that hurt, all we have to do is say a prayer and push this button on "The Debtinator."

Press the eject button and place the cassette into a box labeled "Forgiven." Hold up a different videocassette in the other hand.

Over here, I have a videocassette of what God has seen from all the things *you've* done wrong. That's right. It's *all* here. Think for a moment about what some of those things are that *you've* done wrong and how it makes you feel to watch it in your mind.

God already knows about our sins, but we must acknowledge to him that we understand what they are. We acknowledge them by confessing, or telling all of our sins to God, and letting him know that we are sorry for them and need his forgiveness. Let's put this videocassette in "The Debtinator" and send those sins right to God.

Place this videocassette into the videocassette recorder and press eject. Then place it in the forgiveness box.

But what if something on that videotape is not about anything we did wrong, but about something someone else did to hurt us? What is it doing on *our* tape of bad stuff? Maybe it's there because of how it

made us feel. Maybe we've been holding onto the memory of it by replaying it in our mind, and continually getting angry over what it's all about. Let's be sure to ask forgiveness for that today, too.

Story of the Rich Young Servant

Divide the audience in half with an imaginary line. The presenter may want to have the kids in the middle scoot to one side or the other so parts are clear.

I am going to tell you the Bible story of the rich young servant found in Matthew 18:21-35, but I'm going to need your help. When I point to your side of the audience, I want you to loudly say one word but say it in a special way. Okay, you kids on this side (pick a side and point to them) will say "Pleeeeeeease..." just like you would if you are really begging for something. Now, you kids on this side (motion to the other side) will say, "Noooooooooooo..." when I point to you. Let's practice.

Lead each half of the audience through a few rounds of practice. Point to one side and cue, "Pleeeeeeease...." Point to the other side and cue, "Noooooooooooo..."

Okay, here's the story. There was once a master who had a servant. Sounds pretty normal so far, huh? Well, this master was very rich. You could say that he was rollin' in the dough. In fact, get this... he had ten million dollars just sitting around the house!

Cue: "Noooooooooooo..."

Yes, he did! Well, the servant knew about this stash of cash and I bet you can guess what he did with it. That's right... he took it, stole it, robbed him blind, and cleaned him out.

Toss the large moneybag out to the audience.

Cue: "Noooooooooooo..."

Yes, he did! He must have had a lot of fun because he spent *all* of it.

Have the audience member holding the moneybag toss it back to the presenter.

However, eventually he was caught and returned to his master. When he saw his boss, the servant fell onto his knees and told him what he had done.

Cue: "Noooooooooooo..."

Yes, he did! This is what the Bible says,

“That is why the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to do this, a servant who owed him millions of dollars was brought to him. Because he could not pay off the debt, the master ordered him, his wife, his children, and all that he had to be sold to pay off the account.” (Matthew 18:23-35)

So the master said that he should be arrested and thrown into jail. Not only the servant, but also his whole family should be thrown into jail.

Cue: ***“Noooooooooooo...”***

Yes, it’s true! So the servant, while on his knees, pleaded with his master and said,

Cue: ***“Pleeeeeeease...”***

“... Give me time, I’ll pay it back!” Well, how could he do that? It was impossible to pay it back. But, now listen carefully. His master decided that since there really was no way for the servant to repay him, that he would have to erase the servant’s debt and let him, and his family, go free.

Cue: ***“Noooooooooooo...”***

Yes, and he did it! Now, there is another guy who enters the picture. He was a friend of this servant and once borrowed a couple hundred dollars from the servant.

Throw out the small moneybag to someone in the audience to hold.

One day, this servant decided that he wanted his money back. So he went to his friend and said, “Where’s my money?” Well, guess what? He didn’t have the money to pay back.

Have the audience member holding the moneybag toss it back to the presenter.

The friend gets on his knees and says to the servant, “But if you just give me some time, I’ll pay it back to you.”

Cue: ***“Pleeeeeeease...”***

Now you’d think that the servant would be generous to his friend since his master had been so generous to him for doing the same thing. But listen to what happened. The friend said,

Cue: *"Pleeeeeeease..."*

"...Forgive me." But the servant man said,

Cue: *"Noooooooooooo..."*

"... Way! You're going to jail along with your wife and children until you pay back everything you owe me." So, is this fair?

Cue: *"Noooooooooooo..."*

No, it's not! But when the other servants heard what had happened to their friend, they told the master who confronted the servant and said "You're busted pal!" I showed compassion and love toward you by erasing *your* debt. But apparently you didn't learn a thing from it. Now I'm pressing charges and sending you to jail until you pay back every last cent you owe *me*.

This will happen to us, too, if we don't forgive others for hurting us. What do we do with those debts?

Teaching Point: The Lord's Prayer

Jesus said,

"Forgive us our (debts) sins for we forgive (our debtors) everyone who sin against us." (Luke 11:4 NIV)

Point to the stack of videocassette tapes on the store shelf.

Each one of these tapes on my shelf here at Forgiveness Unlimited represents the injuries that people have done to us. Thinking about those events is like having a videotape of it in our minds. Sometimes when we think of the person who hurt us or actually see them, it causes us to plug the tape in and relive the entire injury or debt that is owed against us. Replaying that tape means that we have a hard time forgetting about it. Maybe we do this to help ourselves get even with them or understand why it happened. But instead, we get more and more angry and bitter which is only destructive to us and not actually helpful at all.

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:32,

"Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ."

Jesus commands us to forgive other people's debts. Because of this, we need to recognize when we plug that tape in and begin to replay

it. Once this happens, we must take the tape out and hand it to God, which is why you need to buy your very own Debtinator.

We then say to God, "This injury is more than I can deal with. I need you to deal with it. I won't hold onto it or try and get even with the person who did this to me. You will take care of judging them. Help me release the debt to you."

Be assured that you will think of the bad thing that happened to you again but also know that you can eject it again. Satan will keep trying to play that tape over in your mind, but ejecting it and sending it to heaven, before you get angry, is what Jesus wants us to do. He loves us and wants us to know that the more we experience and practice God's grace, which is his forgiveness for us, holding no grudges against others will keep getting easier and easier. Just think of the joy and peace that comes with that freedom.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son Jesus to die for our sins, that we may have life forever with you. Give us the strength and perseverance to take those mind pictures containing the debts we feel we owe to others for hurting us, and erase them. Help us to do this by handing over our grudges to you. The bad feelings they cause are too destructive in our lives. But you are powerful enough to judge them and handle the weight of their burden. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Make as many copies per scene as actors used.

Scene 1: Gossipy Girls

Two girls gossip about another girl who is reading the Bible. They talk about how, “She just thinks she’s so much more holy than the rest of us.” They say things like: everyone else does homework, prays and studies the Bible, too, but we don’t have to do it in front of everybody else and act so “big” about it.

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