

Bible Study Forgiveness

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Needed Supplies:

- Paper for each person
- Pencils for each person
- Large erasers for each one
- Bible for each one

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32

Have you ever done something that you wish you could take back? Maybe something that you said that makes you cringe when you think about it? It happens to all of us at one time or another. As a kid I remember when I did something I knew to be wrong, I had that terrible sinking feeling in my gut that caused me turmoil in my heart and in my soul.

Today we are going to talk about sin and forgiveness. Forgiveness is one of the hardest things we can ask for or give, in my opinion. We often say we forgive but do we really forget? Let's work together to do a little illustration for each of us.

- Have participants draw a large heart on their paper. If you'd prefer, you can print out large hearts instead.
- Ask the participants if the heart is pure. Since it is clean, the answer is yes.
- Tell them, sometimes even when you are trying to do a good job, we mess up anyway. What is a way that we may mess up?
- Read **Colossians 3:5** which tells you some specific sins, tell them that sin clouds up your heart. Write the sin on the heart (big!) and have the participants do the same.
- Ask them what might happen after that. For example, if the first sin they offer is stealing, then tell them you might lie to cover it up because you don't want them to know. Then write the next sin on your heart and have them do the same.
- Repeat these steps until the heart is full of sins things.
- Now ask them, do you think that Jesus still loves you even with this? But do you think He can live in your heart with all this garbage?
- We need Jesus' forgiveness at all times. Can someone tell me what forgiveness means to you? How do we receive and give forgiveness? We must forgive as well. If we harbor bitterness and animosity in our lives, we must forgive as well. Colossians 3: 13 tells us this, ***“bear with each other and forgive one another if any one of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”***
- Read 1 John 1:9 ***“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”***

- Ask them “So what do we need to do to be forgiven?” “Why do you think that you need to say it out loud?” We have to admit it so that we are being honest with God and ourselves.
- What else do you think would be a good thing to do? Guide them until they answer that you should talk to the people that you wronged.
- Go through each of the sins on the heart and “make it right”. That means praying for the person you wronged, making it right, and asking for Jesus’ forgiveness. Each time, erase the sin from the heart. Have them do this as well.
- Once it is clean, ask the students if they think it will stay like that forever.
- Tell them: It’s probably not going to stay pure forever. Even if you try hard, you will probably mess up every once and a while. The important thing is that we try to do our best to be like Christ, and that we ask for forgiveness when we mess up—and quickly! We don’t want to end up filling our heart with sins.
- Give them a few minutes (play a quick worship song) and ask them to think about something they may need to ask forgiveness for, and to pray for it. At the end, pray a general prayer over them that they will learn from this lesson and try to keep their hearts pure.

Quotes on Forgiveness

- “To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you” – Louis B. Smedes
- “To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness” – Robert Muller
- “Forgive others not because they deserve forgiveness, but because you deserve peace” – Jonathan Huie
- “Forgive all who have offended you, not for them, but for yourself” – Harriet Nelson
- “If we really want to love we must learn how to forgive” – Mother Teresa
- “When you forgive, you immerse yourself in healing waters” – Stephen Richards
- “To forgive is to refuse to contaminate the future with the errors of the past” – Craig D. Lounsbrough
- “When we forgive, the slave we free is ourselves” – Edward M. Hallowell
- “Forgiving others is having power over the stars, forgiving yourself is having power over the moon” – Alan Maiccon

Check out this month’s craft – Soap Carving – which would follow nicely with this Bible Study.