

Bible background

Matthew 18:21-35

Aim of lesson

To teach that Jesus wants us to forgive others as God forgives us.

Preparation required

Make one paper crown. Choose a suitable area to be a prison - in a corner or under a table.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Ask the children to act the story as you tell it.

'Jesus once told a story about a king.' Bring out the crown and put it on the head of one of the children. 'A lot of people owed him money. He told them to come to the palace to pay. So they lined up to pay.' Line three children up to pay. 'This one owes your Majesty ten pounds.' Tell the child to pay an imaginary ten pounds to the 'king'. Similarly with the second child. With the third say he owes a million pounds, but he does not have any money to pay. Explain what the king said and let the child acting the part of the king order him to be sold as a slave, and his wife and children too. Tell the 'servant' what to say on his knees and how the king forgave him all the debt.

Tell how the servant went out happily - have him walk around the class - and found another servant who owed him two pounds. With another child from the class act out the rest of the parable. Call on members of the class to be guards who take the second servant off to prison, and other servants who reported what had happened to the king.

2. Jesus told this story to teach us that if we do not forgive other people when they do wrong things to us, we are like that wicked servant. We owe God so much more than anyone owes us. Ask the children about the things God has given us freely - life, food, animals, sight, hearing. We owe him a lot.
3. Teach the song 'Can You Forgive?'
4. Fold the activity sheet into a booklet and use it to recap the story,. Ask what is happening in each picture. The centre pages can be used for the children to draw a situation where they would have to forgive someone.

Alternative activities

1. Do some coin rubbings with wax crayons, or pre-cut some coins from foil or shiny paper and stick on to a piece of paper or thin card cut into a moneybag shape.
2. Make a prison out of blocks/Lego and act out the story using toy figures.
3. Talk about situations at home/school/nursery where they might need to forgive someone/be forgiven for something. You may need to give a few examples as it is a difficult concept. Draw some pictures.

Relevance to the children's lives

Ask the children if they forgive their brother or sister if they lose or break one of their toys, or are cross and nasty to them. Who has been unkind to them this week? Can they forgive them? Teach that God and his Son, Jesus, are pleased when we forgive others.

Prayer

Use these ideas to make up a prayer starting 'Dear Lord God, help us to forgive other people when they...'

Verse

'Forgive as the Lord forgave you.' Colossians 3:13.

Song

Can You Forgive? (Tune: Lavender's Blue)



Can you forgive all the people who have hurt you?
Just as your Father in heaven forgives you too.

Music: Traditional.