

Week #1

Forgiveness

Supplies you will need

- 2 empty gift/shoe boxes.
- Papers or sticky notes to write on.
- Something to write with.
- 2 movie clips on pain or unforgiveness (*suggestions at the bottom).
- 2 real examples about the power of forgiveness.
- Scriptures promises and commands about forgiveness.

Estimated Time Needed

20-30 minutes

Statement from the Cross #1

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Luke 23:34

- Read aloud Luke 23:34.
- Spend time talking about scenarios of how we can be hurt by others. Ask for real examples, or use your own stories to make it personal.

Watch Video Clips

- Using media, find 2 movie clips that show hurt and un-forgiveness (for younger children, use a cartoon or a picture book).
- After watching the clips, talk to your family about the power of forgiveness and how it is not a power that we have but something that God possesses.
- ****It is very important to emphasize that Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.***

Gift/Shoe Box Activity

- Have 2 gift boxes prepared. One gift box will have papers inside that are blank. On those papers you can list things that people do that can cause hurt or tempt us to be unforgiving. If you are doing this with older children, you can list actual people or situations they are facing currently.
- Put the lid on the box and seal it. The box represents Jesus taking our pain, anger, hurt, and frustration when we make the choice to forgive and surrender it to him.
- In the second box, have verses written out inside that talk about the power of forgiveness, as well as the command to pray for our enemies.

The Boxes Explained

- **FORGIVENESS** is an **ACTION WORD**. When we forgive others, we must do three things:
 - We surrender or **{LET IT GO}** to Jesus
 - We personally **{RECEIVE}** God's forgiveness
 - We pray and **{GIVE FORGIVENESS}** to someone else.
- Have some real life examples that demonstrate the power of forgiveness. Explain that the way we know we have really received forgiveness is that our pain will be overcome by the love of God. When we are tempted to open our box of pain, we can reach for the other box instead and choose a promise or say a prayer of blessing for someone who has hurt us. We do this all through Jesus name. That is when we will experience the **POWER** and **MIRACLE** of forgiveness because our hearts will begin to be transformed, and so will others around us! It is not what we do, but what God has already done for us that makes this possible and changes our hearts.
- If someone in your family my question if they have actually forgiven the person or situation. As the *Spiritual Leader* in the family, remind them that they can continue to surrender that situation to God. Using the box activity, explain that you cannot hold on to both boxes at one time. It is important to **{Let Go}** the box of pain, and **{Receive}** the box of God's forgiveness.
- While holding onto God's forgiveness, we now have the ability to **{Give Forgiveness}** to others. Remind your family that they are not doing the forgiving on their own. As they continue to surrender to God, He continues transforming their heart (John 15:5).

A Closing Thought

- Often, in our stubbornness, we do not want to forgive others until they are willing to apologize to us. This is not what we are called to do. We forgive others regardless of their reaction, or how it is received. Remember,

"as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." - Colossians 3:12-14

- Close your evening with prayer and thankfulness for the forgiveness that comes through Jesus Christ.

Related Scripture References

Proverbs 17:9; 2 Chr. 7:14; Matt 6:14; 1 John 1:9; Matt 5:44; Mark 11:25; Psalm 32:1