LESSON 9

Keeping Score Is Not Forgiveness



Aim: **To teach the children that, just as Jesus forgives us, we need to forgive those who have wronged us.**

Scripture Reading: **Matthew 18:21-35; 6:14-15**

Memory Verse: **Matthew 6:14**
"[I]f you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Presenting the Lesson

Starting Point

Ask the class what happens when there is a quarrel or a fight at home or at school between two children.

Question: What do the parents or the teacher ask them to do once they have been stopped?
Answer: They have to apologise or say they are sorry to each other. They are asked to forgive each other.

Question: Do people find it easy to forgive?
Answer: No, often it's very difficult.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. One of the disciples once asked Jesus this question: "How many times should I forgive someone who has wronged me?" Jesus told a story to give the answer.
2. **Tell the story in Matthew 18:23-34. Note: This story might be easier for you to tell and for the children to follow if you give the two servants names.**
   One day, a great and important ruler decided to check how much every servant owed him (18:23).
   One of the servants owed him a huge sum; much more than he could ever pay back to his master (18:24).
   As the servant could not pay his debt, the king ordered that he and his family be sold as slaves (18:25).
   However, even selling them would not bring in enough money to pay what they owed the king. Therefore, the servant begged the king not to sell them but to give him more time to repay him (18:26).
   Instead, the king wiped out the debt. He let the servant go free even though he owed him so much (18:27).

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3. When he came outside, the same servant found another servant, who owed him a small sum. He nearly killed this person who owed him and demanded that he pay back the debt (18:28). Even though the other servant begged, he refused to allow him more time to pay (18:29-30).
   Show Picture 9. Point out the other servants watching.
4. The other servants reported what happened to the king. When the king heard that the same servant who had received such great mercy was so unforgiving towards a fellow-servant, he punished him very severely (18:31-34).

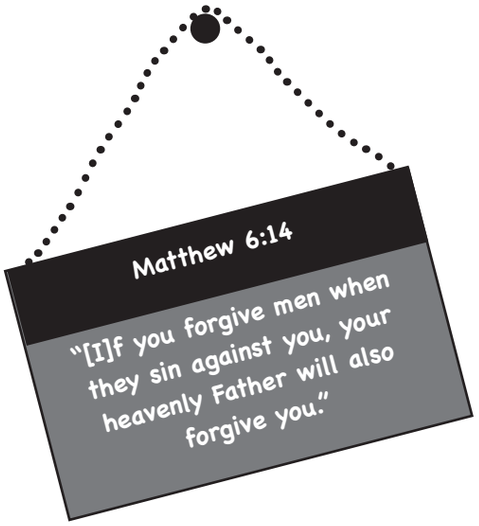
Our Response to the Story

I think most of you have seen or even helped someone working a garden or a field, digging with a hoe. A hoe must be very sharp to do its job. Suppose the person cut him- or herself. What will happen if they don't wash and clean the wound? It will grow worse and soon they will find it difficult and painful to walk.

If we do not forgive people who have wronged us, the bad feelings we have toward them also grow worse. We become angry and bitter, even if we do not show it.

We all know how difficult it can be to forgive, especially when the wrong is as huge as the sum that the servant in the story owed the king! However, as Christians we can forgive others their sins against us because God has forgiven us all our sins. God is like the king in the story. He expects us to show others the same kind of mercy that we have received. As we forgive others, we come to understand God's forgiveness better and forgiving others becomes easier.

Instil the Memory Verse



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