

Each month we have a special memory verse and Life App.
All of our stories revolve around those.

This month's Memory Verse is:
***"Bear with one another and forgive one another
if any of you has a grievance against someone.
Forgive as the Lord forgave you."
Colossians 3:13, NIV***

This month's life app is
Forgiveness
"Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay."

Weekly, we have a different bottom line that goes with our story and Life App.

So far this month our bottom lines have been:

- 1) Forgive others because God forgives you. (The unmerciful servant)
- 2) When you forgive others, it can change them. (Zacchaeus)

Our story for this week is about when Jesus teaches on Forgiveness. (Matthew 5:1-2; 23-24)
The **Bottom Line** this week: 'Take the first step to forgive others.'

**Today I want to share with you an awesome example of forgiveness from Jesus. When Jesus was here on Earth, He taught amazing things, which we can read here in the Bible. (*Hold up Bible.*) He also healed people who were sick. People would follow Jesus everywhere He went, just to see Him and hear what He had to say.

One time, a great crowd was following Jesus around. So, He went up to the side of a mountain and sat down. His disciples came, and He started to teach them.

Jesus taught about a lot of things that day, and we can find His words in the book of Matthew. He talked about how important it is for us to fix our relationships with each other. Listen to what He said:

Open the Bible to Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV) and read.

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

Now, today we don't offer gifts at God's altar. That was what people did in the time before Jesus came. It was kind of like what we do today when we pray or worship God together. But what Jesus said that day is still true for us now. If someone is mad at you, if someone has a problem with you, before you do anything else, go and do what you can to make peace with them. Make it RIGHT with them.

How many of you may have ever gotten into an argument with a sibling or a friend over a video game? Maybe you were SO into the game that you didn't even notice that you were totally hogging the controller. You never gave your friend a turn. And it made them so MAD because it seemed like you did it on purpose! What do you do when you're in a situation like that? Probably argue about it, until one of you leaves . . . or until your mom or dad comes in to stop the yelling.

Video games are fun, but FIGHTING over video games is NOT fun. And honestly, are video games so important that they should hurt your relationship with a friend or family member? Of course not!

Remember, Jesus said that we should make things right with each other BEFORE we go to God. That's how important forgiveness is. It's important that we take the first step to say, 'I'm sorry' and it's just as important for us to be quick to forgive.

You see, when you take a step to say you're sorry and ask for forgiveness, or when you forgive someone who's wronged YOU, you make things right. You fix the relationship and that makes others want to fix it too. It feels SO good turn something that was a problem (maybe even a BIG one) into . . . a celebration!

It can be really hard for us to see where we've messed up. But we can ask God to show us. Sometimes we can just sort of sense that someone is upset at us, but we don't know why. In those moments, we need to have the courage to take the first step and ask.

When we find out something that we might have done wrong, we might be tempted to try to defend ourselves. We might think about all the reasons why we were right to act the way we did, But, if we really want to make things right with someone, we should take what they say seriously. We should be willing to ask for forgiveness.

If we have a problem with someone, we should do whatever we can to fix the relationship. We should be willing to say we're sorry, to ask for forgiveness. In the same way, we should be willing to forgive when someone has wronged US. Remember: Treat others the way you want to be treated, and

"Take the first step to forgive others."

Don't let the hurt or anger build up. Don't hold something against your friend when you could just get it out in the open. Forgive quickly, because the longer you wait, the harder it will be. With God's help, we can always find the courage to make the first move and make things right.

Let's pray and ask God to help us with that.

PRAY

"God, thank You so much for Jesus' words that help us see things Your way. Help us to do what Jesus said—to take the first step toward fixing our relationships with others. It can be tough to do that when we can't see what we've done wrong or maybe when we don't FEEL like apologizing. But we know that it's really important for us to make things right with others. Please help us to choose forgiveness and fix the relationships in our lives. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."

There is an app that corresponds with the lessons we do called **parent cue**. We encourage you to download it and follow up the lessons with the questions and activities the app provides. Plus, it's free!

ACTIVITY 1:

What you need: Butcher/construction/copy paper, crayons, tape, written memory verse for kids to see

- Place the long piece of butcher paper or sheets of construction/copy paper on the floor and hang the memory verse up on the wall for everyone to see.
- Instruct the kids to trace the outline of one of their feet on the paper. (The outlines will be far from perfect! But, as much as possible, let kids do the tracing themselves.) Make sure the feet are in a semblance of a line if using butcher paper.
- Assign each child a word or two from the verse posted, making sure you're assigning the verse in order with the kid's footprints.
- Instruct kids to write their word(s) inside their own foot outline, and then decorate the outline however they'd like.
- Once everyone is finished, put the foot step verse in order and practice saying the it together a couple times. Or let kids take turns walking along the footsteps on the butcher paper, saying each word as they step on it. If you have a space, hang it up and have kids say it whenever they pass by.

What you can say:

“The memory verse steps look so cool! Can anyone tell me why we wrote the verse on our feet outlines? Right! Because we're talking about taking the first STEP toward forgiveness! And we need feet to take steps! **Take the first step to forgive others** when they do something wrong. Instead of staying mad, remember what our verse says: Forgive!”

ACTIVITY 2:

What you need: Music

- Play some upbeat music and encourage kids to dance however they want to.
- After about 15 seconds, stop the music and tell kids to freeze!
- Once the kids are frozen, call out one way that we can take a step toward forgiving others or showing others that we have forgiven them.

Example Action Steps:

High five your neighbor.
Smile to the person on your right.
Wave to the person across from you.
Say hello to the person to your left.
Give the person behind you a compliment.

- Challenge kids to quickly perform that action before the music starts back up.
- After a few rounds, feel free to let your kids create some action steps of their own!

ACTIVITY 3:

What you need: Uninflated balloons

- **Gather** kids in a circle.
- **Hold** a balloon and **ask** kids to think of something they are holding on to that they need to forgive or something they have forgiven in the past.
- **After** each example kids share, **blow** the balloon a little bigger.
Examples could include: Someone said something mean to you. Or someone said they would do something and they didn't follow through. Or maybe you got in trouble for something your sister did.
- **Explain** God doesn't want us to hold on to anything that keeps us from forgiving someone; God wants us to let go of anything we are holding against someone. (*Let go of the balloon.*)