



I AM

Week 2: I am forgiven

What we want students to learn: Forgiveness is final.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: Forgive themselves and others, believing Jesus has already forgiven them.

Large Group Message Focus: Ephesians 2:1-10 and John 19:28-30

Scripture Focus: Matthew 6:14-15 and Matthew 18:21-22

The Main Point

Many of us feel we are never really “finished” with our past sins. We think about them, feel shame for them, and even try to cover them up. However, God forgives us for every sin we have done and loves us unconditionally. Some students may be thinking, “so, what’s the catch?” There is none. We only need to accept it as the free gift Jesus died to give us. We want our students to learn how to forgive both themselves and others as God has forgiven them.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever seen a kid try to play hide and seek and their hiding spot is the most obvious place in the world? What about when a little kid tried to cover up something they did, but the cover up failed miserably. Ask the following question to see who has the best little kid cover story.

- **Think back to when you were little. Do you remember ever making a mistake and then going above and beyond to cover it up? What did you do?**

Just because we are older now, doesn’t mean we stop trying to cover up our sin. The only difference is that now instead of throwing a blanket over the broken lamp, they may lie, hide out, or even scheme to have other people use the same “cover story” they do so no one notices. We hide our sin because of the shame we feel with it. But, what if your students knew that in the face of Jesus, they never have to hide it.

PRAY that you students will fully understand the importance of forgiveness and what huge changes it can make in their life.

LESSON

In the continuation of His famous sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses our need to forgive others. Next, your students are going to read this passage. But, first, it will be helpful for you to know what one commentator said about this passage: “The prayer assumes that those whom God forgives in turn forgive

others.” This is not to say our salvation is contingent on whether or not we forgive people who wrong us. Rather, forgiving others is our new response to what we have received. Have your students read Matthew 6:14-15.

- **What happens when you forgive others?**
 - *God forgives your sins.*
- **What often stops you from forgiving others?**
 - *Maybe forgiveness makes you feel weak, ashamed, silly, or even guilty. Forgiveness isn't the natural response in our society. Holding a grudge is. But, Jesus has called us to a new way of thinking.*
- **Why do you think Jesus stressed the importance of forgiveness?**
 - *Forgiveness strengthens our friendship with God and lifts the burden of shame off of our shoulders.*

In the same Gospel, Jesus talks about forgiveness again. Have your students read Matthew 18:21-22.

- **Why do you think Jesus says to forgive 77 times?**
 - *His followers should be more willing to show mercy than to seek justice for themselves.*
- **When you forgive others should your actions also represent forgiveness? Why or why not?**
 - *Yes, or it would be like you didn't even forgive them. To forgive someone isn't just to say it, but to act on it as well. That means letting go of grudges and treating them fairly.*

LIFE APPLICATION

Forgiveness can feel like a vague thing to apply. For many students, they may have verbally forgiven someone before, but experienced no real change in their heart. Help your students navigate this using the questions below.

- **What is one thing you need to forgive yourself for? Why?**
 - *Forgiving yourself can often be harder than forgiving someone else.*
 - *Remind your group members that this is a safe space for them to share.*
- **What is one thing you need to forgive someone else for? Why?**
- **How can forgiving others become easier for you?**
 - *Pray about it, don't put it off, remember that God forgives you and other people even when it's hard to believe it, etc.*

To close out small group, consider sharing a recent experience you have had with either forgiving yourself or someone else. How did you go about it and how is your life different now because of it?

TAKE IT OUT

Close small group out with prayer requests. Pray specifically that your group would receive the forgiveness God wants to freely give them.

After prayer, be sure to remind them of any upcoming group serving activities or student events and THE WEEKEND!