

Second Chances

By Nance Keyes

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 5**Focus:**

Jesus shows us that failure isn't fatal.

Lesson 5**Bible Basis:**

Matthew 26:23-25,
31-35, 57-75;
John 21:15-17

Lesson 5**Memory Verse:**

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
—Psalm 103:8

Students will contemplate failure and find that with God even the worst failure can be forgiven—again and again.

Materials:

Internet access

Have you ever been on the winning team? Earned an A after studying hard? Promised to stop picking on your brother or sister and kept the promise? It sure feels good when we get it right! Sadly, even when we try hard, we sometimes fail. Failure is a very real and hard part of being human.

Show the following video to your students [2:58]:

Famous Failures

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLYECIjmnQs>

At the end of the video, the narrator claims that, “If you have never failed, you have never tried anything new.”

➤ **What are your experiences with trying something new and failing? Tell us what you tried and what the first few attempts were like.** (Insist that your students be sensitive to each other's stories. Monitor responses to assure no one gets laughed at or appears to make fun.)

➤ **How did you feel about yourself when you failed at what you tried?** (Answers will vary: sad, stupid, defeated, like I would never succeed, etc.)

➤ **How do you respond when you don't succeed at something? Do you try again or are you done with it? Why?** (Accept all reasonable answers.)

At some point in their lives, all of the people mentioned on the video we just watched failed at something—repeatedly. Yet they became famous for succeeding in that very same field or something grander.

Happily, we are going to learn some good news about failure when it comes to our relationship with God. Let's see how God handled Peter's failure and how God handles ours as well.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

upper elementary



Lesson 5 / March 29, 2020

Second Chances

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 5

Focus:

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Lesson 5

Bible Basis:

Matthew 26:23-25,
31-35, 57-75;
John 21:15-17

Lesson 5

Memory Verse:

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
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—Psalm 103:8

Materials:

- Internet access
- Paper plates
- Pens or felt-tip markers
- Rulers
- Whiteboard and marker

Now that you've heard Peter's story, answer this:

➤ **When does failing in some part of our relationship with God mean we are doomed?**
(Answers will vary but might include: Never; if we repent, we are forgiven, over and over again; failing is not final; failing is not fatal.)

Distribute materials. Draw a circle on the whiteboard. Fill in the numbers from one to 12 as they would appear on the face of an analog clock. As you describe how your students are to divide their plates using rulers and pens or felt-tip markers, refer to the numbers on this image to help them position their lines equally, but help them understand that they will *not* be copying the numbers to their plate—they are on the board for reference only.

When we see a plate, we sometimes think of a serving of food—or maybe even seconds or thirds! We are going to use these plates to guide us through a daily practice in experiencing God as a God of seconds, thirds, and even more chances than that.

Draw a big X on your plate, where one line of the X reaches diagonally from the two to the eight and the other reaches from the ten to the four (point to the numbers as you explain). Now draw a vertical line down the middle of the plate, reaching from the top position of 12 to the bottom position of six. This should divide the plate into six sections, approximately the same size.

Maybe you would like to do better or stop doing something as part of living in relationship to God and honoring Him. Perhaps it's to be more patient or to complain less; maybe it will be to take time to be thankful every day or not to talk back to a parent. Write those things in the section you labeled "Monday."

On the back of the plate write today's memory verse: "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love" (Psalm 103:8).

On Monday morning, read your list and commit to it. Before bed, read the list again. How did you do? If you failed, pray and ask for forgiveness and for help to do better tomorrow. Do not punish yourself for the failure. Just cross off Monday's section on the plate and consider any failures forgiven and forgotten.

That's right! Forgiven and forgotten. All clear. Read the memory verse on the back of the plate and then turn the plate over and copy Monday's list of goals to Tuesday. Tuesday brings a second chance, an opportunity to start new! Continue this throughout the week. Sometimes there will be success for a few days and then not on another, so you may want to keep the same items on the list even when there is success. Or you may want to remove items and add others to the list as the week goes along.

Give your students an opportunity to create their plate and pray about and fill in their Monday list.

Ask your students to think of specific ways they might be able to reach out to others with the love of Jesus during this time of social distancing due to COVID-19. Challenge them to find ways to connect even though they have no physical contact: texting, sending notes of encouragement, video chatting, etc. Remind them that they need their parents' permission and assistance to follow through with this.

Close in prayer. **Thank You, Father, that we do not have to do anything to earn Your love. You already love us. Thank You that we do not have to do anything to convince You to forgive us. Because of Jesus, sin is forgiven. Please help us to know that with You, our failures are not fatal. Help us to confess our sins, repent, and walk with You each day. Thank You for second chances. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

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