

Fine to Forgive

By RLD Team

for use as

STEP 1

**Lesson 12****Focus:**

Forgive each other even when it's hard.

Lesson 12**Bible Basis:**

Philemon 1-21;
Matthew 5:23-24;
Ephesians 4:26-27

Lesson 12**Memory Verse:**

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. —Ephesians 4:32

In order to introduce the lesson topic, students will hear a short story about forgiveness and talk about when they find it easy and difficult to forgive.

Materials:

None

Begin your time by reading this short story to your students:

Needa lives with her sister Padma at an orphanage in India. Both of their parents are alive and live in a nearby village, but they cannot afford to care for their daughters.

Their father works hard, but he doesn't make enough money to support them all. Their mother struggles with mental illness and disappears for days at a time. The girls have bad memories of fending for themselves.

The girls both love and follow Jesus, but they struggled with bitterness and hatred towards their parents for not providing and caring for them.

Then, Needa heard the story of Stephen from the Bible. Stephen was stoned for professing his faith in Jesus—and even as he was dying, he forgave the people who stoned him. As Needa listened to his story, she realized she was holding onto unforgiveness towards her parents. She decided to ask God to help her forgive and love her parents, even though they had hurt her. As she invited God to help her forgive, Needa experienced freedom that comes with forgiveness.

Sometimes, we are deeply hurt by people we love—like Needa. But even if we usually get along with everyone, there are always times when someone is stubborn or unthinking or just plain selfish. Disagreements or quarrels can ruin everybody's day if they're not dealt with in the right way. We've all been told many times that forgiveness is the best way to deal with fights...but it's not always easy!

➤ **Why is it sometimes hard to forgive?** (Allow students to offer their opinions; accept all answers.)

➤ **What do you think is easier: forgiving someone else, or asking for forgiveness? Why?** (Opinions may vary; encourage discussion. Be prepared to share your own experience.)

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

Story Source: <https://davidcalebcook.org/2013/09/18/the-supremacy-of-forgiveness/>

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Materials:

- Index cards
- Pens/pencils

If you are doing class online, invite students to get a piece of paper and a writing utensil (or even the “notes” section of a phone or device). They will use these in place of the index cards.

As students clean up from Step 3, move back toward the lesson focus.

When others hurt us, it can separate us from others and make forgiveness more difficult. But Paul’s lesson for Philemon gives us the answer: when we see others as part of the same church family—the Body of Christ—we are no longer separated from them and it is easier to forgive! Ask for a volunteer to read Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” **When we think of all that God has forgiven us for—all that Jesus went through to make sure we would be accepted—it should make it easier for us to forgive.**

Hand out index cards and pens/pencils. Ask your students to think of someone they may have upset in the past or someone they haven’t forgiven and why they think it has been hard to forgive. Ask them to record a way they will use what they have learned in today’s lesson to mend that relationship. Challenge them to note the outcome and be ready to share next week.

After your students have had a chance to think and write, call them back together as a group.

This week, be on the lookout for ways you can use today’s lesson. I hope no one wrongs you this week, but if that does happen, use Paul’s advice to make peace instead of responding in anger or retaliation.

Close in prayer.

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