

Compassion

Oops! I Made a Mistake

Issue

I want to feel love towards myself, but it's hard when I've hurt someone.

Principle

I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.

Affirmation

I forgive myself now. Thank you, God!

Scripture

So when you offer your gift to God at the altar, and you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there at the altar. Go and make peace with that person, and then come and offer your gift.—Matthew 5:23-24 New Century Version

Song

“Magic Penny,” *Wings of Song*, #179

For the Teacher

The language we use is important here. We receive forgiveness as a gift from ourselves and others. Others may or may not forgive us, but we can give ourselves the gift of forgiveness. Receiving denotes more of a taking in and assimilating than accepting does. We receive a gift—we accept circumstances we may or may not like. Children can experience forgiveness from themselves, even if the other person chooses not to forgive.

Supplies

Prepare Ahead

Pre-session

List of feeling words on paper or chalkboard or dry-erase board (glad, sad, mad, afraid, upset, etc.).

Younger Children

Option 1, Let Go of Grudgie game

Make “Grudgie” from a 5-lb. package of flour or sugar. Cover it with a plastic bag or paper and write “Grudgie” on it.

Pre-session

Feeling Colors art

Paper

Markers

Crayons

Sheet of paper with feeling words (or use chalkboard or dry-erase board)

The Gathering

Wings of Song

Younger Children

The Children’s Illustrated Bible

Option 1, Let Go of Grudgie game

5-lb. package of flour or sugar

Plastic bag, or paper, tape and scissors

Marker

Option 2, I Forgive paper airplane

Paper

Markers

Crayons

Lesson Intention

To help children understand the joy of receiving forgiveness from self.

Older Children

The Children’s Illustrated Bible

Option 1, Self-forgiveness self-portrait

Paper

Markers

Pencils with erasers

Option 2, I Am Free sculpture

Modeling clay (Play-Doh®), Wikki Stix, pipe cleaners, building blocks or other 3-dimensional materials

Scarves, elastic headbands or other tying materials, one per 1-2 children

Compassion

Lesson Intention

To help children understand the joy of receiving forgiveness from self.

Oops! I Made a Mistake

Supplies

Paper
Markers
Crayons
Sheet of paper with feeling words (or use chalkboard or dry-erase board)

All ages together

Pre-session

Feeling Colors art

Display the list of feeling words (glad, sad, mad, afraid, upset, etc.). Invite the children to select one of the feelings from the list or to select one of their own. Encourage them to draw a picture showing that feeling on the paper.

The Gathering

Welcome/Opening Prayer

Say: Hi, everyone! Let's put our hand over our heart. *Pause.* Dear God, I feel your love and peace and forgiveness flowing into me. I can feel my heart tingle. Thank you for blessing me right now. Amen.

Introductions/Announcements

Say: Let's go around the circle and give our name and say one word about how you're feeling right now.

Music and/or Movement

"Magic Penny," *Wings of Song*, #179

Unity Principle

Say: Last week we learned about giving forgiveness to others. Today we are going to explore and experience the power of receiving forgiveness for ourselves. Unity Principle #3 states "I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe." This principle helps us understand that we can choose to receive forgiveness for ourselves. We may be sad or angry with ourselves for making a mistake or for hurting someone. But we can still give love to ourselves for something we did, even if we feel we don't deserve it, and even if the person we hurt still holds a grudge against us. Forgiving ourselves does not depend upon what anyone else does or thinks about us.

Scripture

Say: We ask God for things from time to time and we thank God for blessings. Jesus had some advice for us to help us to clear our minds and hearts. “So when you offer your gift to God at the altar, and you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there at the altar. Go and make peace with that person, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24 New Century Version)
Sometimes the person we have to make peace with is us!

Younger Children

Exploration

Bible Story

“Jacob’s Return,” pp. 54-55, *The Children’s Illustrated Bible*

Drama

The children have the opportunity to act out the story later when Jacob wrestles with the stranger and when Jacob and Esau meet and embrace as brothers.

Say: Jacob and Esau were two brothers who had not seen each other in many years. Jacob had stolen Esau’s inheritance and ran away. He married two of his uncle Laban’s daughters and had a family. He tended Laban’s sheep in the fields. Finally, he decided that it was time to go back home and reconcile with his brother.

Read “Jacob’s Return,” from *The Children’s Illustrated Bible*, pp. 54-55. Stop after Jacob sends his family across the Jabbok River, at “so that he might have some time alone.”

Say: You can all be actors and actresses now while I read the rest of the story to you. You can be either Jacob, or you can be first the stranger, and then Esau. If you want to act, stand up.

Invite the actors to move to an open space where they can safely move around. Continue reading the rest of p. 55. Repeat some of the dialogue so the children can say it as the characters.

Say: Thank you, actors and actresses, for making our story come alive.

Not all questions need to be asked. Help the children to connect the story to their lives.

Discussion

- Who are the characters in this story? How did it feel to be that character?
- What happens in this story? (Be sure children understand the story beginning, middle and end.)
- I wonder how Jacob felt when he was about to meet Esau?
- I wonder how Esau felt when he knew Jacob was coming to meet him?
- I wonder when you have felt like Jacob?
- When have you felt like Esau?
- What did Esau have to do before he could happily greet Jacob?
- Why did Jacob bow down when he came to Esau?
- I wonder how the brothers felt when they hugged each other?
- Think of time when you did something that you now wish you didn't do. How did you feel?
- Did you forgive yourself for making a mistake? How did that feel?

Say: Part of forgiving ourselves means we have to let go of a grudge we have against ourself. When we carry around a grudge, it hurts our bodies and our hearts. Before we can forgive ourselves, we have to let go of the grudge. Another part of forgiving is to accept ourselves as we are and to love ourselves even when we make mistakes.

Say: Meditation is a great way to open our hearts and receive forgiveness. Let's do a meditation right now.

This meditation is intentionally the same as last week except for who is forgiven.

Meditation

Say: Get comfortable in your seat and close your eyes. Take a deep breath in, and slowly breathe out. *Pause.* Take another deep breath, and slowly breathe out. *Pause.* Let your mind drift to a time when you made a mistake. It could be something you said or did that you wish you hadn't said or done. *Pause.* Just let your mind and heart open to whatever hurt is inside you that you would like to heal. *Pause for 10 seconds.* Let yourself feel whatever feelings you have about the situation. *Pause for 10-20 seconds.*

Say: Now picture yourself outside in an open field. You see a huge, beautiful hot air balloon touch down nearby. Notice how it's decorated. *Pause.* There is a person in the balloon who you may or may not know. You know this person is safe to be with and you get up and walk towards that person. It could be an angel, a spirit guide, or perhaps Jesus. *Pause 30 seconds.*

Say: Notice that in your hand you have a piece of paper with a description of what happened. Or maybe you have a photograph of what

happened. You are ready to forgive yourself for what you did. It's over. You know that you do your best whenever you can. You give the description or photo to the person in the balloon. They thank you for letting go of it. You watch as the balloon rises into the sky. You feel peace and lightness as you watch the balloon disappear in the sky. You breathe a sigh of relief. Feel the lightness and relief now. *Pause.*

Say: When you're ready, wiggle your toes and fingers. Return your attention to this room and open your eyes.

Creative Experience

Choose one option or both, if time permits.

1 Option 1, Let Go of Grudgie game

Say: Let's all stand in a circle. Have you heard the phrase "to hold a grudge"? It means to hang on to upset feelings or unforgiveness toward someone or toward ourselves. Instead of holding a grudge, let's play "Let Go of Grudgie." To help us play this game, here is "Grudgie."

Say: Each of you will have a turn to hold "Grudgie" and tell us about a grudge you had sometime. Then tell us your reason for holding the grudge.

Say: I will ask you, "Are you ready to let this grudge go?" You can say something like, "Yes, I let Grudgie go! I forgive everyone, and me too!" Then you pass Grudgie to the person next to you and they get to tell us their story.

After everyone has taken their turn, ask:

- How did it feel to let Grudgie go?

Say: Grudgie can feel heavy after you hold it a while. Sometimes we get used to carrying the weight around. When we finally let Grudgie go, we realize how nice it feels not to have Grudgie weighing us down anymore.

2 Option 2, I Forgive paper airplane

Say: I now invite you to draw a picture of how it feels to forgive yourself. If you wish, you can fold your picture into a paper airplane after you finish your picture. We will release the situation in our drawing by saying, "I forgive myself now." Then we can fly our airplanes into the trashcan.

Supplies

5-lb. package of flour or sugar
Plastic bag, or paper, tape and scissors
Marker

If you have more than 10 in your group, divide the group, with a leader and "Grudgie" for each group.

Supplies

Paper
Markers
Crayons

After the children fold their pictures into paper airplanes, have them stand on the same side of the room. Place the garbage can 10 to 15 feet away. Invite the children, in groups of two or three, to fly their airplanes into the garbage can after saying the “I forgive myself now” affirmation.

Closing

Gather the children into a circle for closing.

Sharing

Say: Let’s go around the circle and share. In a few words, tell us one thing that was special for you today.

Affirmation

Say: We’ve learned about and experienced forgiveness today. Let’s use an affirmation to remind ourselves about forgiveness. I will speak the affirmation once, and then you can repeat it with me three times: “I forgive myself now. Thank you, God!”

Prayer

Say: Father/Mother God, thank you for the wonderful feeling that I get when I forgive myself. I know that everyone deserves forgiveness, and that includes me. I let go of my grudges now! Thank you, God!

Older Children Exploration

Bible Story

Read from “The Garden of Gethsemane,” pp. 266-267, *The Children’s Illustrated Bible*. Stop at “ran for their lives.”

Discussion

- In the Garden of Gethsemane, what did Jesus ask his friends to do? What help did he need? What did they do instead?
- How do you think Jesus felt when his friends wouldn’t stay awake and help him?
- What did Jesus’ friends do when he was arrested? Why do you think they reacted that way?

Not all questions need to be asked. Help the children to connect the story to their lives.

- What do you think it would be like to have one of your closest friends betray you? What would it feel like to have your friends run away when you need them the most?
- How do you think Jesus' friends felt later on about running away when he was arrested?
- Have you ever deserted someone when they needed you? What was that like for you? What was it like for the other person?
- What have you done in the past that you still regret? Who would be willing to share that with the group? What steps can you take to forgive yourself?

Say: Our theme today is receiving forgiveness from ourselves. We're going to do a meditation right now about receiving forgiveness.

Meditation

Say: Get comfortable in your seat and close your eyes. Take a deep breath in, and slowly breathe out. *Pause.* Take another deep breath, and slowly breathe out. *Pause.* Let your mind drift to a time when you made a mistake. It could be something you said or did that you wish you hadn't said or done. *Pause.* Just let your mind and heart open to whatever hurt that you would like to heal. *Pause for 10 seconds.* Let yourself feel whatever feelings you have about the situation. *Pause for 10-20 seconds.*

This meditation is intentionally the same as last week except for who is forgiven

Say: Now picture yourself outside in an open field. You see a huge, beautiful hot air balloon touch down nearby. Notice how it's decorated. *Pause.* There is a person in the balloon who you may or may not know. You know this person is safe to be with and you get up and walk towards that person. It could be an angel, a spirit guide, or perhaps Jesus. *Pause 10-20 seconds.*

Say: Notice that in your hand you have a piece of paper with a description of what happened. Or maybe you have a photograph of what happened. You are ready to forgive yourself for what you did. It's over. You know that you do your best whenever you can. You give the description or photo to the person in the balloon. You watch as the balloon rises into the sky. You feel peace and lightness as you watch the balloon disappear in the sky. You breathe a sigh of relief. Feel the lightness and relief now.

Say: When you're ready, wiggle your toes and fingers. Return your attention to this room and open your eyes.

Supplies

Paper
Markers
Pencils with erasers

Creative Experience

Choose one option. Use both if time permits.

Option 1, Self-forgiveness self-portrait

Say: We are going to see what unforgiveness does to us and how forgiveness can help. I invite you to use the markers and draw a picture of yourself.

Say: After you are done, take a pencil and shade over your portrait. This is what our energy is like when we hold on to upset feelings and unforgiveness. *Pause.* Now I would like you to think of an affirmation that you can say to yourself to help you let go of those old, dark feelings and focus on your true, shining self. Write this affirmation down on your paper. *Pause.*

Say: Say your affirmation to yourself three times. When you finish, use your eraser to erase the shading from your portrait. This is what forgiveness does. It gets rid of the heavy, dark energy that holds you down. You get to shine again!

Supplies

Modeling clay (Play-Doh®),
Wikki Stix, pipe cleaners,
building blocks or other 3-
dimensional materials
Scarves, elastic headbands or
other tying materials, one per
every 1-2 children

If you don't have a tie for each
child, the children will have to take
turns.

Option 2, I Am Free sculpture

Say: Today we are going to create a sculpture. Think about how you feel when you forgive yourself. Let your sculpture show that feeling. But first, there is a twist. You have to try it with your hands tied. Help your neighbor to gently tie their wrists together, then they can help you.

After one minute, ask the children to affirm together, "I forgive myself. I am free and unlimited."

Say: Now you can remove your ties and continue building.

- How did it feel to remove your ties?

Closing

Gather the children into a circle for closing. Invite the children to briefly share their creation. They may want to place their creation in the center of the circle.

Affirmation

Say: We've learned about and experienced receiving forgiveness from ourselves today. Let's use an affirmation to remind ourselves about forgiveness. I will speak the affirmation once, and then you can repeat it with me three times: "I forgive myself now. Thank you, God!"

Prayer

Say: Father/Mother God, thank you for this opportunity to let go of any upset feelings I have towards myself. I forgive myself now. I know that God is love, and God's love is inside of me. I choose to give this love to myself in my thoughts, feelings and actions today. Yea, God!