

Preteen | W3

Today's Suggested Schedule—July 2026, Week 3

Bible Story: The Servant Who Had No Mercy • *Matthew 18:21-35*

Bottom Line: God's kingdom grows when you forgive.

Conversation Starter: What and who do you need to forgive?

Monthly Memory Verse: *God's kingdom is not about eating or drinking. It is about doing what is right and having peace and joy. All this comes through the Holy Spirit.* • Romans 14:17 Nlrv

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

Prelude: Setting the Tone for the Experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God

Opener

Worship

Bible Story

Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot

Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions

Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You

Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer

Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App



Bible Story

The Servant Who Had No Mercy • *Matthew 18:21-35*

Bottom Line

God's kingdom grows when you forgive.

Conversation Starter

What and who do you need to forgive?

Monthly Memory Verse

God's kingdom is not about eating or drinking. It is about doing what is right and having peace and joy. All this comes through the Holy Spirit. • Romans 14:17 Nlrv

5 min

Social

5 min

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play *Uses Minimal Supplies*

What You Need

	Offering container	1
	Paper	1
	Writing supplies	1



EveryChild tips

- *Group kids to work in pairs or small groups.*
- **Groups**
- **Creating a Safe Place to Connect**
- **25 minutes**
- Groups 1/5

Providing Time for Fun Interaction

What You Do:

Before the Activity:

- Print "The Big Oops" on paper, one per kid.

During the Activity:

- Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Give each kid a "The Big Oops" Activity Page and a pencil or marker.
- Ask kids to come up with the words, then fill in the blanks.
- If time allows, ask for volunteers to read their Mad Libs out loud.

What You Say:

"Those stories were pretty ridiculous! It's funny how a few random words can completely change a story. In our Bible Story today, Jesus told a parable or story to change His friends' understanding of something huge: forgiveness. Let's go hear about it."

5 min

Bible Story Review

5 min

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

What You Need

 Bible	1
 Paper	1
 Marker	1
 Table	1
 Bells or buzzers	2

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Open the Bible to Matthew 18:21-35, and show the kids where the Bible Story is.
- Review the parable of the servant who had no mercy by sharing these key points:
 - Peter asked Jesus how many times he needed to forgive someone.
 - Jesus answered, and then He told a story to share how God's kingdom works.
 - In the story, a king decided to get everyone who owed him debts to pay him.
 - One servant had a huge debt and begged and begged the king for time to pay.
 - Instead of making the servant pay back the humongous debt, the king forgave it! Completely!
 - But that same servant had someone who owed him a little debt.
 - Instead of forgiving the person who owed him, like the servant had been forgiven, that servant put the person who owed him in prison and demanded that he pay him his tiny debt.
 - The king heard that the servant wouldn't forgive the person who owed him, and the king was so upset. He threw the servant in jail until he could pay his huge debt.
 - Jesus said that we should forgive people who hurt us because we have been forgiven of so much.
- Divide the kids into two teams.
- Ask the teams to come up with a team name.
- On the paper, create two columns, and write the team names at the top of the columns.
- Position the bells/buzzers on either end of the table.
- Have one person from each team come to the front and stand by their team's bell/buzzer.
- Explain you're going to play "Kingdom Feud."
- Read a review question from the list below. The first person to hit the buzzer gets to answer.
- According to Peter, how many times should you forgive someone? (*seven times*)
- In the parable, how much did the first servant owe the king? (*a huge amount/ten thousand bags of gold*)
- Did the king make the servant pay it back? (*No, he canceled the debt.*)
- How much did the second servant owe the first servant? (*a small amount/100 silver coins*)

- What did the first servant do to the second servant? (*choked him/threw him in jail*)
- If they get the answer right, their team gets a point. If they get the answer wrong, the other team gets a chance to steal. Record each team's points on the paper.
- Play until you've gone through all the questions.

What You Say:

"Great job! That was a close game. This story Jesus told was intense. He used these huge, crazy numbers to make a point we can't miss: the forgiveness God gives us is infinitely bigger than any forgiveness we could ever be asked to give someone else.

"When Peter asked how many times he should forgive someone, suggesting up to seven times, Jesus replied, '77 times,' meaning we should always forgive.

"To explain further, Jesus told a story about a servant who was forgiven an enormous, impossible-to-repay debt by a merciful king. However, that same servant refused to forgive a much smaller debt owed to him and had the other servant thrown into prison. When the king found out, he punished the unforgiving servant, teaching that we must forgive others from the heart just as God has forgiven us.

"Jesus taught that God's kingdom grows through love and forgiveness, not power or force. **[Bottom Line] God's kingdom grows when you forgive."**

Groups 3/5

5 min

Application Activity

5 min

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Reflect

What You Need

-  Index cards 1
-  Coloring supplies 1
-  Optional: Music player and soft, reflective music 1

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Ask the kids to spread out and find a quiet space in the room.
- Give each kid an index card and some coloring supplies.
- *Optional: Play some soft music if it helps create a reflective mood.*
- Ask kids to think quietly for a minute about the Conversation Starter: "What and who do you need to forgive?"
- Tell them they don't have to share this with anyone. This is between them and God.
- Instruct them to write down the person or situation on one side of the card. They can write a name, a word, or draw a symbol.
- Give them a minute of quiet to sit with that thought and talk to God about it.
- After that quiet moment with God, ask them to flip the card over. On the other side, invite them to write or draw what they need to do or who they need to forgive.
- Give them another minute of quiet to sit with that thought and talk to God about it.

What You Say:

"Forgiveness is one of the hardest parts of being a follower of God. It's uncomfortable, and it doesn't always feel fair. Holding onto anger is like carrying a heavy weight, but forgiving sets you free.

"Jesus told the story we heard about today to teach us that God is like the good king who completely forgave a huge amount of money. When we trust that Jesus paid for our sin on the cross and choose to follow Him, God wipes out our sin debt. We were completely tied up in our sin, but now we're free! Because God has forgiven us of such a giant sin debt, He wants us to pass that forgiveness on to the people around us. Like Jesus told Peter, we can continue to forgive without putting limits on it.

"Forgiving someone doesn't mean what they did was okay or you should let them keep doing it. It doesn't even mean you have to keep being friends with them. If someone hurts you or makes you uncomfortable, tell a grown-up you trust!

"Forgiving someone says you're trusting God to make things right. And when you forgive, it frees *you* from staying angry and becoming hard and bitter. Forgiveness isn't a feeling, it's a choice. And when you ask God for help and choose to forgive, you are showing your world God's good heart of forgiveness. And God will do great kingdom things when

you choose to forgive. **[Bottom Line]** God's kingdom grows when you forgive."

Groups 2/5

5 min

Memory Verse Activity

5 min

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Move *Uses Minimal Supplies*

What You Need

 Bibles

1

 Latex-free balloons

1

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Give every kid a Bible.
- Invite them to look up Romans 14:17 using the Bible Navigation Tips below:

Finding verses with 4th-5th graders: Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the Memory Verse out loud together several times.
- Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids.
- Invite the kids to set their Bibles aside.
- Give each kid a balloon.
- Tell them the balloon is like us. It can have the *potential* for doing what's right, peace, and joy, but on its own, it's just flat. It can't do anything.
- Ask: "What does the balloon need to fly?" (*air/breath*)
- Say: "The breath is like the Holy Spirit. He is the power that helps us live out the stuff of God's kingdom."
- Instruct the kids to blow up their balloons. On the count of three, have everyone let their balloon go and watch them fly all over the room.

What You Say:

"Just like the air makes the balloon go, the Holy Spirit is the power that helps us do what is right and feel God's peace and joy. We can't do the kingdom stuff on our own! We need help from the Holy Spirit.

"You can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you forgive. Forgiving someone says you're trusting God to make things right. And when you forgive, it frees *you* from staying angry and becoming hard and bitter. Forgiveness isn't a feeling, it's a choice. And when you ask God for help and choose to forgive, you are showing your world God's good heart of forgiveness. And God will do great kingdom things when you choose to forgive. **[Bottom Line] God's kingdom grows when you forgive.**"

Groups 5/5

5 min

Discussion Questions

5 min

Preteen Discussion Questions *Uses Minimal Supplies*

What You Need

No supplies needed



EveryChild tips

- Provide a "think time" of 15-20 seconds after you ask a question before calling on anyone. This helps kids who need more time to process their thoughts.
- Groups 4/5

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

- Ask these questions and discuss:
- Why do you think Jesus used a story about money and debt instead of just saying, "Forgive each other."?
- What do you think Jesus wanted Peter to understand by saying "77 times"?
- Why did Jesus compare our sin to a huge debt that we could never pay back?
- The first servant probably thought the king's mercy was awesome—until he was asked to show mercy himself. Why is it sometimes easy to accept forgiveness but hard to give it?
- What does this story teach us about what God is like?
- **[Conversation Starter] What and who do you need to forgive?**

5 min

Prayer

5 min

Preteen – Make It Personal with Prayer | Made to Reflect *Uses Minimal Supplies*

What You Need

No supplies needed

Creating a Safe Place to Connect

What You Do:

During the Activity:

- Ask the kids to find a partner.
- Tell them to think about one area where it's hard for them to forgive. They don't have to share the specifics with their partner.
- Lead them in a "breath prayer." It's a simple way to pray by syncing words with your breathing.
- Model it for them:
 - As you breathe IN, say to yourself, "God, You forgive me."
 - As you breathe OUT, say to yourself, "Help me forgive others."
- Instruct the pairs to do this quietly together three or four times.
- Close in prayer for the whole group.

What You Say:

"Every single one of us has sinned against God. We have done and said things that go against God and His ways—including the laws or rules that He gave because He made us and loves us and knows the best way for us to live. God is so amazing and perfect and holy that any sin creates a giant debt, like the money the first servant owed the king in the Bible Story. But Jesus loves us so much that He paid our giant debt we owed because of sin. When we realize how much we've been forgiven, it changes everything. Let's close our time together with prayer and thank God for His ultimate forgiveness."

Prayer:

"God, thank You for the story Jesus told. It's a hard story to hear because it shows us how much we need Your help to forgive. Thank You for forgiving us for our huge debt of sin. Help us to be people who pass that forgiveness on to others. When it's hard, remind us of Your great mercy for us. We want Your kingdom to grow. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Getting Ready | Preteen Small Group

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

SOCIAL:

Opening Activity

Made to Play

What You Need:

- Offering container, one per Small Group
- "The Big Oops" Activity Page, one per kid
- Paper, one piece per kid
- Writing supplies, one per kid

What You Do:

- Print "The Big Oops" on paper, one per kid.

GROUPS:

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God \ | Application Activity]

Made to Reflect

What You Need:

- Index cards, one per kid
- Coloring supplies, several per kid
- *Optional: Music player and soft, reflective music; one per Small Group*

2. Bible Story Extension

Talk about God \ | Bible Story Review

Made to Play

What You Need:

- Bible, one per Small Group
- Paper, one piece per Small Group
- Marker, one per Small Group
- Table, one per Small Group
- Bells or buzzers, two per Small Group

3. Discussion Questions

Talk about God \ | Bible Story Review

Made to Connect

What You Need:

- No supplies needed

4. Verses to Take with You

Hear from God \ | Memory Verse Activity

Made to Move

What You Need:

- Bibles, one per kid
- Latex-free balloons, one per kid

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

Pray to God \ | Prayer Activity

Made to Reflect

What You Need:

- No supplies needed

Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resource: **Parent Cue App**.

Supplies

Preteen Social Activity | Made to Play *Uses Minimal Supplies*

	Quantity
1. Offering container	1
2. Paper	1
3. Writing supplies	1

Preteen – Bible Story Extension | Made to Play

	Quantity
1. Bible	1
2. Paper	1
3. Marker	1
4. Table	1
5. Bells or buzzers	2

Preteen – Take a Snapshot | Made to Reflect

	Quantity
1. Index cards	1
2. Coloring supplies	1
3. Optional: Music player and soft, reflective music	1

Preteen – Verses to Take with You | Made to Move *Uses Minimal Supplies*

	Quantity
1. Bibles	1
2. Latex-free balloons	1