

A Christian's Secret Weapon

LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Forgiveness

Scripture: Ephesians 4:25-5:2

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

The Children's Sermon

This letter was written many years ago by one of the first Christians named Paul. Paul was a great leader in the church just after Jesus rose from the dead. Paul traveled around quite a bit and made friends for Christ. He liked to keep in touch with all the people he met and he liked to reach out to others he knew were trying to follow Christ. He was helping to build the first church.

The first Christians often had problems. The part of the Bible about Jesus hadn't been written yet. They were just figuring out how to be a church and sometimes they fought among themselves and sometimes they just didn't know the right thing to do. Paul's letter answers their questions and gives them advice on how to be better followers of Christ. Even though this letter was written two thousand years ago, its advice is still good for us today as we try to be better Christians.

In this long letter to the Ephesians, Paul tells them what to do when they are angry. Have you ever been angry? What did you do when you were angry? Did you feel like you needed help? Everybody gets angry. And that's all right. Paul doesn't tell the Ephesians

not to get angry. Instead, he gives them two secret weapons they can use when they start to feel angry. Can you guess what they are?

One of them is LOVE. Paul tells the Ephesians and us to imitate God and Christ. He tells us to live in love. He says be tender and kind. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Well, sometimes we forget and look for ways to get even with people who make us mad. That brings us to a second secret weapon.

This secret weapon is really powerful. It is a true superpower. If you learn to use it, you will be a superhero. You don't have to be big or strong to use this superpower. You just have to practice. This powerful secret weapon is FORGIVENESS. Sometimes, maybe even most of the time, it is hard to forgive someone when we are angry. But you will be surprised if you work at it, you will discover that once you forgive someone, the other person feels better, but so do you! It sounds impossible, but let's all give it a try. The next time we get angry, let's look for a way to forgive. It might be hard at first. It does take practice. And I can tell you even grown-ups have to work at this a bit. But we can do it and God will help us.

Now, let's talk more about Forgiveness and Love. Imagine you have a toy, and your friend accidentally breaks it. You might feel really upset, right? But if you remember Forgiveness and Love, you can think about how your friend didn't mean to break it. Maybe you can say, "It's okay, I know it was an accident. We can try to fix it together." That's showing Forgiveness and Love.

Forgiveness and Love are like a magic key that can open up any locked door. They can turn a bad day into a good one. They can turn a frown upside down. When we choose

Forgiveness and Love, we're choosing to be like superheroes, just like Paul said. We're choosing to make the world a better place, one kind act at a time.

Sometimes, Forgiveness and Love can be like a game of catch. When someone throws you a ball of kindness, you catch it and throw it back with Forgiveness and Love. It goes back and forth, making everyone feel happy and light. It's a game where everyone wins!

Now, imagine if a friend says something that hurts your feelings. Instead of getting mad and saying something mean back, you can pause and think about Forgiveness and Love. You can say, "That hurt my feelings, but I still care about you. Can we talk about it?" This way, you're opening the door for understanding and healing. You're being brave and kind.

Remember, using Forgiveness and Love doesn't mean you let people treat you badly. It means you're strong enough to talk about problems and find ways to fix them together. It means you're giving yourself and others a chance to do better next time.

I hope you don't get angry this week. It is never fun to feel angry, but if you do start to feel anger, stop and remember the word FORGIVENESS. Take a deep breath and while you are exhaling think of a way you can forgive. Then work at it. Practice! Let me know next week if you had a chance to try using your superpower, forgiveness, and tell me how it made you feel.

But what if someone doesn't say sorry? That's when Forgiveness and Love become even more powerful. You can choose to forgive them in your heart. This doesn't mean what they did is okay, but it means you're choosing not to carry around anger. You're choosing peace for yourself.

Forgiveness and Love are like seeds. When you plant them, they grow into beautiful flowers of kindness and friendship. The more you practice, the more flowers you'll have in your garden. And just imagine how beautiful a garden full of Forgiveness and Love would look!

So, this week, let's all be superheroes of Forgiveness and Love. Let's look for ways to be kind, to forgive, and to spread love everywhere we go. Let's make our world a garden of kindness, one act of Forgiveness and Love at a time.

Bible Memory Verse

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

You Will Need:

- Colored construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Glue sticks
- Stickers (optional)

Get Ready:

- Cut the construction paper into heart shapes, one for each child plus a few extras.
- Set up a table with the markers, crayons, scissors, glue, and stickers.

Do This:

1. Give each child a heart-shaped piece of construction paper and ask them to think of someone they want to forgive or ask forgiveness from.
2. Have them write or draw on the heart about their feelings or a message to that person.
3. Encourage them to decorate their heart with markers, crayons, and stickers. Explain that just like they are making their hearts beautiful, forgiveness can make our hearts happy and light.
4. After everyone is done, gather the hearts and share a few (if the children agree), discussing how forgiveness and kindness make us feel better and help us follow Jesus' example.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A large paper heart for each child - or use the hearts from the Bible Memory Verse
- Markers or crayons
- Sticky notes
- A "Forgiveness Tree" poster or a large tree drawn on poster board with branches
- Bible or printed verses from Ephesians 4:25-5:2

Get Ready:

- Prepare the large paper hearts, one for each child.
- Set up the Forgiveness Tree poster on a wall or easel where all the children can reach.
- Write out Ephesians 4:25-5:2 on a separate poster or have it ready in a Bible to read aloud.

Do this:

1. **Introduction to Forgiveness:** Start by explaining that forgiveness means letting go of angry feelings or wanting to get back at someone for hurting us. It's something God wants us to do because He forgives us. Read Ephesians 4:25-5:2, emphasizing verses 4:32 and 5:1-2 about being kind, compassionate, forgiving, and living a life of love just like Jesus.
2. **Heart Activity:** Give each child a large paper heart and markers or crayons. Ask them to think of a time they felt hurt or upset by someone else's actions or words. Without naming names, have them draw or write about that feeling on their heart. Explain that holding onto these feelings can make our hearts heavy and sad.
3. **Forgiveness Practice:** After they've drawn or written on their hearts, hand out sticky notes. On these sticky notes, have them write or draw something kind, loving, or forgiving they can do or say instead of holding onto hurt feelings. Then, let each child come up and stick their note on the Forgiveness Tree. Explain that each act of forgiveness is like a beautiful leaf or flower growing on the tree, making it and our hearts happier and healthier.
4. **Conclusion and Reflection:** Gather the children around the Forgiveness Tree and reflect on how it looks with all their forgiveness notes. Ask them how they feel about replacing hurtful feelings with acts of kindness and forgiveness. Close with a prayer, asking God to help them forgive others as He forgives us, making our hearts and lives full of love and happiness.

Snack Activity: Forgiveness Fruit Pizza

You'll Need:

- 1 large sugar cookie dough (store-bought or homemade)

- 1 cup of cream cheese frosting
- Various fruits (strawberries, blueberries, grapes, kiwi, etc.)
- A rolling pin
- Cookie cutters in heart and star shapes
- Parchment paper
- Baking sheet

Get Ready: Preheat your oven according to the sugar cookie dough package instructions. Roll out your dough on a piece of parchment paper to about 1/4 inch thickness.

Do this:

1. Use the heart and star cookie cutters to cut out shapes from your rolled-out dough, representing love and shining forgiveness. Place them on a baking sheet and bake according to the package's instructions. Let them cool after baking.
2. While your cookie shapes are cooling, wash and prepare your fruits by cutting them into small pieces or slices. These fruits represent the variety and beauty of friendships that flourish with forgiveness.
3. Spread cream cheese frosting on each cookie shape evenly, symbolizing the foundation of forgiveness. Then, let the kids decorate their cookies with the fruit pieces, creating their own forgiveness fruit pizzas. As they do, explain how Ephesians 4:25-5:2 teaches us to be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave us. The act of decorating their cookies with various fruits can remind them that forgiveness brings together different feelings and people, just like the different fruits, to make something beautiful.

Game Activity: Forgiveness Path

You'll Need:

- Sidewalk chalk
- Small stones or beanbags
- A list of simple 'forgiveness scenarios'

Get Ready: Use the sidewalk chalk to draw a large path on the ground, making sure there are clearly defined squares or stepping stones. Number each square from start to finish. Write a forgiveness scenario on separate pieces of paper and place them in a bag.

Do this:

1. Have the children line up at the start of the Forgiveness Path. The first child draws a scenario from the bag and reads it aloud (or the teacher reads it for them). Each scenario should involve a situation where forgiveness could be applied, based on Ephesians 4:25-5:2.
2. The child then tosses a stone or beanbag onto the path. Whatever number it lands on, they hop to that square, sharing a way they could show forgiveness in the scenario they drew. If the stone doesn't land on a square, they share a forgiveness idea but stay in place, giving the next child a turn.
3. Continue until all children have had a turn. The goal is to reach the end of the path by showing understanding of forgiveness. Encourage children to think of different ways to forgive, reflecting on the kindness and love we should show each other as mentioned in Ephesians 4:25-5:2.

Craft Activity: Forgiveness Flowers

You'll Need:

- Construction paper in various colors

- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Glue stick
- Popsicle sticks
- Green paint or green construction paper

Get Ready: Cut out flower shapes from the construction paper. Prepare enough shapes so each child can have several flowers. If using green paint, paint the popsicle sticks green ahead of time or cut leaves out of green construction paper.

Do this:

1. Begin with a short discussion on Ephesians 4:25-5:2, focusing on how we should 'be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.' Explain that just like flowers need water to grow, our friendships need kindness and forgiveness to grow.

2. Ask the children to think of a time someone forgave them or they forgave someone else. On one side of a flower, have them write or draw about that experience. On the other side, they can write 'I choose forgiveness' or a simple 'I forgive you.'

3. Glue the flower to the top of a popsicle stick (or attach the green leaves if using paper). Arrange the flowers in a pot or a vase to create a 'Forgiveness Garden.'

Encourage the children to place their garden somewhere they can see it every day as a reminder to practice forgiveness, just like Jesus teaches us.