

Parable: The Unforgiving Servant

The Building Blocks of the Lesson

Bible Reference



Matthew 18: 23-34

Memory Verse:

Matthew 18: 32-33

Theological Themes



Forgiveness, grace, mercy, love of neighbor, kingdom of heaven ____

(your ideas, too) _____.

Catechism Connection



* The Lord's Prayer, forgive us our sins

* Office of the Keys – forgiveness and absolution

* Sacrament of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion

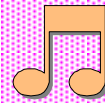
Objectives



Help participants know:

- * God's kingdom is one of unlimited forgiveness. His forgiveness is beyond our calculating.
- * We cannot earn God's forgiveness.
- * Unlimited forgiveness is not to be confused with tolerance of hurtful behavior in our daily patterns of life.

Music



Borrow or buy the CD including "Blessed" by Martina McBride. Listen to the words of the song. Counting your blessings can often make it easier to be gracious to those who we need to forgive.

Additional Resources



Have the class participants share songs from their youth that speak to forgiveness. Perhaps you can listen to these selections. You may even want to record the key phrases on newsprint or chalk board. Ask at the nearest Christian book store for an appropriate selection or two if no one in the class chooses that category of songs.

Context



Matthew 18 is on forgiveness and humility. Under Jewish law a man's wife and children would not have been sold into slavery to pay a debt. The sum involved is not realistic. It is far too great, more than a whole kingdom at the time of Jesus.

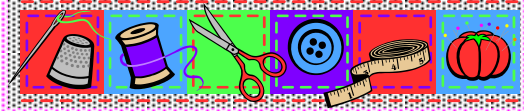
??? Discuss /Ask???

Failure to change is not "all right" given this parable. How is repentance connected to change in our daily lives?

Is it easy to love your enemies? When you love your enemies, do you create a loyal ally? Why do you think the unmerciful servant failed to grant his fellow servant's request? Think of a modern example of a refusal to show mercy by a person who has received mercy?

Consider how important change is in relationship to the Gospel. What things do you change daily (clothes, your mind, paper towels, etc.) seasonally (calendar, decorations, plants, flowers, light bulbs, etc.)? Do the changes enrich your life or deplete it? How does the Gospel enrich your life today?

Activity



Use a calculator in class. Keep multiplying by the number 7, the perfect number. Record each new total on newsprint or the chalk board. See how big (great) the digits become. This is an example of how Jesus wants us to forgive. What does this say to you about forgiving?
OR

Start a blessings journal. Make entries each night before saying your prayers.

Sending



Think of someone who has something bad to you. Say a prayer for them. Show the mercy of God toward them. Do you see any change occurring in YOU?

Prayer



Lord God, help us not to fall into the trap of thinking and acting like "that's the way life is". Lead us by your Spirit to be people of compassion and mercy, offering forgiveness, which is the expression of your rule. We pray in the name of our merciful Savior, Christ Jesus.
AMEN.