

Forgiveness

(Session to be adapted depending on the Year group)

Remind the children that this is their quiet time with God and that they do not have to share any thoughts or ideas with anyone other than God.

Reflection

- Light candle to show that Jesus is with us. Play calming music.

As we look into our hearts, there are times when we need to be forgiven and God forgives us. There are times when we need to forgive. God gives us the strength to forgive. How will we respond? By a prayer of thanksgiving? By promising never to do it again? By praying for the person we have forgiven?

Main Activity

Read examples from the Bible that show the importance of forgiving others. Time can be given after each reading to discuss these.

“And when they came to the place. . . there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ . . . Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ And having said this he breathed his last.”

Luke 23:33-34, 46

Jesus is the reason we can be forgiven and he is the reason we can forgive others.

The Prodigal Son

“And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’” And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt

compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate."

Luke 15:11-32

Because we are part of God's family, we are forgiven and welcome no matter what.

Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

'Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.'

Matthew 18:21-22

Jesus instructs us to forgive others over and over again just like he does for us.

(Each table to be provided with a bowl of sand) Is there something you wish to bring to God to ask forgiveness? Write or draw it in the sand, then remove the words or images as a symbol of receiving God's forgiveness.

Is there something which you should forgive? Write or draw it in the sand. Ask God for the strength to forgive. Smooth the sand.

Now, what will be your response be to God's forgiveness working through you? Write or draw your response in the sand and leave it for the next person to see.

In the prayer journals draw or use words.....

This made me think of..... I felt.....