

The Unmerciful Servant

Purpose	To help each child want to be more forgiving.
Preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prayerfully study Matthew 18:21–35; 6:12, 14–15; and Doctrine and Covenants 58:42. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.) 2. Additional readings: Ephesians 4:32, Doctrine and Covenants 64:8–10, and James E. Talmage, <i>Jesus the Christ</i>, pp. 392–97 (if available). 3. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson. 4. Materials needed: a Bible or a New Testament for each child.
Suggested Lesson Development	<p>Invite a child to give the opening prayer.</p> <p>Attention Activity Ask the children to multiply 70 by 7. (You could put the problem on the chalkboard.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the answer a large number? How long would it take you to count that high? <p>Ask one of the children to read Matthew 18:21–22.</p> <p>Explain that this number teaches us an important lesson about forgiveness. Jesus was teaching us that we should always be willing to forgive someone. (Also see enrichment activity 4.)</p> <p>Scripture Account Teach the account of the unmerciful servant from Matthew 18:21–35. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.) This might be a good account to dramatize. You or one of the children could read the verses while the children take the parts of the king, the unmerciful servant, his fellow servant, and the other servants.</p> <p>Discussion and Application Questions Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the king first intend to do to the servant who owed him 10,000 talents? (Matthew 18:25.) Explain that a talent was a large sum of money. (See <i>Jesus the Christ</i>, pp. 396–97, for more information on talents.) • Why did the king change his mind? (Matthew 18:26.) How did he feel toward his servant? (Matthew 18:27.) What do you think it means to feel compassion?

- What did the servant do after the king forgave the debt? (Matthew 18:28.) What did the servant who owed 100 pence (a very small amount) ask of the servant who had owed 10,000 talents? (Matthew 18:29.) How did the servant react to the pleas of his fellow servant? (Matthew 18:30.) What did the king do when he found out what had happened? (Matthew 18:31–34.)
- How are we sometimes like the unmerciful servant? like the king? How do you feel when you forgive others? when you do not forgive?
- What can we learn from the great difference in the debts owed by the two servants?
- What was Jesus trying to teach the people when he told the parable of the unmerciful servant? What does Jesus tell us we must do in order to receive forgiveness? (Matthew 18:35.)

Ask the children if they can remember the phrase from Jesus' prayer in the Sermon on the Mount that talks about forgiveness. Have them open their Bibles to Matthew 6:12 and repeat this verse together. Read also verses 14 and 15.

- Ask the children to think of a time when someone did something unkind to them. How did that unkindness make them feel? What did they do? What has Jesus Christ taught us to do in such situations? Was it easy to forgive? How can we become more forgiving? Explain that no one should hurt anyone else and that if someone is hurting the children, they should tell their parents, another adult they trust, or the bishop.
- How would you feel if you did something mean to a friend or a member of your family and, even when you said you were sorry, that person would not forgive you?
- When we do something wrong and then repent and ask the Lord to forgive us, what has he told us he will do? (D&C 58:42.)
- What did Jesus say when Peter asked him how often to forgive someone who has sinned against him? (Matthew 18:21–22.) What do you think Jesus was trying to teach Peter? (There is no limit to how many times we should forgive others.)

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Give each child a paper and pencil. Have them write *a, b, c, d, e, f,* and *g* down one side of the paper and answer the following questions about forgiveness. All the questions can be answered “yes” or “no.”
 - a. Are you forgiving when you say, “I forgive you, but I will not forget what you did”?
 - b. Are you forgiving when you are happy that something unfortunate has happened to someone who was unkind to you?
 - c. Are you forgiving when your brother or sister hits you and you don't get mad?
 - d. Are you forgiving when you want to get even with someone who has been unkind to you?

- e. Are you forgiving when you stop talking to someone who has been unkind to you?
- f. Are you forgiving when you stand up for someone who has been unkind to you?
- g. Are you forgiving when you speak unkindly about the person you think has been unkind to you?

Discuss the meaning and importance of forgiveness as you discuss the answers to this quiz.

2. Have a child read Doctrine and Covenants 64:8–10. Divide these verses into phrases and have each child explain one of the phrases to the class. You could also divide the class into groups and have each group discuss what this scripture means. Have them share their ideas, and help them understand that we have been commanded to forgive everyone.
3. Encourage the children to memorize Doctrine and Covenants 64:10 or Matthew 6:14–15.
4. Give the children paper and pencils or markers. Ask them to draw seven squares on their papers. Then ask them to draw six more sets of seven squares. Tell the children that ten times the number of squares they have put on their papers is the number of times Jesus said we should forgive someone. He was teaching the people that they should always forgive others.
5. Sing or read “Help Me, Dear Father” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 99).

Conclusion

Testimony	Bear testimony of the importance of being forgiving as Jesus taught. Help the children realize that when they forgive, they are worthy of being forgiven by our Heavenly Father.
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Matthew 18:21–35 at home as a review of this lesson. Invite a child to give the closing prayer.