

Lesson 5

Parable – Unmerciful Servant

Objective

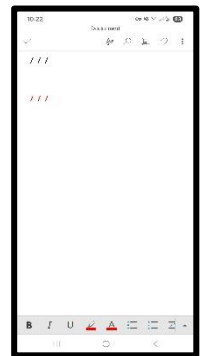
Study Matthew 18: The parable of the Unmerciful Servant.
The wise forgive as they are forgiven.

Supplies

Teachers and/or Coordinators ensure supplies are ready prior to each class.

Print From the Site:

- Unmerciful Servant Visual Aid – one for class
- Bibles – enough for everyone to have one
- Pens/Pencils/Crayons/Pencil Crayons
- Stickers (for attendance)
- Attendance Chart – one for class
- Songs about Parables Sheets – one per every 2-3 students and for teacher
- Whiteboard / Chalk Board / Computer or Phone – one for teacher to demonstrate



Break the Chain Mercy Craft

- 2 Different Colored Markers appropriate for drawing on the board or if using phone or computer put it on a document where you can make marks on the sheet and then erase them – for teacher
- Colored Paper – 2 Different Colors cut into long strips before class – 2 strips of each color per student to make chains
- Stapler or Tape – to share



Optional Supplies

- Two Buckets – for class
- Rocks, bricks, sand, or something heavy – to fill one bucket

Snack: Never Ending Forgiveness Popcorn or Cereal

- Popcorn or Cereal – enough to fill a large bowl x 2
- Large Bowl – one per class

- Large Scoop Spoon – one per class
- Paper Cups – one per student
- Napkins – one per student

Teacher Tips

★ See Lesson One to Review

1) Introduction to Lesson

As students enter, welcome them and thank them for coming. Take attendance.

We are studying parables that were taught by Jesus. Parables are a simple story with a spiritual meaning. Jesus used these simple stories to help teach people about the kingdom of God and other spiritually important topics.

Can anyone remember the main point of the parable of the treasure and the pearl that we studied last time? Let students answer.

The wise recognize that God’s Kingdom is very valuable and they are willing to give up anything in order to obtain and keep it. We are wise when we obtain and recognize the value of being in the Kingdom of God. We will continue to learn about the value of the Kingdom in the coming weeks.

Ask students if they know what it means to forgive? Let them answer.

To forgive someone is to wipe out the debt they owe and/or to let go of the anger we feel toward them for doing something wrong.

Using a whiteboard, chalkboard, computer or phone ask students:

Name some bad actions that would need forgiveness. (Make lots of marks on the board/screen representing each sin. For example, stealing, disobeying, backtalk, each get one mark on the board.)

Sin marks our lives and we need Jesus to make us clean.

Wipe the board clean of the lines representing the sins. Explain that: **This is what God does when we are baptized and continue to ask Him to forgive our sins after becoming Christians. Jesus died so that our debt could be wiped clean.**

Now, think about a time that someone did something bad or wrong to you. You don’t have to say what it was, but think about it. Perhaps a sibling took a

toy, or a friend was unkind. Using a different color, make a small line to represent the sin that someone committed against each of them – so if 10 students have 10 lines.

We are going to learn today that just like God forgives us and the bad things we do, He wants us to forgive and show mercy to those who do bad things to us. Forgiveness is not always easy, but since God forgives us, we need to forgive others. If the King does it, so should the citizens in His Kingdom! Today we will learn why and how to forgive. (Leave the lines on the board/screen until later and when the class is done learning the parable you will finish teaching using the lines that are left.)

Let’s sing a song to get us started! Let’s sing Merciful, Forgiving.

Hand out one Songs about Parables to every 2 students so they can follow along. Sing song once or twice.



2) Class Time – Unmerciful Servant 15-20 minutes

Prep
 Gather Bibles and Visual Aid. Hand out Bibles as needed.

Class
When we studied about Jesus’ teachings, we learned that part of being blessed is being willing to love others, even those who are our enemies. Jesus said we need to be kind and good to even those who do evil towards us. We need to be merciful.



Matthew 5:7, 44-45

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

What is mercy? Mercy is not getting what you deserve. It is being forgiving and kind when someone has done wrong to us or needs kindness rather than

punishment. Have you ever been in trouble and instead of mom or dad or the teacher yelling at you, they said, “It’s ok, just don’t do it again?” You deserved to be punished, but instead you didn’t get what you deserved, you received mercy. They forgave you. That is mercy.

Ask students to turn to **Matthew 18**.

Let’s read Matthew 18:21-35. Then ask a volunteer to read, or read yourself. Show visual aid.

In today’s money, the first servant owed millions and millions of dollars, too much to ever be able to repay. In fact by today’s standards he would have to work over 200,000 years to pay off his debt. Impossible.

The second servant only owed a few thousand dollars, over time he could have paid it back.

Who is like God in the story? The King.

Who is like us in the story? The servants – needing God’s mercy and forgiveness.

What did the first servant do instead of forgiving? Made the other person pay for their debt/sin and didn’t show any mercy.

Why was the king angry with the first servant? He didn’t forgive a much smaller debt even though he had been forgiven much more.

How did the king treat the servant who did not forgive? Put him in prison because the servant wasn’t merciful and forgiving to others even though the king had been merciful and kind to him.

How does God treat those who forgive others? Forgives them!

What should we do when someone does us wrong or owes a debt (meaning a sin)? Forgive and be merciful! Like God is with us.

Remember Jesus’ prayer and discussion when we learned of Jesus’ teachings? He talked in Matthew 6 about us praying to God and asking that God forgive us as we forgive others and that we need to forgive to be forgiven. Jesus said in

Matthew 6:9-15

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

*¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,

15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Remember we learned that the wise follow and obey Jesus. Jesus says we need to forgive and be merciful, so if we want to be wise we must forgive others and show mercy to them like God does for us everyday.

When we forgive others, and are merciful to them, Jesus says God will be merciful and forgive us when we sin and do wrong. Mercy is a special gift that God gives to us. He wants us to share that special gift with others.

We need to remember that:

- **We must forgive others.**
- **God forgives people’s sins.**
- **We should forgive without counting.**

What makes forgiveness hard? Let students answer.

How does forgiving others help us? We receive forgiveness from God if we follow His Son and the Bible. It frees us from feeling angry or hurt. It allows us to move on. It makes us more like God when we can forgive, etc.

What can we say when someone treats us wrong? “That’s ok, I forgive you.” “That hurt, but I forgive you.” “Please don’t do that again, but I forgive you,” etc.

God is a kind and loving King who is willing to forgive and show mercy to those who are merciful and kind to others. We are blessed to have such a loving King! Jesus said God the Father is willing to forgive our huge debts that we can never pay back – all the wrongs and sins we have ever committed or will commit if only we are willing to be kind, forgiving, and merciful to others as God is with us and to submit to God. Let’s be like the King and be willing to forgive. Remember mercy is not getting what a person deserves. It is being forgiving and kind when someone has done wrong to us or needs kindness rather than punishment. Showing mercy allows us to be like the King and makes God happy when we do. When we show mercy, God will be merciful to us as well.

Allow for questions. You can contact Sundayschoolbiblelessonsforkids@protonmail.com if you need help with any questions.

3) Break the Chain Forgiveness Craft

10-15 minutes

Prep

Gather paper in two different colors already cut out before class in strips about 2 inches/5 cm wide. Gather stapler/tape, pencils or markers as well. Each student will need two strips of one color and two strips of another color. One color represents "To Forgive," the other represents "To Be Forgiven For". You can create a sample chain beforehand so students can see what the finished product looks like, if you'd like.

Activity

Ask each student to write or draw something they want to be forgiven for on a paper strip. They don't need to share with the class. This is their personal choice. They can make 2. Then have them write or draw something they want to forgive someone for, have them make 2. Maybe a friend who said something mean, a sibling who didn't do the chores and left them with the mess, a parent who promised to take them somewhere but didn't. They should have about 4 strips each. Again, this is private, they don't have to share.



Now ask them to link the strips of paper together to form a chain, with the words on the inside. See picture above. Staple or tape each link within the next.

We learned about a servant who owed his master a massive amount of money—so much he could never pay it back. The King felt sorry for him and cancelled the entire debt. He set the servant free!

But then, that same servant found someone who owed him a tiny amount. Instead of remembering how the King had forgiven him, he grabbed the other servant and demanded payment. He refused to forgive.

This chain represents unforgiveness. Every time we hold onto a grudge, an anger, or a hurt, we add a link to the chain. Whenever we do something

wrong, we add to the chain as well. It starts small, but it gets longer and heavier.

Have students connect everyone's loops together to form one giant class chain.

Look at this chain. It connects us all. When we hold onto anger, we are tied to the person who hurt us. We are stuck in a loop of "they hurt me, so I hurt them back." Just like the unmerciful servant, we become trapped by our own refusal to let go. And when we sin, we hurt others.

Why is it hard to forgive? It hurts, we can't forget, the person does it over and over, etc.

Why did the Master forgive? Because He was merciful and forgiving. He wanted to be kind and offer help. He is loving. Because He is God.

If we keep adding to the chain, it will just keep growing and growing, getting heavier and heavier. What happens if we forgive others and ask for forgiveness when we hurt others and truly try not to do it again? What would that do to the chain? It would be broken, never get big, shrink, etc.

Ask students to each find a spot on the chain and take one link with their hands. Say: **Think of the things you wrote about someone else and one at a time, break a link by tearing it in half as you forgive the person of their wrong and let it go. Next think of the wrong you did, and as you remember that, think and plan what you need to do to seek forgiveness. Go to the person you have hurt and ask for forgiveness. As you plan of this, break the other links you made as well.**

How does it feel? Let students answer.

Today and this week I want you to go to those you have hurt and ask for forgiveness, then go to the people who have hurt you and tell them what they did and that it hurt you, but that you are wanting to forgive them and move on. See how it goes this week. If it is a big issue, mention it to your parents or some adult you trust so they can help you do what is best. Some things require the help of adults and that is ok.

Remember that God forgives so we must forgive too. And, since God forgives us, we should be free, happy and light remembering that because we are

shown mercy, we need to show mercy to others. We should extend that freedom and happiness to them as well.

Look! The chain is gone. The weight is gone. When we forgive, we aren't just being nice; we are freeing ourselves from the prison the unmerciful servant built for himself. The unmerciful servant stayed in prison because he wouldn't break his chain. But you don't have to stay there. Because the King has forgiven you, if you are willing to obey Him, you have the power to break the chain today. Remember when Peter asked how many times to forgive? Jesus says forgiveness is endless, it is limitless. There is no limit to how many times God will forgive us and how many times we may need to forgive others. What a blessing to know we can receive mercy and can extend mercy to others.

Now point to the lines on the board or phone that you made with the class earlier that showed bad things that people had done to them. Ask them: **Based on the parable Jesus taught what do we need to do?** Forgive and show mercy.

I want each of you to erase one line that represents the sins that others had done to you, you have the power to erase them and forgive. It doesn't mean God forgives them, as that is between God and them. They need to follow God and do what He says to be forgiven, but you can show mercy and forgive them as much as you are able. You can have a heart of forgiveness and mercy and extend that to others. You can let it go and move on. Let students come up and remove the line, if they have trouble discuss with them why it is important to forgive and how **by forgiving it doesn't mean they have to accept what the person did. It was still wrong and hurtful, but you don't hold it against them anymore and you won't let their sin determine your feelings or abilities in the future. You are moving on even though what they did really hurt.**

We will learn more about forgiveness and the next step, repentance, next time.

4) Optional: Forgiveness Relay

5-10 minutes

Prep

Ensure there is room for students to line up and walk quickly to one end of the room and back. If possible, you can do this outside if you’d like.



Gather a bucket filled with heavy items (books, bricks, water bottles, or rocks). Tell the students this represents “Unforgiveness.” Gather another bucket either kept empty or filled with very light items (feathers, cotton balls, or popcorn). Tell them it represents “Forgiveness”. Put a chair at one end of the room for students to walk to and switch buckets. So the heavy bucket is with them, the light bucket is on the chair waiting. Have a clock or timer available.

Game

Split the class into two equal teams. Have team 1 line up at one end of the room with the heavy bucket, the light bucket will sit on the chair at the other end of the room. Team 2 will wait on the side and then have a turn to race next. Tell them:

We are going to play a relay race, but there's a twist. We are going to learn why the servant in the story ended up in prison.

Remember the story? The King forgave a servant a debt of 10,000 talents—an impossible amount, like millions of dollars. But that servant ran out and grabbed a friend who owed him only 100 denarii—a tiny amount in comparison. He refused to let the friend go.

In this race, we are going to feel what it's like to carry that debt. First team 1 will go and I will time them. Player 1 will carry the heavy Unforgiveness bucket to the chair and feel the weight of carrying grudges, hatred, and burdens. At the chair switch it for the Forgiveness bucket – which is light, easy, freeing, and pleasing to carry back to the second player. The second player will take the forgiveness bucket to the chair and switch for the unforgiveness bucket, keep going back and forth until all players have had a chance to carry the unforgiveness and forgiveness buckets. Then we will switch teams and see how the other team does carrying both as well.

Any questions?

Set your timer and say “go” once the students in team 1 are ready. Repeat the same thing with team 2. The team that finishes with the quickest time wins.

Ask students:

What was it like carrying the heavy unforgiveness bucket?

How did it compare to the forgiveness bucket?

Which was easier to carry?

Which took longer to drag around?

God wants us to forgive and lighten our burdens. God says we need to forgive and show mercy as He does. If we want to be like the King and Master – God, we need to do what He does – forgive and show mercy.

In the story, the King threw the unmerciful servant into prison. Why? Because unforgiveness traps you. You can't run the race of life freely when you are carrying a grudge. When we forgive, we are putting down the heavy bucket.

We are saying, "I don't need to carry this anymore. God already paid the price for me, so I can let go." Forgiveness isn't just being "nice"; it's freedom. It lets you run fast again. Next time someone hurts you, or you feel angry, ask yourself: "Am I picking up a heavy bucket?" Are you holding onto a grudge that is slowing you down? Remember the King's mercy. He wants to forgive you a debt you can't pay. So, put down the heavy bucket. Forgive the small debt. And run free.

5) Optional: Memory Verse

5 minutes

This month students will be learning two new memory verses, which they can also practice at home. **Ephesians 4:32 and Matthew 25:21.**

Try different ways to help students learn these verses as a group.

*If you choose, bring treats for those who remember the verses over the coming weeks. Praise those who remembered them, encourage those who didn't to try next time.

6) Closing Prayer

**Before the prayer, make sure the activities have been cleaned up. Ask if there are any prayers the students want to share and if so write them down.

Recite **Matthew 6:9-13** below and then continue:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Thank You God that You offer forgiveness and mercy to us. Please help us to forgive others and enjoy showing mercy to them. Thank You for forgiving our huge debts. Help us not to be like the unmerciful servant. When we feel the weight of anger, remind us to put it down and run in Your freedom. Thank You for Your help, Your love and for being our Father.

Be with those who were not able to attend today. Be with our families, friends, and those in the church. In Jesus' name, Amen.

7) Optional Snack: Never Ending Forgiveness Popcorn 5 minutes

Prep

Gather supplies and either make a large amount of popcorn or have 2 boxes of tasty cereal that is easy to eat from paper cups. Have napkins available.

Snack

You've all done a great job this morning learning that God's Kingdom is full of mercy and forgiveness. For us to be forgiven and shown mercy by God, we must also give mercy and forgiveness to others. To help us remember, we are going to have a snack. Show large bowl of popcorn/cereal. Just like this bowl is large and has many, many pieces, we too need to have hearts that are large and can forgive many, many times. God shows us mercy that is uncountable and we need to extend that mercy to others.

Hand out snacks by scooping the snack from the bowl into their paper cups.

Let's eat our snacks remembering that God's Kingdom is full of mercy and forgiveness. We are blessed that God does not hold our sins against us and we need to have big hearts and do the same to those we know and meet. God gives us forgiveness without measure; we need to do likewise.

Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands. Discuss and review questions while snacking.

What did the King do? Let students answer.

What did the first servant do that upset the King? Let students answer.

Why did it upset the King?

What should we do that is helpful to us, God, and others? Forgive and show mercy!

Any questions about today’s parable?

What was the favorite thing you learned or did today? Why?

8) Optional Songs

5 minutes

Practice singing the Old or New Testament Books of the Bible.
Sing songs from the Song Sheet.

9) Things to Remember

Thank students for coming.
Remind them to take their activity sheets home.
Make sure students leave with a responsible person.

Thank you for serving Christ in this way!