

VOLUNTEER DEVOTIONAL

NO PROBLEM

STUDY

Conversations when it comes to forgiveness can be . . . complicated. It definitely feels more comfortable talking to students about the *process* than thinking about going through it ourselves. Why? Because forgiveness requires something more of us than a simple apology. Often, an apology is just the beginning of the work. The first steps of reconciliation can be some of the most difficult steps to take.

As you prepare to lead students through a series on the gift of forgiveness, hang out in the stories found in the Gospels. Allow them to speak to you about what forgiveness you may currently need and the kind of forgiveness Jesus is leading you to give.

To get ready for this series, **spend a few minutes reading the stories we'll be teaching students this month.** As you do, think about what God has taught you (and is still teaching you) about forgiveness through these passages, and how these Big Ideas have been true in your life.

WEEK 1: When you need forgiveness, don't just apologize. Psalm 32:5; Luke 19:1-20

WEEK 2: When it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective. Job 19:23-27a; John 16:32-33; Matthew 5:43-45

WEEK 3: When forgiveness is needed, remember God forgave first. Isaiah 12:1-3; Matthew 18:21-33

WEEK 4: When you've been hurt, remember Jesus has too. Jeremiah 23:1-6; Luke 23:33-38; Psalm 46

PRAY

Think about a time you needed someone's forgiveness and you apologized. How did that go? People, when they're hurting, may appreciate an apology – but more often, they want to see what you're going to do to make things right. Jesus was constantly interacting with people who would have been difficult to forgive. They were blatantly against him, spoke poorly of him, and even shamed him publicly. Yet, Jesus' perspective was such that nothing they said or did changed how he felt about them. As you lead students this month, it's possible that your own hurt will surface. Talk to God about the relationship or relationships that caused that pain and consider how God can give you strength to forgive just like Jesus did.

Which passage of Scripture or Big Idea from this month is most relevant to you right now? Spend a few minutes asking God to show you how you've already grown in this area, plus the next step you need to take in order to keep growing.

GROW

So what's your next step? Do you need to make something right between you and someone else? Do you need to shift your perspective about someone you hurt (or someone who hurt you)? Do you need to forgive someone for a hurt you've been holding onto? Do you need to spend some time with Jesus who feels your pain with you?

Whatever your next step is right now, take it. Then help students do the same.