

big faith

SESSION 13

Unit 3: Recipe for Love

Faith Focus: Jesus teaches us to love and welcome others.

Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. (John 13:34)

GROW IN FAITH

One Part Forgiveness—Luke 15:11-32

Today's Bible story is another familiar parable that describes a father's love for his son. But the parable is really about all three of the characters in the story—the younger son, the father, and the older son. At some point in our lives, each of us has probably felt like each one of these three family members. Most of us can relate to the father, as we have had to experience continuing to love people even in the midst of their mistakes. And then there's the older son. At one time or another we have each felt that life is confusing and unfair. And, of course, we must remember the younger son. We have each messed up. Hopefully, we have also experienced the relief of being forgiven and loved no matter what.

No matter the mistakes we have made, the complicated family relationships we might have, or how long it takes us to ask for forgiveness, God celebrates when we decide to live our lives the way God intended. God loves us and God will always forgive us. Accepting forgiveness and offering forgiveness to others helps us live fully into God's love and grace.

- Explore each character's emotions.
- Teach the importance of forgiveness in loving relationships.

SESSION OUTLINE

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Faith Focus—Jesus Teaches Us to Love and Welcome Others

Prodigal Son's Party Hat (Craft)

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Big Faith Video

Faith Response

FUN WITH FAITH

Forgiveness Freeze Tag (Game)

Prodigal Son's Party Menu (Imagination)

Reflection on Forgiveness (Response)

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

SUPPLIES

scissors

string

tape

CEB kids' Bible or CEB Bible storybook

TV and DVD player or streaming device

sticky notes

crayons

pencils

paper

colored pencils

COME TOGETHER

Prepare to Learn

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack, Activity Sheets, Activity Stickers

Prepare Ahead: Set up your area with the supplies and activity pages needed for today's session. Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16), Unit 3 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 5 & 20), and Unit 3 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18) to use later in the session.

- As children arrive, invite them to join you in a circle.
- Give each child a copy of the "Spring Sticker Page" (Activity Sheets—p. 29) and their own set of Activity Stickers. Have children place the party hat sticker on the Session 13 space.

SAY: Forgiveness means that we choose to stop feeling negatively or to stop holding a grudge against another person who did something wrong to us. All of us do the wrong thing sometimes. We all need to forgive sometimes, too.

Faith Focus—Jesus Teaches Us to Love and Welcome Others

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack

Prepare Ahead: Display the Unit 3 Faith Focus Poster (Class Pack—pp. 5 & 20).

- Show children the Faith Focus Poster.

SAY: Jesus told a story of a father who forgave his son. The story helps us understand how much God welcomes us and loves us no matter what.

ASK: Have you ever forgiven someone? How did it feel?

- Give children time and space to share their ideas.

Prodigal Son's Party Hat

Supplies: Activity Sheets, scissors, string, tape

Prepare Ahead: Tear out "Prodigal Son's Party Hat" (Session 13 Activity Sheet) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of the activity sheet.

SAY: The father in today's story was so excited to see his son come home, he forgave him right away. Let's make a party hat to participate in the celebration!

- Have the children follow directions for the "Prodigal Son's Party Hat" activity sheet.

FAITH CONNECTIONS

Read the Story

Supplies: *CEB kids' Bible or CEB Bible storybook*

- Invite the children to join you in a circle.
- Read the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32) from a CEB kids' Bible or your favorite CEB Bible storybook.

ASK: How do you think the younger son felt when he decided to go home? How did he feel when his dad forgave him? How did the father feel? How did the older son feel?

Big Faith Video

Supplies: *Big Faith DVD, TV, DVD player or streaming device*

- Watch the Session 13 video on the Big Faith DVD or via your Amplify Media subscription.
- Give children time to respond to the questions on the screen. Discuss the questions as partner pairs, as small groups, or all together.

ASK: What was your favorite part of the video?

Faith Response

Supplies: *All-Ages Class Pack, sticky notes, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Display the Unit 3 Faith Response Poster (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18) and Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) if you haven't already.*

- Invite children to wonder about the images on the posters.
- Encourage children to say the Bible verse with you: "Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other" (John 13:34).

SAY: Jesus told stories to help people better understand God's love. The story of the prodigal son teaches us that God, just like the father in this story, wants us to come to God no matter what we have done.

ASK: What might make forgiving someone hard?

SAY: God has perfect love for us. God can always forgive us. As Christians, sometimes forgiveness means throwing a party and welcoming someone back into our lives. Sometimes it means moving on from our negative feelings. Forgiveness is complicated because people are complicated. But God will love us no matter what.

- Lay the Faith Response Poster on the floor or a table and invite the children to gather around it.

- Give each child a sticky note and crayons.

ASK: What do you see on our poster?

- Invite each child to write one way he or she can practice forgiveness this week. Let the children put their notes on the poster.

FUN WITH FAITH

Forgiveness Freeze Tag

ASK: How do people communicate with each other? (*talking, writing, facial expressions, body language*) How do you like to communicate with others?

SAY: The son left the father to have a fun time. But when his good luck ran out, he knew he needed to come home. The father was so excited he threw a party. We are going to play Forgiveness Freeze Tag to have our own forgiveness party.

- Have one child volunteer to be the tagger and one volunteer to be the forgiver.
- Play a game a freeze tag. When tagged, a person must freeze. The tagger must yell, "I don't forgive you!" when tagging. When the forgiver tags a person to unfreeze the person, the forgiver yells, "You're forgiven!"
- The person unfrozen can do a little dance and have a mini-party before rejoining the game. Continue until everyone has had a turn to be either the tagger or the forgiver.

Prodigal Son's Party Menu

Supplies: pencils, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Make copies of "Prodigal Son's Party Menu" (Leader Guide—p. 88).

SAY: The father planned a party for the son when he returned. How would you plan a party for someone who returned home?

- Give each child a copy of "Prodigal Son's Party Menu." Let the children follow the instructions on the page.

Reflection on Forgiveness

Supplies: paper, colored pencils

SAY: We all make mistakes. We all need to be forgiven. When we consider the ways we have been forgiven, it can be easier to offer forgiveness.

- Give each child paper and colored pencils.
- Have the children write about or draw how it feels to be forgiven.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Big Faith Idea—Faith in Jesus

Supplies: All-Ages Class Pack

Prepare Ahead: Display the Spring Big Faith Idea Poster (Class Pack—pp. 4 & 21). Photocopy the Unit 3 Family Faith Letter (Leader Guide—pp. 95–96) as needed.

- Show children the Big Faith Idea Poster.

SAY: We forgive others by letting go of our negative feelings toward their wrongful behavior. Forgiveness is complicated and can be a long process. God forgives us and wants us to forgive others.


- Have the children gather in a circle.
- Have each child silently consider how she or he might express forgiveness to someone who has hurt her or him.
- Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: Lord, help us to forgive others. Help us to change and seek forgiveness when we do something wrong. Thank you for your love for us. Amen.

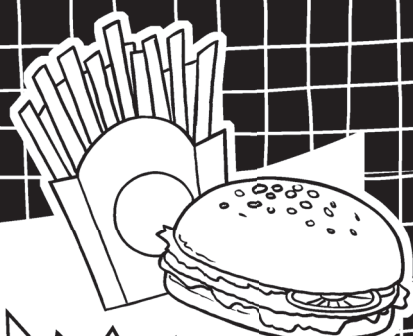
- Send the Family Faith Letter home with each child who hasn't received it yet.
- Send home any activities or items made during today's session.

Create your own party with your favorite foods by filling in the menu. Color your menu.


MENU




Snacks



Main Course



Dessert



Drinks

Art: Omar Aranda/Gwen Walters Artists' Representative