

Christian Union Planning Sheet

Theme / Topic

Freedom in Forgiveness – *Part 4 of the 'Christian Values' 5-part series*

Bible Passage

Matthew 18:21-22 'Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (New International Version)

Time Allocation

30 minutes

Aim

The young people will learn that the Bible speaks important of forgiving others just as we have been forgiven by God.

Introduction

Challenge the group to write their name or a message using their non-dominant hand. Then ask everyone to reflect on how it felt. You might like to ask some individuals to share their thoughts with the group.

When a member of the Wycombe YFC team tried this, they shared it felt unnatural and awkward, it wasn't easy and they had to really think about what they were doing. Can anyone relate to those feelings?

Forgiveness can feel a lot like this – it can feel unnatural and awkward. It isn't easy and we do have to think about it. But like anything we choose to do, the more we do it, the more natural it becomes.

Teaching

When we experience hurt, anger or pain through the words or actions of someone else, our natural reaction is not always to forgive. Quite often we respond by either trying to ignore what has been said or done, or by responding with revenge. We want the person to feel the same level of pain, anger and hurt they have caused us. But neither response enables us to deal with the anger, hurt or pain we are feeling.

Take a moment to consider this analogy – think of the pain, anger and hurt you might feel at times as being like an open wound on your hand. If it isn't treated, then it can become infected and begin to have a greater affect on you. In the same way, if we don't choose to forgive, then that pain, anger and hurt we feel can begin to affect us.

Watch the Vitalise Devotional video 'Freedom in Forgiveness #2' together, to hear something of what the Bible says about the important of forgiveness and the encouragement we find in the book of Colossians to forgive.

You can find the video here: <https://youtu.be/NtrHuGGaTLE>

Application, Reflection and/or Activity

In the Bible, Jesus' disciples asked him about forgiving others:

'Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

The Bible – Matthew chapter 18 verses 21 – 22 (New International Version)

Jesus then goes on to explain what He means to all those listening. He tells a story, called a parable, which we can find and read in The Bible (Matthew, chapter 18, verses 23 – 35). In this story, a servant owes a great deal of a money to a King. The servant pleads to the King to have mercy on him as he is unable to pay the debt and the King takes pity on him, cancels the debt, and lets him go.

The servant then finds a fellow-servant who owes him a much smaller amount of money and he demands the debt to be paid. When the fellow servant begs him to be patient with him, he refuses and has the man thrown into prison.

When others saw and heard what had happened, they reported everything to the King. The King questions the servant as to why, when the King had cancelled his debt, he not shown mercy to his fellow-servant. The servant was forgiven so much and yet he couldn't forgive someone else for something far smaller.

Christians believe that when Jesus died on the cross, He did so to take the punishment for all the wrong things that we think and say and do, so that we can be forgiven by God. God chooses to love us and offers us forgiveness for the wrong choices we make and in turn we are called to show that same forgiveness to others. Forgiveness allows us to give the whole situation to God. It enables Him to work in us to help begin to heal the hurt and anger and pain that we feel. With our analogy of the open wound, it is like choosing to put a plaster over the wound in order to allow the healing process to begin.

Take some time now to write down the names or situations of anyone or anything that you need to forgive. Then asking God to help you forgive, tear up your piece of paper as a way of symbolically choosing to let go of those situations you are holding onto and begin the process of forgiveness.

Memory Verse

'Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.' – Colossians 3:13; NIV

Resources

Pens and paper for introduction challenge & reflection

Vitalise Video

Bibles available in case young people would like to look up Bible references

** Forgiveness doesn't mean accepting being treated poorly continuously, there are times and situations where we need to seek help to bring it to an end. If you are concerned, please do speak to an adult you trust to help you through the situation you are facing. **