

Throwback

Week 2

BIG IDEA
We can always forgive.

BIBLE
The Unforgiving Servant: Matthew 18:23–35; 1 John 3:1–7

LARGE GROUP TIME

Sup homies! Welcome back to *Throwback!* Each week, we'll go back in time and see that the things Jesus taught are always trending because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever! This week, we're going back to the 1990's! Are you ready for the 411? I mean, let's check this out!

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Sorry!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Make a pathway of colored paper or lines resembling a board game. Have kids spin the arrow on a spinner wheel. Whatever color they land on, they move to the corresponding colored space that's closest. If another kid lands on the same color square, they are knocked out and have to go back to the starting line. The person replacing them has to say, "Sorry!" The first kid to reach the end wins. If you have a large group, this would be best to break up into smaller teams.
- Kids in the 90's didn't play online video games as we do today . . . at least, not at the level we do now. So they played a lot of board games, like Sorry!
- **How did it feel when you got knocked out of your square and had to start over? Did it help that they said, "Sorry?"**
- Today's Bible story is going to talk about what we can do when people tell us they're sorry . . . or even when they don't!

POLL | Taste Travel

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Bring in some candies that were popular in the 90's like the ones in [this video](#) (Fun Dip, Bubblicious, Pop Rocks, Warheads). Ask some volunteers to try a little bit of each candy and rate them on a scale of one to five. If you'd like everyone to participate, you can pass out different candies to groups and ask them to rate the candy they got and why.
- **How do you feel about the candies that were popular in the 90's?** Well, something that hasn't changed since then is that eating a lot of candy and not brushing your teeth very well could lead to cavities!
- We'll see from today's Bible story that when we choose not to forgive, it can be worse for us than rotting teeth! Let's find out more.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 18:23–35 (The Unforgiving Servant)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** This week, to represent the 1990's, introduce the kids to a multi-cam sitcom-type program. Play a musical sting (like [these](#)) to start and end the skit portion, and prepare a "laugh" sign to hold up (or use a [laugh track](#)) to punctuate the scene. Have your actors dressed in '90s garb, and give the diner owner a paper hat, apron, and a dish towel.
- **Let's check it out in Matthew 18:23–35.**
- The first servant was forgiven a giant debt that he could never hope to pay back. Even if he worked really hard nonstop for the rest of his life, he would never be able to pay it all back. And even though he was forgiven of this impossible debt, he failed to show mercy to someone who owed him a much smaller debt.
- Jesus was trying to show the people that God had forgiven them all of something much bigger — their sins. This is something nobody else could forgive, and it was a debt they can never pay back. Knowing this, they should show their gratitude by being kind and forgiving to others. And we can do the same.
- Jesus showed us that forgiving others is a good trend to follow!

BIG IDEA | We can always forgive.

We can always forgive.

OBJECT LESSON | Big Backpack

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Fill a backpack (a JanSport if you can find one) with packing cushions or something else bulky but not overly heavy. Invite a volunteer to wear the backpack and then do a series of activities like: a push-up or sit-up, crawl under a table, roll on a mat, squeeze in between a row of kids, and the like. Then have them try the same activities without the backpack.
- Kids in the 90's usually had really big backpacks, especially teenagers, because they had to carry their textbooks to school every day.
- Imagine that instead of school books and school supplies, you were carrying your anger and bitter feelings around with you like this. **Isn't it uncomfortable? Doesn't it get in the way of normal activities?**
- This is what it's like when we don't forgive others — we carry the weight of it everywhere we go! Sometimes we withhold forgiveness because we think that will teach someone a lesson or make them feel bad. What we don't realize is that it often hurts us more than it does anyone else.
- **But what happens when we let it all go?**
- When we forgive others, it's like letting go of something big, heavy, and awkward that we've been carrying around with us. And not only will it make you feel better to forgive, but it will become the first step to repairing a broken relationship. **We can always forgive.**

SCRIPTURE | 1 John 3:1–7

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the passage aloud. Then go through [pictures](#) of Ty Beanie Babies (or procure a few as props for kids to look at). Then show a listing for a vintage collection (like [this](#)).
- Beanie Babies were really popular in the 90's! People would collect them. Some Beanie Babies would be easy to find but others were a little harder. Some Beanie Babies were worth a lot of money. So if you wanted one of them, there was a great price to pay.

- Now, imagine if someone just handed you an entire box of Beanie Babies. Not because you deserved it. Just because. Even if you're not a fan of these adorable collectibles, you'd be shocked at how much it's worth! **Would you be able to believe that someone would just give something so valuable to you?**
- That's how God gives us love and forgiveness. 1 John 3 tells us that it's a luxurious gift that we didn't deserve or earn, but verse 5 tells us that Jesus "appeared so that he might take away our sins." It's something only Jesus could do because he is the only one who is truly righteous and without sin.
- Even though you might not want to do this with your vintage Beanie Babies, God's forgiveness is a gift we can open and share with others. **We can always forgive** because we have been forgiven, too.

VIDEO | Throwback, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Press Play](#).

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

RESPONSE | Plan To Forgive

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out a piece of lined paper and a ballpoint pen to each kid.
- Write or draw an emotion you're having when you think about a situation where you had to forgive. Or maybe you haven't forgiven them yet. **Why is it so hard to forgive?**
- Now take your pen and cross it out and write today's Big Idea underneath it: **We can always forgive.**
- The thing that you crossed out isn't completely gone. This gives us a better understanding of what forgiveness might look like. When you forgive someone, it doesn't mean you have to . . .
 - Forget what they did.
 - Agree with what they did.
 - Let them keep hurting us. If someone continually hurts you, tell a grownup you trust about it.
- Only God can forgive perfectly, but we can imitate God by offering grace even though the other person might not fully deserve it. We can let go of our own anger or hard feelings about the other person and not let it bubble up inside of us. Or at the very least, we can choose to not pay them back in the same way.
- **What are some things you can do to practice forgiveness?** You might choose to . . .
 - Pray for them.
 - Not allow their comments or actions to bother you.
 - Not spread any bad information about that person to others.
 - Take deep breaths.
 - Find other ways to spend my time and energy.
- **Jot down the ones you are willing to try!**

MEMORY VERSE | Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

- **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."**

PRAYER

- Jesus, thank you for always forgiving us. We could never pay you back, but we can pay it forward by forgiving others. Instead of holding grudges, we want to practice forgiveness. Show us who we can forgive and how. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
 - **What did the king do for the servant who owed ten thousand bags of gold?** *The king canceled his debt and let him go.*
 - **What did the first servant do to his fellow servant who owed one hundred silver coins?** *He attacked him and sent him to prison.*
 - **Why did the king hand the first servant over to the jailers?** *The first servant didn't forgive a fellow servant even though he himself had been forgiven a huge debt.*
 - **Read 1 John 3:1. How is it possible that we can be called children of God?** *God loved us and gave us this right. God forgave our sins.*
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
 - **Why can we always forgive?**
 - **What happens when we hold grudges for a long time?**
 - **Knowing that Jesus forgave us and continues to forgive, what are some things you can do to show forgiveness?**

ACTIVITY | Picture Perfect

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [an image](#) of a 35mm camera and film. Give each kid a copy of the [printable](#). Level it up by printing on transparency film, and have kids draw with fine permanent markers.
- People didn't have smartphones in the 90's so if you wanted to take photos, you would have to use a camera that contained a roll of film. Once you used up the entire roll, you would take it to a place where they would develop the photos from the film strips, or negatives. People held on to the negatives in case they wanted to print more copies of the photos.
- When it comes to forgiveness though, we don't have to hold onto the negative things. In each of these film squares, **write or draw some things that will remind you of all the things we talked about today** (including those wild 90's trends!). Don't forget to add today's Big Idea in there: **We can always forgive.**