

GAME PLAN

WEEK 4

BIG IDEA

Forgiveness is always God's game plan.

BIBLE

David and Nathan: 2 Samuel 11:26–12:13; Psalm 34:15–22

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Once the game is over, teams will often put aside whatever happened on the field and settle their differences by shaking hands. This week, we'll take a look at the time when Nathan rebuked David for what he did to Uriah and Bathsheba until David repented for his actions. David's confrontation with Nathan helped him discover firsthand that forgiveness is always God's game plan.

Large Group Time

Welcome

Welcome back to *Game Plan*! Today, we will continue to learn a time when David *didn't* follow God's game plan and needed God to forgive him for a huge mistake. It's fantastic to see basketball players battle it out during the game but then shake hands afterward. It's like they're letting go of the rage and competitiveness from the game and being forgiving. That moderate—and sometimes half-hearted—forgiveness isn't anywhere close to the kind of forgiveness we're going to see God display in today's Bible story.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Blindfold Basketball

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need two basketballs (or other balls), a trashcan, and two blindfolds. To play, divide kids up into two teams. Pick one volunteer from each team to be the blindfolded basketball player. Blindfold those players and hand them a basketball. Give their team ten seconds to direct them to the trashcan (or hoop) in hopes of making the shot. After ten seconds, the blindfolded players have to shoot and hope for the best. Play a few rounds, starting the player from different places in the room. Most baskets in wins!*
- **Did you notice that this game required some amount of forgiveness?** Hold up—what? Not

sure what this game has to do with forgiveness?

- Well, for one thing, you might have had to ask for forgiveness for allowing your player to run into an obstacle.
- The player might ask for forgiveness when they miss the trashcan even though your directions were perfect.
- Both players and teammates might have to forgive themselves for their poor play during this funny basketball game.

This silly game is a good example of how many times a day we can practice, or at least encounter, forgiveness. I bet it's more than you think!

QUESTION | Have you ever needed forgiveness?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the following questions. You can have every kid shout their answer but then ask a few kids to share their answers with everyone. Comment briefly on their answers –and have fun with this!
- Imagine yourself in a basketball game. It's tied with one second left on the clock. You just got fouled by the other team, and now you have a chance to shoot a free throw and win the game! But ... you miss.
 - **How would you respond?**
 - **How would you want your teammates to respond?**
 - **Now imagine yourself as one of the teammates. How would you respond?**
 - **Have you ever been in a situation similar to this (sports or not) where you made some kind of mistake and needed someone to forgive you? How did that situation play out?**

Forgiveness is a choice we make to let go of bitter or angry feelings toward someone else. Oftentimes, forgiveness is followed by giving someone a chance to do better and repairing a relationship. God gave us stories like the one we'll look at today so that we might know how God forgives and wants us to do the same!

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

SCRIPTURE | 2 Samuel 11:26–12:13 (David and Nathan)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pretend that you are the announcer at a one-on-one basketball game. Ask one kid to play the role of David. Ask another to play Nathan. Have the two stand facing each other. Each time their names are mentioned, have that kid dribble the ball or shoot it into a basket (a trashcan is fine). At other times, they can be still, like a freeze frame, so they don't distract the audience.
- All right, sports fans! It's an epic one-on-one basketball battle on the court. David versus Nathan, and these two have some things to sort out. Let's see what happened right before this matchup.
- **Read 2 Samuel 11:26–27.**
 - Woah! David did not have one of his best games. He scored zero points with God by stealing Uriah's wife and then making sure he died in battle. That's a lot of personal fouls right there.

- So God sent the prophet Nathan to have a word with David. Nathan begins the game with a tricky no-look shot. He tells a story that seems to have nothing to do with David, but it's a foolproof strategy to get the point across. It was a story that he knew would make David mad. It's an interesting tactic!

- **Let's check out this story in 2 Samuel 12:1–4.**

- We can all agree that the rich man did a terrible thing in the story. He took the one lamb his neighbor had instead of giving up one of his many.
- That's awful! David thought so, too.

- **Hear what he said in 2 Samuel 12:5–6.**

- Sounds pretty fair, right? Except ... Nathan wasn't really talking about a man stealing his neighbor's lamb.
- He told this story to help David realize that what he did in real life was way worse.

- **This is what Nathan said to David in 2 Samuel 12:7–12.**

- David thought he answered with a slam dunk, but he got rejected! Though it was supposed to be a one-on-one game, Nathan actually spoke and played for God. And, in response to David's fouls, he just dunked on him. Game ... over.
- But is it? What would happen to David?

- **Read 2 Samuel 12:13.**

- Unbelievable turn of events. It looked like the game was over for David. But because of God's forgiveness, David was able to stay in the game.

Holy Toledo! I don't believe what I just saw! Now *that's* how you do forgiveness!

BIG IDEA | Forgiveness is always God's game plan.

VIDEO | Game Plan, Episode 4

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

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

REFLECTION | Pass It!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need a basketball. The one who has the basketball is the one who gets to speak. Start with the basketball yourself, then ask the first question and pass the basketball to a person who wants to answer. Keep the basketball moving around with all who wish to share.*
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** *Some preteens may find it embarrassing to talk about times they needed to be forgiven. Give them space if they don't want to share. Remind them that you are safe for them to talk with, even if it's outside of the typical small group sharing times.*
 - **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Spontaneous communication may be difficult for some kids.*

During this week's questions about forgiveness, they might need a few minutes of extra time to think about what they want to share.

- **Forgiveness is always God's game plan.** When playing sports, our fouls or penalties are often numbered and held against us.
 - **How does this mindset (counting fouls) sometimes sneak into our everyday lives with others? Do you keep track of how often people have wronged you?**
 - **How about in our relationship with God?**
 - **When was a time when someone forgave you for a big-time mistake? How did this make you feel?**
- When it comes to forgiving others, especially people who hurt us in a big way, it doesn't necessarily mean we just let it go and pretend it didn't happen. It's okay to acknowledge the pain someone else has caused you and learn to distance yourself from people who repeatedly treat you unkindly.
- After all, only God can forgive us completely and embrace us even after we've made a mess of things. But we can also forgive by controlling our own actions.
- We can let God's love drive our decisions ... not hate, anger, or bitterness. Following God in our Bible story looked like David seeking forgiveness for a big mess.

What might forgiveness look like for us in our day-to-day life?

RESPONSE | God's Plan Playbook

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need to use the [printable](#) from last week (have extras available for kids who don't have one already). During the activity, have kids draw up a "play" based on a situation where they can choose to follow God. Invite them to use Xs and Os to represent different people and arrows to indicate how they'll move or what they'd do. It can end up looking something [like this](#).*
- Okay, team, here's the situation: somebody just said "sorry" to you, and you can accept their apology and forgive them.
 - You're not sure what to do because it's not the first time this person was mean to you.
 - Or you're not ready to move on and want to stay mad at them.
 - Or perhaps it's someone who doesn't sound like they mean "sorry" at all.
- **How could you choose forgiveness in these kinds of situations? Who could help you with this choice you have to make?**
- Draw up the play on your play sheet, using Xs and Os like a team coach would. We might not be perfect forgivers, but all of us, at one point, have been forgiven for something.

God is the ultimate forgiver who made it so that all our sins could be forgiven through Jesus. Jesus is the perfect reminder that **forgiveness is always God's game plan.**

Prayer

God, thank you so much for seeing our need for forgiveness and making it your game plan to forgive us. Please help me to recognize when I need to ask for forgiveness and when I need to forgive others. Thank you for placing people in my life who can help me understand when I need to look to you for forgiveness. Amen

Small Group Time