



DEEPER BIBLE

Will God Really Forgive Any Wrong Choice?

[15 min]

Supplies

- Bibles*
- bulletin board paper (butcher paper)
- washable markers*
- slips of paper
- pens
- paper lunch bag
- transparent tape

Easy Prep

- Draw a large outline of a person on bulletin board paper, then do the same on a second piece. Tape one to the wall, and set the other one out of sight.

Write Offenses

Say: **We're learning that we are forgiven. I don't know about you, but sometimes there are things people do to me that I find hard to forgive!**

Have small-group leaders distribute slips of paper and pens. Have kids write on their paper something that would be really hard for them to forgive, if someone did it to them. It could be hypothetical or something they've actually experienced. Let kids know you'll be reading some of these aloud.

When kids have finished writing, small-group leaders will collect the slips and bring them to you. Place them in a paper lunch bag.

Say: **Here's what we're going to do. Our room is now a scale of 1 to 10. Point to the wall that represents 1 and the wall that represents 10. I'll read something from a paper, and you'll stand along our scale to show how hard you think it would be to forgive that offense if someone did it to you. One means it's easy to forgive, and 10 means you'd never, ever forgive the person.** (Space too tight for kids to vote by moving? Have them hold up fingers instead.)

One at a time, pull out a slip and read it aloud. Let kids vote by where they stand on the scale, and have a few kids explain their answers. Then tape the slip to the paper person on the wall. Continue until you've read through about 10-12 slips. Then scatter the others on the ground in front of the paper person.

Say: **It looks like there are some things we find hard to forgive. But we're learning that we are forgiven. So will God really forgive *any* wrong choice? Or does he have a hard time with it like we sometimes do? Let's dig in to that.**

Dig Deeper

Say: **As I read these verses, listen to how it describes how God *feels* about our sins.**

Read Psalm 103:9-13.

Ask: • **What did you notice about God's feelings?**

Say: **It seems like our sins might make God angry at first, but he doesn't *stay* angry. Because he has other feelings—love and compassion! His love is so great, he wants to forgive us. We are forgiven! Now, listen to the verses again, but this time, listen for what God *does* in response to our sins.**

Read Psalm 103:9-13 again.

Ask: • **What did you notice about what God *does* about our sins?**

Say: **God removes our sins from us, as far as the east is from the west.**

Point to the paper person on the wall. Say: **So let's say this guy on the wall has done *all* the things we wrote on our slips. For us, he'd be hard to forgive! But God removes his sins far away from him.**

Have kids each remove a slip from the paper person (or the ground in front of him), walk to the other side of the room, and hold on to the slip.

Say: **So how does God remove our sins? Here's how.**

Read Acts 13:38.

Say: **We are forgiven. But God is just, as well as being loving and forgiving. That means in order to forgive us, someone had to take the punishment for our sins. That person was Jesus. Jesus is God's Son, who came to earth, lived a perfect life, and died to take our punishment. Then he came back to life!**

Set out the second paper person, and have kids take turns taping a slip of paper to it. It may help to have small-group leaders tear and distribute the tape.

Say: **Because Jesus took the punishment for what we do wrong, we are forgiven. No matter what we do, it's not too hard for God to forgive, because he already paid the ultimate price to forgive us.**



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Clean and Forgiven

[5 min]

Supplies

- wet wipes
- trash can

Clean and Pray

Say: **Let's close our time with a prayer for forgiveness. We know that when we tell God we're sorry, we are forgiven. He cleans away our sins.**

- Have small-group leaders give each child a wet wipe.
- Have kids scrub their hands well as they silently talk to God about what they need his forgiveness for.
- Walk around with a trash can to collect the wet wipes when kids have finished praying.
- Pray: **God, thank you that in your eyes, we are forgiven. We're not defined by the wrong things we do; you give us a new start and wash us clean. We love you! In Jesus' name, amen.**
- Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



OBJECT LESSON

God Knows, God Forgives

[10 min]

Supplies

- Go Fish game cards or other picture cards, such as shape flash cards (1 deck of cards for each adult or teen leader)
- rubber bands

Easy Prep

- Make sure all the cards in each deck are stacked facedown. Then turn the bottom card of each deck faceup, and replace it at the bottom of the deck. Use a rubber band to keep the cards together and in order.





- Connect with your adult or teen leaders as kids are arriving and quickly show them how they'll perform this trick later for the kids. The steps are found below. It's very easy to learn!

Tip

- If you don't have any or enough cards in your stored supplies, you can find affordable Go Fish or simple flash cards at dollar stores and department stores.

Watch a Card Trick

Say: **Today we're learning that we are forgiven. If God forgives us for *everything* we do wrong, then that means God knows about *everything* we do wrong—even times no one else is looking and we might think "Whew, I'm the only one who knows!" Let's see what it's like when a person knows something that you think *only you* know.**

- Form small, leader-led groups, and give each leader a prepared deck of cards.
- Have groups sit in circles. Leaders can invite the child in his or her group who's wearing the most colorful clothing to choose a card first.
- Have leaders do the following steps to complete the card trick for each child in their group, or until a child figures out how the trick works can call out the answer:
 - Step 1: Being careful not to reveal the overturned card at the bottom of the deck, fan the deck out to allow a child to select and pull out one card.



- Step 2: Tell the child to carefully study his or her card to lock it in memory and keep you from seeing what's on the card.
- Step 3: While the child is focused on his or her card, subtly flip the deck over so the overturned card that was on the bottom of the deck is now on top of the deck and all the cards below are faceup. Then push the cards back together so the deck appears to be the same as when the card was pulled.



- Step 4: Invite the child to carefully slide his or her card back into the deck, facedown so you can't see it.



- Step 5: Turn your back to everyone so no one can see how you find the chosen card. Flip the deck over once more and fan the cards out. The chosen card will be the only card now facing up, so you can remove it from the deck, return the deck to the Step 1 position, and then present the card to the whole group and tell the child who selected it, "This is your card."



- Then that card can be left out of the deck and the next person can select a card to start a new round of the card trick.
- Kids will be amazed as time after time the leader performing the trick knows which card they selected!
- When groups finish, call attention back to you and have leaders rubber band their decks together again.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell me about what just happened in your groups!**

• **How do you think your leader *always* knew what card was taken**

out?

Say: **There was a trick your leaders used to help them know which card you chose.** Borrow a deck of cards from a leader, and slowly walk everyone through the trick to show kids how it works.

Say: **This is a silly and fun card trick, but God *doesn't* use *any* tricks to know all we say and do. God knows everything because God is very special. If we do wrong, we don't need to try to hide it or worry because God knows about it. God loves us even when we do wrong, and we are forgiven.**