

Howdy, Pardon-er

Virtue: Peace—proving that you care more about others than winning an argument.

Memory Verse: “So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.” *Romans 14:19 NLT*

Bible Story: Howdy, Pardon-er (Jacob and Esau meet again) • *Genesis 27:41-45; 32:1-21; 33:1-11*

Bottom Line: *It's better to let go than to get even.*

Plug In: Focus the Energy (Small Groups, 10-15 minutes)

FOR LEADERS ONLY

The past couple of weeks we've talked about peace and more specifically, how to avoid conflict. But let's say you've forgotten everything you've learned. Somehow you've gotten yourself in an ongoing battle and neither one of you is letting up. What happens now? It gets really hard from here on out, but you can still have peace. (1) Peace is proving that you care more about others than winning an argument. That means your relationship with that person is important enough that you'd give in once in a while, even when you think you're right. (2) Think about the mercy with which God treats us. Instead of punishing or getting even with us, God offers us peace time and again. He knows He's right, but He gives us every opportunity to be reconciled to Him. (3) God wants us to offer that same kind of patience to others. (4) If we do this, we mend bridges with friends and family that we might have lost over something insignificant. As followers of Jesus, we should always have forgiveness to spare, even for the people who we think are in the wrong.

Early Arriver Idea

Ask kids if they got mad at anyone or if someone hurt their feelings this week. If so, ask them what they did in response. Ask them to tell their favorite thing about starting a new school year and why. Invite the kids to put their offerings in the offering container.

Forgiveness Tag

SUPPLIES: none (combine groups as needed)

Play “Forgiveness Tag”: Choose one player to be “It” and another player to be the “Unfreezer” as everyone else attempts to avoid getting tagged. At your signal, everyone should start moving around as It tries to tag players. When he does, he says, “I'm getting even.” The Unfreezer should tag frozen people. When she does, she says, “Let it go.”

Tip: If you have limited space or you want to control velocity, you can still play this game (and it will be fun and challenging) by requiring all players to duck walk, take baby steps, or crab walk.

WRAP UP

LEADER: “That was an exciting game! *[Transition]* We experienced someone getting even and someone letting go. Let's go to large group and hear about a brother who had to decide if he wanted to get even with his brother or forgive him.”

Lead your group to the large group environment for worship and videos

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Power Up: Engage the Heart (Large Group, 20-25 minutes)

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Power Up: (Large Group, 25-30 minutes)

Opening Announcements (Worship Team – 2 minutes)

Worship Time (10 – 12 minutes)

Video Lesson –Drop It (10 minutes)

Prayer (2 minutes) - Worship Leader

Prayer:

Worship Leader: “Father, thank You for not holding a grudge against us. Thank You for loving us and being willing to forgive us, even when we do wrong things. Help us to forgive others when they do things to us that are wrong. **[Impress]** **It's better to let go than to get even**, so give us the strength to let go. We love You. Amen.”

Dismiss children to their small groups.

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Catch On: Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25-30 minutes)

* If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activities #1 and #2. Activity #2 is particularly good for children who need to move in order to stay engaged (not just for boys).

* **1. WRONG! (application activity / Bible story review)**

SUPPLIES: Bibles

Test your kids' listening skills. Read the paraphrased Bible story, provided below, out loud to your small group. Instruct them to call out “Wrong!” when they hear you read something they think is incorrect. Read aloud the words or phrases in bold. The words in parentheses show the correct answers. Be sure to read slowly to give kids an opportunity to identify the parts of the story that are incorrect. After you finish reading the Bible story, go back and tell them which “wrongs” they missed. Challenge your small group further by asking them what words or statements would make the story correct.

Paraphrase from Genesis 27:41-45; 32:1-21; 33:1-11:

In Bible times, the oldest son got a special blessing from his father before the father died. The blessing was like a prayer that God would fill the son's life with many, many good things. Esau [EE saw] was the older son, so he was supposed to receive this special blessing. But Jacob played a terrible trick and **buried** (*stole*) Esau's rightful blessing. Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of this and planned to **throw a party for** (*kill*) him. When the brothers' **grandmother** (*mom*) heard what Esau was planning, she told Jacob to **go take dance lessons** (*run away*). After Jacob had been gone many years, he decided to **immigrate to the United States** (*return home*). So Jacob gathered all of his family, livestock, and belongings and **got on a plane for** (*started walking*) home. Jacob wondered if Esau still wanted revenge for stealing his **lunch** (*blessing*). So Jacob sent some of his men ahead of him to take Esau a valuable gift. The gift included **chickens, dogs, cats, emus, and iguanas** (*cattle, camels, donkeys, sheep, and goats*). The gift was to serve as a peace offering. When Esau heard Jacob's message, he took **40** (*400*) men with him to meet Jacob. When Jacob saw them, it made him **laugh** (*afraid*). As they got nearer to each other, Esau began to **crawl** (*run*) to his brother Jacob. Esau **high-fived** (*hugged*) his brother, and they cried together. Esau told Jacob to **give him** (*keep*) all his animals. But Jacob insisted that

Esau keep the gift. Esau had forgiven **his sister** (*his brother; Jacob*) for stealing his blessing. And God blessed them both!

LEADER: “Isn’t it neat how God helped Jacob and Esau to end their conflict? At the beginning of our Bible story, Jacob was selfish and on the run, and Esau was furious and out for blood! God showed His power by helping these two brothers make peace. **[Apply] One way to make peace is to forgive. In fact, God wants us to forgive instead of get even.** But He doesn’t expect us to do it on our own! God helped Esau and Jacob to have a change of heart and God can help you have a change of heart, too. If there is someone in your life that you have a hard time making peace with, remember that **[Impress] it’s better to let go than to get even.** **[Apply] Sometimes you just have to choose to forgive, but you may have to ask God to help you do it.** You never know, you may end up the way Jacob and Esau did—reconciled, happy, and at peace with each other!”

[Personalize] Tell the kids of a time when someone did something hurtful to you and you decided to let it go rather than get even. How did God work through you in that situation? What did God teach you? Did the other person learn anything from your forgiveness?

*** 2. Act It Out (application activity / great for boys)**

SUPPLIES: Bibles, “Act It Out Cards” (Activity Pages)

Tell kids that now that they’ve reviewed the Bible story, **[Apply] everyone is going to have a chance to act out what God might want us to learn from Jacob and Esau’s experience.** Divide kids into teams of two or three. Place the “Act It Out Cards” face down in the center of your circle. Guide each team to choose a card. Tell them to read their card and work together to decide how to act out a way to make peace in that situation. Give them a few minutes to plan and rehearse, then let each team act out their conflict and peaceful resolution.

If you have any cards left over and you have the time, ask kids to name some possible peaceful resolutions for the leftover scenarios.

LEADER: “Does anyone know what a grudge is? (*a feeling of dislike or spitefulness that lasts a long time; a feeling like you don’t want to forgive*) It can be easy to hold a grudge. Someone could hold a grudge because of something mean or hurtful or wrong that someone else does to him or her—like the grudge that Esau held against Jacob. Someone could also hold a grudge just because he doesn’t like what someone else did—like if a kid gets mad at her parents for grounding her when she does something wrong. In those moments when it seems the hardest to make peace, that’s when making peace makes the most difference in you and in others. **[Apply] God wants you to know that if you hold on to a grudge, you can’t make peace. And the longer you hold on to a grudge, the harder it is to make peace. You have to be really strong to make peace instead of getting even. That’s why God wants to help us forgive and make peace.** So remember, **[Impress] it’s better to let go than to get even.**”

Optional Club 56 Discussion Questions

If you lead Club 56, consider asking these discussion questions:

- Which is harder, getting even or letting a situation go? Why?
- What is the best way to begin talking again with a person who took advantage of you or hurt you after you have CHOSEN TO FORGIVE and let go? Should you even mention that you are forgiving and moving on or just move on without saying anything?
- How do you think you will feel after letting go?

3. Responsive Prayer (*pray*)

SUPPLIES: none

LEADER: “When people hurt us, we may be tempted to get even or to hurt them back. However, God says **[Impress] it’s better to let go than to get even.** That’s not always easy to do, so that’s why we need God to give us the wisdom and strength to let go instead of getting into a fight or disagreement. **[Personalize] I have faced some situations in which I really wanted to get even. (Continue by sharing a time when you chose to let it go instead of getting even. Especially share if you prayed and asked God what to do or for strength to let go.) Letting go is a challenge: How hard will you work at fixing what is wrong between you and someone else? What are you willing to do? What are you willing to give?”**

Explain that you are going to have a responsive prayer. Tell the kids that you will say a phrase and then they should pray the following sentence to God in response each time. Their prayer each time should be, “God, help me to CHOOSE TO FORGIVE.”

Pray: “When someone hurts my feelings ... ” (*Kids respond.*)

“When I feel angry ... ” (*Kids respond.*)

“When I have been treated unfairly ... ” (*Kids respond.*)

“When someone is mean to me ... ” (*Kids respond.*)

“Amen.”

WRAP UP

Bring together all the groups in your classroom so the Leader can conclude the session with a review. Be prepared to distribute this week’s GodTime and Fridge Door cards.

LEADER: “Our memory verse is Romans 14:19. Let’s say it together ... **“So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.” Romans 14:19 NLT** Practice saying this verse during the week and try to memorize it. Think about what it means to live in peace, and remember that it’s something God has told us to do. Sometimes to live in peace, we need to forgive others. Remember, God says **[Impress] it’s better to let go than to get even.”**

Distribute the GodTime cards.