

UNIT 33 | SESSION 3

JESUS CAN FORGIVE ANYONE

2 CORINTHIANS 5

KEY PASSAGE:

John 3:17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus can be forgiven of their sins and be right with God.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus can forgive anyone. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His family. He calls us to tell others about Him so they might believe in Jesus and be saved.



LEADER Bible Study

One theme Paul wrote about in the book of 2 Corinthians is the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ. He shared of his own need for reconciliation with God and how he—like us—had been tasked with taking part in the Lord’s ministry of reconciliation. Being a part of God’s family means bringing others into His kingdom, too.

How can anyone be forgiven of their sins? What does it look like to live as one forgiven by God?

Like Paul, we are all in need of the Lord’s forgiveness because we have all sinned against Him. Paul reminded the Corinthian church that forgiveness of sins has been made possible through Christ’s perfect sacrifice. It is faith in Jesus alone that reconciles us to God, and it is faith in Jesus by which our sins are not counted against us. Through Jesus’ willing sacrifice on our behalf, He was made sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. Thus, forgiveness is given to anyone who turns to Christ as Savior and Lord.

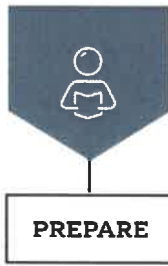
Paul continued to encourage the Corinthians to live as forgiven people who are compelled by the love of Christ to share the gospel with others. No longer should we live for ourselves, seeking after the ways of the world. Rather, we live as new creations,

set on making much of Jesus and declaring how only He can reconcile us to God. The hearts of forgiven people saved by grace have a deep desire for others to know the love of Jesus and be saved.

As you prepare for this session, consider the forgiveness you’ve received from God. How has repentance played a role in your life as a believer? What is your testimony of being brought from death to life, and how can you share it with the kids in your class? Ask God to make the reality of His power to save and forgive real in the hearts and minds of your class today.

DOCTRINE TO KNOW

Christ as Reconciliation: Through Christ’s death, God provides the means whereby the broken relationship between God and humanity is restored and renewed.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



Activity Page

- ☐ “What’s the Good News?” activity page



Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “Jesus Can Forgive Anyone” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ small wooden cross or picture of a cross (optional)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 33, Session 3” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ “Betsey Stockton Photo” printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ “Through Him (John 3:17)” song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ index cards



Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ hula hoops, 5 or 6
- ☐ music

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ dry erase board and marker

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| SAY “What are some animals in creation that change? How do they change?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What’s the Good News?” on the activity page.

| SAY “The Bible tells us good news; news that really is life-changing. Today, we will learn how anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven of sin and given new life.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: TRANSFORM PAPER

Provide each kid with a piece of paper. Challenge kids to transform their paper into an airplane. Allow kids a few minutes, offering assistance as needed. Then invite kids to test their paper planes by flying them across the room. Consider creating a contest to see whose plane can fly the farthest.

If time allows, challenge kids to see other ways they can transform their paper such as a star or an envelope.

| SAY “Through some simple folding, we were able to transform the paper into new creations. In our story today, we’ll learn that God does more than change the outside. He changes us from the inside out to make us new creations that live to glorify Him. Let’s learn how the apostle Paul helps us understand how we have new life in Jesus.”

☐ OPTION 2: EXCHANGE PLACES



Form kids into two even groups. Assign each kid from both groups a number, making sure both groups use the same numbers. If groups are uneven, choose one kid to have two numbers. Lead groups to line up on opposite sides of the room.

Tell kids that you will call out a number such as “two.” Explain that both kids assigned the number two will run to swap places. Tell kids that whoever is first to get to their spot earns a point. Continue playing, calling out different numbers each time. For even more of a challenge, call out multiple numbers each time. The kid with the most points wins.

| SAY “What an exciting game! Each time your number was called you had to exchange places. This reminds me of something we’ll learn in our Bible story today. Paul taught us that Jesus came to earth and took our place as He was punished for our sin. Because of what Jesus did, we can now have forgiveness of our sins.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story



1 TELL THE **BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER** (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Corinthians 5. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Can Forgive Anyone.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS CAN FORGIVE ANYONE

“In his second letter to the church at Corinth, Paul wrote to encourage the believers. Paul reminded them that because of Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His family forever. He loves us, and He calls all of us to tell people about Jesus so they might believe and become part of God’s family too.”

Paul wrote, “We know what it is like to fear God because we will have to answer for our sins.” **Paul used to be an enemy of God, but Jesus saved him! Apart from Jesus, all sinners are enemies of God. Paul wanted to share the good news that Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners.**

Paul wrote, “We are compelled to obey God and to share Christ because He loves us, and we love Him. **We know this truth: Jesus died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.**” Paul wanted others to hear the gospel so they might hear and believe in Jesus.

Jesus changes everything. To some people, Paul seemed like he was out of his mind. Why would anyone be content with a difficult life? But Paul believed any suffering was worth it if it brought glory to God. **Paul wrote, “Once we follow Jesus, we see the world differently. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!”**

Then Paul wrote, “Everything is from God, who has brought us to Himself through Christ.” Something amazing happened when Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. **Jesus gave up His life to rescue sinners, and God was pleased with Jesus’ sacrifice.**

Paul said that Christ has made us acceptable to God, and He gives us the mission of bringing others to Him through Christ. “So we are ambassadors for Christ. **God can use us to reach other people. We can tell others, ‘Be made right with God. He made Jesus—who never sinned—to be sin for us, so that in Jesus we might become the righteousness of God.’**”

Christ Connection: Jesus can forgive anyone. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His family. He calls us to tell others about Him so they might believe in Jesus and be saved. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Cheer: Lead kids to cheer every time the Bible story mentions Jesus’ love, forgiveness, or salvation.

Show a cross: Display a small wooden cross or pass around a picture of a cross as you tell the Bible story. Remind kids that Jesus died on the cross so we can be forgiven of our sins.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)



Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY 🗣️ Hello! It is so great to see you! My name is [your name]. I am so excited to share a story from God's Word with you from the book of 2 Corinthians. Did you bring your Bible with you? If so, please take it out. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

The book of 2 Corinthians was written by Paul. Last week, we learned that God called Paul to be a missionary. Corinth was one of the cities where Paul preached the gospel. Later, he wrote the church a letter to help them in their faith. Let's get ready to learn how Paul told them that Jesus can forgive anyone. 🗣️

worship

* House of The Lord

* offering

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

* Forgiveness



SAY 🗣️ Who can answer our big picture question: Who can be saved? [Allow responses.] Our answer is, Anyone who trusts in Jesus can be forgiven of their sins and be right with God.

Our story today helps us understand why trusting in Jesus is the only way to be forgiven and saved from our sins. We can't do good deeds or go to church enough to have our sins forgiven. Only faith in Jesus forgives us of our sins and makes us right with God. We are made right with God because our sins have been forgiven. As we'll learn, Jesus took our punishment on Himself when He died on the cross for our sins. Now, when we trust in Him, we can be forgiven. 🗣️

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY 🗣️ Over the ~~past~~ couple of weeks, we have learned how God changed Paul's life. He went from a persecutor of the church to one who was now starting churches in new cities throughout the world. Paul's life had changed so much that he was willing to risk losing his life so others could hear the ~~good~~ news. Today, we will learn how Paul wrote to the Corinthian church to remind them of Jesus' forgiveness and encourage them to make the gospel known to others. 🗣️



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “Paul sent a letter to remind the church in Corinth that through Jesus, God forgives sin and invites everyone to be a part of His family. Paul wrote, ‘We know what it is like to fear God because we will have to answer for our sins.’ What does that mean to fear God? **[Allow responses.]** Fearing God is not the same as fearing something like spiders. The fear of God is an attitude of respect. We recognize that God is holy and just. He knows and will judge every thought, word, and action. When we fear God, we understand that we are sinful and that our sin deserves to be punished. But there’s good news! God loves us and made a way for us to be forgiven. Through faith in Jesus, we receive forgiveness of our sins.”

Paul said that trusting in Jesus changes everything. How do we change when we trust in Jesus? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus died for our sins by taking our punishment on Himself. He makes us into new creations by giving us changed hearts. Now, we want to follow Jesus and live for Him.

Paul said that faith in Jesus makes us right with God. God also gives us a job to do. What job do we now have? **[Allow responses.]** Our job is to now tell others how they can be forgiven of their sins. We share the good news of the gospel so they can have new life and be made right with God.

Jesus died on the cross for our sin. He was sinless but took our punishment for sin. When we trust in Jesus, we are forgiven and God no longer counts our sin against us. Now, God looks at us and doesn’t see our sin, but Jesus’ righteousness.”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “Jesus can forgive anyone. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His family. He calls us to tell others about Him so they might believe in Jesus and be saved.”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 33, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How do we become new creations in Christ?
2. Why is Jesus worth giving our lives to?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Betsey Stockton Photo” as you tell the kids about the missionary.

SAY “When Betsey Stockton became a Christian she wanted to be a missionary in Africa. However, God ended up leading Betsey to serve as a missionary in Hawaii. While traveling to Hawaii, Betsey became friends with Charles Samuel Stewart and his wife, Harriet. Betsey taught at the school she helped start until Harriet became sick and needed to return home. Even though Betsey had to leave Hawaii, her work helped train other teachers and more than 8,000 Hawaiians were taught in the school by 1826.”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Tell kids that later Betsey became a teacher to preschoolers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Share that Betsey went on to teach in other schools, but she eventually moved back to Princeton. Explain that at Princeton, Betsey served as founder, director, and active teacher in schools for the African American community. Tell kids that she also helped start the first African American Presbyterian Church in Princeton, which is now known as the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church. Close in prayer, asking God to send more missionaries into the world who will teach others the good news of Jesus Christ.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

✱ Before the session, write each word of the key passage on individual index cards. Create two sets. Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 3:17 together.

SAY 🌿 Our Bible story today helps us know that Jesus forgives anyone that is willing to ask for forgiveness and put their trust in Jesus. 🌿

Form kids into two groups and give each group a set of index cards with the key passage. Challenge each group to put the cards in order of the key passage. If time allows, mix up the cards and remove one card from each team. Then, the first team that can put the verse in order and know what word is missing, wins round two. Continue to shuffle and remove a card as time allows.

✱ Lead kids to sing "Through Him (John 3:17)." You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

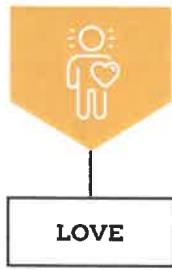
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY 🌿 God, thank You, that You forgive us of all our sin when we trust in Jesus. Help us live for You and tell others how they can be forgiven. Amen. 🌿

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5. Tell kids that Paul preached and lived in Corinth (D5) for a year and a half. Explain that during his time there, he worked as a tentmaker to earn money. Share that the church in Corinth was made of Jewish and Gentile believers.

Consider pointing out the location of Antioch of Syria (D5) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “Paul wants us to remember the love God has for us. God proved His love for us by sending Jesus to die for our sins. Jesus died not only to give us eternal life, but to also change us so we can live for Him now.”

When we live for Jesus, we help others see how they can have forgiveness and new life too. Living for Jesus can look like being honest, choosing to serve others, and speaking kind words. As we live for Jesus, we glorify God. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Who took your punishment for sin? Why?”

Remind kids that Jesus took our punishment for sin. Tell kids that Jesus did this because He loves us, and His death and resurrection is the only way we can have forgiveness. Explain that only Jesus’ death on the cross provided the perfect sacrifice our sin required.

SAY “Are some people too sinful to be forgiven? Why not?”

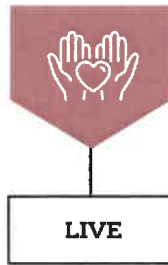
Discuss how no one is too sinful to be forgiven of their sins. Remind kids that the apostle Paul was a murderer before he became a Christian. Tell kids that God’s grace is greater than all of our sin. Explain that Jesus’ sacrifice covers all our sin for all time.

SAY “Who does God use to share the good news of Jesus with others?”

Encourage kids to remember that God uses Christians to share the gospel. Tell kids that Paul said we are God’s ambassadors and that we are meant to represent Jesus to the world and live to tell others about Him. Lead kids to think about people they know who may need to hear about Jesus. Invite kids to discuss how they would share the gospel with others.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ **OPTION 1: MUSICAL ISLANDS**



Remind kids that Betsey Stockton served as a missionary to an island of Hawaii called Maui. Place five or six hula hoops on the floor in a large circle. Explain that kids will play “Musical Islands.” Share that when the music starts, everyone must begin walking around the hula hoops. Tell kids that when the music stops, all kids must jump into an “island” hoop. Explain that if a kid doesn’t fit in a hoop, he is out. Play a few rounds and remove “islands” until kids who remain after each round are trying to squeeze into just one or two islands.

SAY “As the game progressed, some of you were left out of an island. It became harder and harder to fit everyone inside the hula hoops. Thankfully, God never leaves us out of the opportunity to find forgiveness through Jesus. Just as Betsey Stockton shared the gospel with the people of Hawaii, we have the opportunity to tell others how Jesus can forgive anyone of their sins.”

☐ **OPTION 2: BEFORE AND AFTER**



On a dry erase board, create two columns titled Before and After. Prompt kids to think about the apostle Paul. Challenge kids to describe what Paul was like before he became a Christian and write down their responses in the Before column. Responses may include Pharisee, followed the law, hated Christians, persecuted the church, etc. Then challenge kids to describe Paul after he became a Christian. Answers may include shared the gospel, became a missionary, boldness to share the good news, willing to die for the gospel, planted churches, etc.

SAY “Today, we learned that anyone can be forgiven of their sins when they trust in Jesus. The apostle Paul is an example of Jesus’ forgiveness. We also learned that when we trust in Jesus, He changes us. Like Paul changed, we can change to no longer live for ourselves but for Jesus. We can help others know how they can be forgiven too.”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.