

Be ye kind one
to another, . . .
forgiving one
another
(Ephesians
4:32).



I FORGIVE YOU

By Judy Edwards
Illustrated by Denise Kirby



Have you ever had a difficult time forgiving someone who has been unkind to you? If the person comes to you and says that he is sorry, it is always good to say, "I forgive you." But if he is unkind again, what should you do then?

From the New Testament, we learn that Peter asked Jesus a similar question. Peter wanted to know how often he should forgive someone who had wronged him. He asked if forgiving someone seven times was enough.

Jesus answered, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22).

Those of you who can multiply know that $70 \times 7 = 490$! What a large number! Did Jesus really mean that Peter should forgive a person 490 times? Would Peter need to carry a book or a tablet to keep track of each time he forgave until he had forgiven that many times? Elder James E. Talmage, an Apostle in our time, tells us that Jesus meant that Peter—and all of us—should be willing to *always* forgive. (See *Jesus the Christ*, page 393.)

Why is forgiving others so important? When Jesus told Peter to forgive seventy times seven, was He thinking only of the person being forgiven, or was He thinking of Peter too? Would forgiving others help Peter feel peace?

Yes! Jesus knew that Peter would be blessed with a feeling of peace each time he truly forgave someone. Forgiving brings peace to those who forgive as well as to those who are forgiven. Jesus taught that we should forgive and be kind to one another, and He set the example for us.

Instructions

Often it helps us to forgive another person if we try to "walk in his shoes" by imagining how that person feels, or why he might have done or said what he did. As you read the situations, find the shoes that fit each one, and draw a line from them to the situation they match. Then "walk in those shoes" and finish the sentence with possible reasons for that person's behavior.

SHARING TIME IDEAS

1. Write "I forgive you" on seven separate cards and hide them around the room. Have children find and count the cards. Ask the significance of seven cards. Share the story of Peter and Jesus (Matt. 18:21-22) and Jesus' directive that we forgive seventy times seven!
2. Bring several different pairs of shoes. Have each class use a pair of shoes to tell a story of forgiveness; or invite two children to role-play each story, trying on each other's shoes to understand the other person's point of view. During the discussion, show a pair of sandals and a picture of Jesus and explain that there are times when we should forgive even when we don't understand why the wrong was done or when the other person isn't sorry. At these times we must receive help from Heavenly Father to forgive others as Jesus would forgive.
3. Using a buzz session (see *Primary Sharing Time Resource Manual*, page 10), have children read, discuss, and report on situations in which forgiving is a challenge. Sing "Help Me, Dear Father," verse 1 (*Children's Songbook*, p. 99) and discuss our need for Heavenly Father's help in forgiving those who are unkind to us, especially at those times when we don't want to forgive.
4. Have each younger child draw a picture for her or his Book of Peace (See *Sharing Time Idea #3, Friend*, Jan. 1994, p. 44) that shows the child forgiving another person. Each older child could write about a personal experience of forgiving another person. (The page could be decorated by a border of "I forgive you!" messages.)
5. Organize an "I Forgive You!" panel. Some children could be panelists; the rest, members of the audience. Have each panel member portray a person who has gained peace by forgiving others. Examples: Joseph who was sold into Egypt (Gen. 45:4-8, 15; 50:15-21), the father of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), Nephi (1 Ne. 7), Pahoran (Alma 60-61; especially see Alma 61:9, 21).
6. Scramble the letters to each word in "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37), and have the children identify the message. Discuss the peace that comes from knowing that you have forgiven someone who offended you.

1 Debbie went into her bedroom and saw her two-year-old brother scribbling with crayons on the cover of her favorite book.

I think Debbie could understand and forgive her brother because

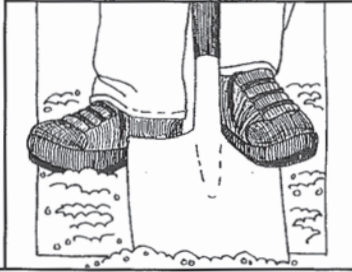
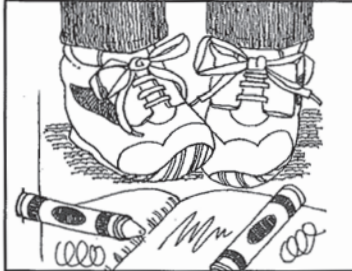
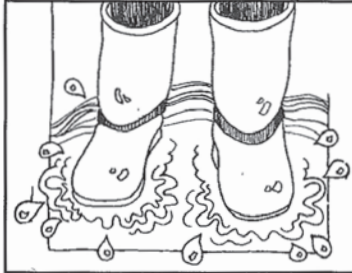
2 Logan had just thrown the soccer ball inbounds, when a member of the other team deliberately ran into him and knocked him down.

I think Logan could understand and forgive the other player because

3 Lisa's father said he had to break his promise and miss her school program that night because of work.

I think Lisa could understand and forgive her father because

4 Michelle jumped into a large puddle and splashed mud all over Kevin.



I think Kevin could understand and forgive Michelle because

5 Nate wanted a turn at riding the family horse, but his older sister wouldn't get off and let him have a ride.

I think Nate could understand and forgive his sister because

6 Robyn was upset because her older brother wouldn't let her go with him to work in the fields.

I think Robyn could understand and forgive her brother because

7 Heidi's little sister Maria wouldn't help catch the family dog, who squeezed through the back fence just as the family was leaving for Church.

I think Heidi could understand and forgive Maria because
