

## Forgiving Others

The purpose of Sunday School is to inspire class members to learn, teach, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ every day.

To forgive someone who has wronged us is a Christlike act. It shows our commitment to the Savior, who taught His disciples to love and forgive (see [Matthew 5:44](#); [D&C 64:9–10](#)). When we forgive others, we participate in the Atonement of Jesus Christ—a power that each of us needs to obtain forgiveness and become worthy to return to our Heavenly Father’s presence.

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### Prepare

As you study [Genesis 27](#), [33](#), [37](#), and [45](#), consider asking yourself:

- What experiences have taught me about forgiveness? Is there someone I need to forgive? How would living this principle help me teach about forgiveness in a more powerful way?
- How could the accounts in these chapters help class members deepen their understanding of the commandment to forgive?
- Who in the class might be able to bear an inspiring testimony about forgiving others?
- How will I encourage class members to learn, teach, and live the principle of forgiveness?

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### Encourage personal and family study

Each week you have the opportunity to encourage class members to have meaningful gospel study individually and with their families. For instance, you could do one of the following:

- Invite class members to explain how they find answers to questions that arise during their personal or family scripture study. As part of this discussion, you could spend a few minutes showing class members the online versions of [seminary](#) and [institute](#) student manuals on [LDS.org](#), which contain learning activities and scriptural commentary.
- Invite class members to share how they have acted on impressions they received during a previous class.
- Ask class members to share and explain verses in [Genesis 22–50](#) that they find particularly meaningful. You may invite several members to prepare to do this ahead of time. This activity could take the majority of the time in class.

### Teaching in the Savior’s Way

In every setting, the Savior was the example and mentor for His disciples. He taught them to pray by praying with them. He taught them to love and serve by loving and serving them. He taught them to forgive others by forgiving them. How can you be an example of the principles you are teaching?

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### Learn together and invite to act

Follow the guidance of the Spirit as you select one or more of these activities or create your own based on the scriptures in this outline and the needs of your class.

- **What are the blessings of choosing to forgive someone?**  
Class members could read or summarize the account in [Genesis 27:1–45](#). How did Esau’s reaction to this situation affect his family? Class members could then read about the reconciliation that happened between Jacob and Esau several years later (see [Genesis 33:1–11](#)). What had changed between the brothers? What else do we learn about forgiveness from these accounts? Consider encouraging class members to think of someone they need to forgive and to reach out to that person in reconciliation.
- **How can we develop a forgiving heart?**  
Before class begins, you could write on the board “Why do you think Joseph was able to forgive his brothers?” You could invite class members to ponder that question while they briefly review the account of Joseph’s experiences in Egypt (to do this, class members could read the headings for Genesis [chapters 37](#) and [39–45](#)). Consider inviting class members to share possible answers to the question on the board or anything else they learn from Joseph’s example, particularly as they read [Genesis 45:1–15](#) and [50:15–21](#). You may also want to discuss as a class some reasons it can be difficult to forgive and ways to overcome those difficulties. Reading or watching portions of President Dieter F. Uchtdorf’s talk “[The Merciful Obtain Mercy](#)” (see below) could add to this discussion.
- **How can we be reconciled with family members who have offended us?**  
To give a modern example of forgiveness, you could show the video “[Two Brothers Apart](#)” and invite class members to look for things they learn about reconciliation between family members and share what they find. As part of this

discussion, you could read together the example of Joseph in [Genesis 45:1–15](#); [50:15–21](#). What similarities are there between the video and the story of Joseph? You could also invite class members to share other scriptures they know of that teach about forgiveness. How do these scriptures apply to our own efforts to forgive others?

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### Learning and living the gospel every day

Encourage class members to think about what they learned and felt today. What do they feel impressed to do? For instance, they could:

- Share with their families something from today’s discussion.
- Continue studying this principle and act on what they learn.
- Reach out to someone who has offended them and extend forgiveness to that person.

During the coming week, you could send class members suggestions for home study in preparation for next week’s discussion. Encourage them to consider using one of the ideas listed under “Basic Scripture Study Strategies” or “Family Study Ideas” as they review these resources.

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### Additional learning resources

- [Matthew 5:44–47](#); [6:14–15](#); [18:21–35](#); [Luke 23:34](#); [1 Nephi 7:19–21](#); [D&C 64:8–11](#)
- President Thomas S. Monson, “[Hidden Wedges](#),” *Ensign*, May 2002, 18–21
- President Henry B. Eyring, “[Mountains to Climb](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 23–26
- President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “[The Merciful Obtain Mercy](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 70–77
- Elder David E. Sorenson made this observation about the account in Genesis 37–45:  
“Joseph’s brothers jealously hated him. They plotted to take his life and finally sold him as a slave. Joseph was carried into Egypt and struggled for years to rise from slavery. During these challenging times, Joseph might have condemned his brothers and sworn revenge. He might have soothed his pain by scheming to get even someday. But he did not.  
“In time, Joseph became ruler over all of Egypt, second in command only to Pharaoh. During a devastating famine, Joseph’s brothers traveled to Egypt for food. Not recognizing Joseph, they bowed down to him because of his high position. Surely at that moment Joseph had the power to exact revenge. He might have put his brethren in prison or sentenced them to death. Instead he confirmed his forgiveness. He said: ‘I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither. . . . And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity . . . and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.’  
“Joseph’s will to forgive changed bitterness to love” (“[Forgiveness Will Change Bitterness to Love](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 10–12).
- Videos: “[Two Brothers Apart](#)” (6:12), “[Forgiveness: My Burden Was Made Light](#)” (8:25)