

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Year A

Education Sunday

Theme: Jesus Teaches Us to Forgive

Gospel: Matthew 18:21–35

Main Message

God loves us and forgives us when we are sorry.

Because God is merciful to us, Jesus teaches us to forgive other people too.

Forgiving can sometimes be hard, but Jesus gives us grace to help us.

On Education Sunday we also thank God for our families, schools and teachers, who help us learn what is true and good and help us grow closer to Jesus.

1. Welcome and Gathering

(Gather the children calmly.)

Leader:

Good morning, everyone.

Today Peter asks Jesus a question.

He wants to know:

“How many times should I forgive somebody?”

Maybe Peter thinks seven times sounds like a lot!

But Jesus tells Peter that we must keep being ready to forgive.

Why?

Because God has forgiven us so much.

Today we are going to learn about God's mercy, saying sorry, forgiving others, and remembering that we belong to Jesus.

And because today is **Education Sunday**, we will also thank God for the people who help us learn: our parents, teachers and schools.

Let us begin with the Sign of the Cross.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus,
thank You for loving us.

Thank You for forgiving us
when we are sorry.

Help us to forgive other people.

Bless our families,
our schools and our teachers.

Help us to learn what is true,
to choose what is good,
and to grow closer to You.

Amen.

2. Opening Conversation

Ask:

- Have you ever had to say, “I’m sorry”?
- Is saying sorry always easy?
- Has somebody ever said sorry to you?
- What do we say when we forgive someone?

Allow simple answers.

Then say:

Sometimes we do something wrong.

Sometimes somebody else hurts us.

Jesus teaches us what to do.

We say sorry when we are wrong.

We forgive when somebody is truly sorry.

And we ask Jesus to help us when forgiving feels difficult.

3. Gospel — Simplified

Peter came to Jesus and asked:

“Lord, how many times should I forgive someone who does wrong to me?

Seven times?”

Jesus answered:

“Not just seven times, but again and again.”

Then Jesus told a story.

There was a servant who owed a king an enormous amount of money.

The servant could never pay it all back.

He begged the king:

“Please be patient with me.”

The king felt sorry for him.

And the king did something wonderful.

He forgave the whole debt.

The servant did not have to pay it back.

But then that servant met another man who owed him a much smaller amount.

Instead of showing mercy, he became angry.

He refused to forgive.

When the king heard what had happened, he said:

“I showed mercy to you. Should you not have shown mercy too?”

Jesus teaches us that because God has been so merciful to us, we should show mercy to one another.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children:

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Reflection

Peter's Big Question

Peter asks:

“How many times should I forgive?”

Peter is counting.

One time.

Two times.

Three times.

Maybe seven times.

Then perhaps Peter thinks:

“That is enough!”

But Jesus does not want us to keep a little book of all the times somebody has annoyed us.

Jesus wants our hearts to become merciful.

That means we should not keep thinking:

“I will never forgive you.”

Jesus wants to help us let go of hatred and anger.

5. Built-in Activity 1 — Count With Peter

Tell the children:

Peter thought seven times sounded like a lot.

Let us count together.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven!

Then say:

Does Jesus mean that after seven times we can stop forgiving?

Children:

No!

Jesus wants us to keep having a forgiving heart.

Say together:

Jesus, make my heart merciful.

6. The King Forgives a Huge Debt

In Jesus' story, the servant owes the king so much money that he could never pay it back.

Imagine filling this whole room with coins.

Then filling another room.

Then another.

The servant could never find enough.

But the king says:

“I forgive you.”

The servant receives a gift he could never earn.

Jesus is teaching us about God.

We have all done wrong things.

We all need God's mercy.

We cannot save ourselves.

But Jesus came to save us.

He died on the Cross for our sins.

He rose again.

And when we are sorry and turn back to Him, He is ready to forgive.

That is how good God is.

7. Built-in Activity 2 — The Heavy Bag

Pretend to hold a very heavy bag.

Say:

Imagine this bag is full of a huge debt.

It is so heavy I cannot carry it!

Pretend to struggle.

Then say:

The king says:

“You do not have to carry it any more. I forgive you.”

Put the imaginary bag down.

Ask:

How would you feel?

Allow answers.

Then explain:

God’s forgiveness is a wonderful gift.

He takes away our sins when we are truly sorry and receive His mercy.

8. Confession — Jesus Gives Us a Way Back

For Catholics, forgiveness is not only something we talk about.

Jesus has given His Church the **Sacrament of Confession**.

When we are old enough, we tell the priest the sins we have committed.

We say that we are sorry.

The priest gives us absolution.

And it is **Jesus who forgives us**.

That is a beautiful thing.

We never have to think:

“I have done something wrong, so Jesus does not want me any more.”

Jesus says:

Come back.

There is always a road home to God.

9. Built-in Activity 3 — Come Back to Jesus

Ask the children to take three small steps away.

Then say:

Sometimes sin means turning away from God.

Now I will say:

“Jesus calls us back.”

Children take three steps back.

Say together:

Jesus, I am sorry. Help me come back to You.

Repeat once.

10. Why Must We Forgive?

The servant in the Gospel receives enormous mercy from the king.

But then he refuses to show mercy to somebody else.

That is what is wrong.

He has forgotten what he received.

Jesus wants us to remember:

God forgives me, so I should learn to forgive others.

Suppose someone knocks over your tower of bricks.

You might be angry.

Perhaps they say:

“I am really sorry. I did not mean to.”

You could keep shouting.

Or you could say:

“I forgive you.”

That does not mean knocking down the tower was good.

It means we do not want anger to become bigger than love.

11. Built-in Activity 4 — Sorry and Forgive

Leader:

I am sorry.

Children:

I forgive you.

Leader:

Please forgive me.

Children:

I forgive you.

Leader:

Jesus forgives us.

Children:

Jesus helps us forgive.

Repeat slowly.

12. Forgiveness Does Not Mean Pretending

Sometimes children need to know something important.

Forgiving somebody does **not** mean pretending that something bad was good.

And if somebody hurts you, frightens you or does something serious, you should tell your parent, teacher or another trusted adult.

Jesus wants children to be safe.

We can forgive somebody and still ask an adult for help.

13. The First Reading — Do Not Hold On to Anger

In the First Reading we hear:

“Forgive your neighbour.”

God warns us about holding on to anger.

Imagine holding a heavy stone all day.

Your hand would become tired.

You would have to carry it everywhere.

Sometimes refusing to forgive can be like carrying a heavy stone in our heart.

Jesus wants to help us put it down.

He wants to give us peace.

Built-in Activity 5 — Put Down the Stone

Ask everyone to pretend to hold a heavy stone.

Say:

This stone is anger.

Hold it tightly!

Now Jesus says:

“Give it to Me.”

Everyone pretends to put it down.

Say:

Jesus, help me forgive.

14. Saint Paul — We Belong to Jesus

Saint Paul says something very beautiful today:

“Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”

That means:

We belong to Jesus.

Jesus made us.

Jesus loves us.

Jesus died and rose again for us.

Jesus wants us to live with Him for ever in Heaven.

That makes every person precious.

The child sitting beside you is precious to God.

Your family is precious to God.

You are precious to God.

And because people matter to Jesus, we should try to treat them with love and mercy.

15. Built-in Activity 6 — Who Do We Belong To?

Leader:

Who loves us?

Children:

Jesus!

Leader:

Who forgives us?

Children:

Jesus!

Leader:

Who do we belong to?

Children:

Jesus!

Leader:

Where does Jesus want to lead us?

Children:

Heaven!

16. Education Sunday

Today is also **Education Sunday**.

Education means helping us learn and grow.

We learn numbers.

We learn words.

We learn about the world God has made.

But Catholic education wants to help us learn something even greater.

To know what is true.

To choose what is good.

To know Jesus.

To love Him.

And to become the people God created us to be.

Your parents were your first teachers.

Before you ever went to school, they began teaching you.

Perhaps they taught you to say:

“Please.”

“Thank you.”

“Sorry.”

They may have taught you the Sign of the Cross.

They brought you to church.

They began showing you how to live.

Our teachers help us too.

Learning is a gift because God has given us minds which can discover the truth.

17. Built-in Activity 7 — Things We Learn

Ask:

Who teaches you at home?

Allow answers.

Who teaches you at school?

Allow answers.

Who teaches us how to follow Jesus?

Possible answers:

Parents.

Priests.

Teachers.

The Church.

The Bible.

Then say:

And Jesus is our greatest teacher.

He teaches us the way to Heaven.

18. What Does Jesus Want Us to Become?

School is not only about knowing more things.

Knowing things is good.

But Jesus also wants us to become good.

We can know every answer in a book and still need to learn patience.

We can be very clever and still need to learn kindness.

We can learn to read big words and still need to learn how to say:

“I was wrong. I am sorry.”

God wants our minds to grow.

And He wants our hearts to grow too.

That is part of becoming holy.

19. Jesus Is Our Teacher

Think about Jesus with His disciples.

They called Him **Teacher**.

Jesus teaches us things nobody else could teach us fully.

Who God is.

Why we were made.

How to love.

How to forgive.

How to pray.

How to reach Heaven.

That is why learning the Catholic faith is so important.

We are learning the truth which leads us to God.

20. Built-in Activity 8 — Jesus Teaches Me

Say each line and ask the children to repeat:

Jesus teaches me to love.

Jesus teaches me to forgive.

Jesus teaches me to pray.

Jesus teaches me what is true.

Jesus teaches me the way to Heaven.

21. A Simple Story

Imagine two children.

Ben builds a lovely tower.

Anna runs past and accidentally knocks it over.

Ben is furious.

Anna says:

“I am sorry. I did not mean to knock it down.”

Ben could stay angry all day.

Or he could remember Jesus.

He might still feel upset.

But he can say:

“I forgive you. Let us build it again.”

Forgiveness does something beautiful.

Instead of ending with two angry children and one broken tower, they begin again together.

That is what mercy does.

It helps us begin again.

And God is very good at new beginnings.

22. What If Forgiving Is Hard?

Sometimes saying “I forgive you” is easy.

Sometimes it is not.

Sometimes we are still hurt.

We can tell Jesus the truth.

We can say:

“Jesus, I want to forgive, but I need Your help.”

Jesus understands.

Forgiveness can begin with asking Him for grace.

We do not have to make ourselves feel something immediately.

We can ask Jesus to change our heart little by little.

23. Living the Gospel This Week

This week try to remember:

If you do something wrong, **say sorry**.

If somebody says sorry, **try to forgive**.

If you feel very angry, **ask Jesus to help you**.

Thank God for your parents and teachers.

Try to learn something new about your Catholic faith.

And every day remember:

I belong to Jesus.

24. Quiet Prayer

Ask the children to become still.

Leader:

Close your eyes.

Think of Jesus looking at you with love.

He knows everything about you.

He knows when you have been good.

He knows when you have done something wrong.

And He still wants you to come close to Him.

Say quietly:

Jesus, thank You for loving me.

Pause.

Jesus, forgive me when I do wrong.

Pause.

Jesus, help me forgive other people.

Pause.

Jesus, thank You for my family and teachers.

Pause.

Jesus, I belong to You.

Amen.

25. Children's Intercessions

Leader:

God our Father loves us and always hears our prayers. Let us pray together.

For the Church throughout the world, that she may teach everyone about the mercy and love of Jesus.
Lord, hear us.

For Pope Leo, Bishop Patrick, our priests and deacons, that God may help them teach His people faithfully.
Lord, hear us.

On Education Sunday, for our schools, teachers and everyone who helps children learn, that God may give them wisdom, patience and joy.
Lord, hear us.

For our parents and families, that our homes may be places where we learn to pray, forgive and love Jesus.
Lord, hear us.

For children who find school difficult, or who feel lonely or worried, that Jesus may send kind people to help them.
Lord, hear us.

For people who have argued or fallen out, that Jesus may help them forgive one another and make peace.
Lord, hear us.

For people who have stopped praying or coming to Mass, that they may remember how much Jesus loves them and come back to Him.
Lord, hear us.

For people who are sick or sad, that Jesus may comfort them.
Lord, hear us.

For those who have died, that God may forgive their sins and bring them into the happiness of Heaven.
Lord, hear us.

Let us ask Our Lady, **Seat of Wisdom and Mother of Mercy**, to pray with us.

Hail Mary...

26. Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
 thank You for Your mercy.

When we do wrong,
 help us to say sorry.

When someone hurts us,
 help us to forgive.

Bless our parents,
 our teachers
 and everyone who helps us learn.

Help our minds to know the truth
 and our hearts to love what is good.

Keep us close to You
 all our lives,

until one day
we are with You in Heaven.

Amen.

27. Sending Back

Today Peter asked Jesus:

“How many times should I forgive?”

Jesus taught him:

Keep forgiving.

Why?

Because God is merciful to us.

As we return to Mass, remember Saint Paul’s beautiful words:

“We are the Lord’s.”

You belong to Jesus.

At Mass, Jesus teaches us through His Word.

And in the Holy Eucharist, Jesus is truly present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Let us go back quietly.

Let us listen.

Let us pray.

And let us thank Jesus for teaching us how to love.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Additional Optional Activities

1. Seventy-Seven Times

Count slowly to seven together.

Then explain:

Jesus does not mean we stop at seven.

He means:

Keep forgiving.

Repeat:

God forgives me. I will learn to forgive.

2. Heavy Stone

Let the children pretend to hold a heavy stone.

Say:

This is anger I refuse to put down.

Then:

Jesus says:

“Give it to Me.”

Children put it down.

Finish:

Jesus gives us peace.

3. The Big Debt

Draw one enormous bag of coins and one tiny bag.

Explain:

The king forgave the enormous debt.

The servant then refused to forgive a much smaller debt.

Ask:

What should he have remembered?

The king had shown him mercy.

4. Sorry Practice

Teach:

I am sorry.

What I did was wrong.

Please forgive me.

Then:

I forgive you.

5. True or False?

Jesus wants us never to forgive.

False.

God is merciful.

True.

We should say sorry when we do wrong.

True.

Forgiving means saying that bad things are good.

False.

We belong to Jesus.

True.

Jesus wants us to reach Heaven.

True.

6. Who Teaches Me?

Name someone who helps you learn.

Mum.

Dad.

Grandparents.

Teacher.

Priest.

Then finish:

Jesus is our greatest Teacher.

7. School Thank-You Prayer

Leader:

Thank You, God, for our teachers.

Children:

Thank You, God.

For our schools.

Thank You, God.

For our families.

Thank You, God.

For everything good we learn.

Thank You, God.

For Jesus, our Teacher.

Thank You, God.

Amen.

8. Draw Forgiveness

Ask children to draw two people making friends again.

Write underneath:

Jesus helps us forgive.

9. Draw Education Sunday

Draw:

A school.

A family.

A church.

Jesus above or at the centre.

Write:

Jesus helps me grow in wisdom and faith.

10. We Belong to the Lord

Leader:

When I am happy—

Children:

I belong to Jesus!

When I am sad—

I belong to Jesus!

At home—

I belong to Jesus!

At school—

I belong to Jesus!

Every day—

I belong to Jesus!

11. Mercy Heart

Draw a large heart.

Inside write:

SORRY

FORGIVE

MERCY

JESUS

Explain:

Jesus gives us merciful hearts.

12. Start Again

Build a small tower.

Knock it down.

Then rebuild it together.

Say:

Sometimes things go wrong.

Mercy helps us begin again.

God gives us new beginnings.

13. Memory Verse

For younger children:

“We are the Lord’s.”

Repeat three times.

For older children:

“Forgive your neighbour’s injustice.”

And:

“Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”

14. This Week’s Challenge

Try to:

- Say a prayer every day.
 - Say sorry when you are wrong.
 - Forgive someone.
 - Thank your teacher.
 - Thank your parents.
 - Listen carefully at Mass.
 - Learn one new thing about Jesus.
 - Remember: **I belong to the Lord.**
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15. Final Memory Line

Repeat slowly three times:

God forgives me.

Jesus helps me forgive.

I belong to Jesus.