



Deuteronomy 6:7 is a call for parents/grandparents/adults to talk about faith issues throughout the day. We have a chance to be facilitators of intentional connect conversations with our children. Here is what the verse says about faith matters...

"Impress them upon your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." -Deut 6:7

Mealttime

...when you sit at home...

A little thought/talk time for mealttime when you are sitting together.

Verse:

Blessed are your eyes because you see.
- Matthew 13:16

Finish the phrase:

Share what Jesus is doing in your life and in the places you live, work and play.

Complete the sentence:

This week I saw Jesus _____.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for giving me eyes to see your love in my life and in one another. Help me to believe with all my heart that if I look for you you will show yourself to me. Amen!



Drivetime ...along the road...

Key Verse:

Peter came to Jesus. He asked, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but 70 times 7.)"
- Matthew 18:21-22

Questions:

What do you think Jesus is saying in these verses? Since God forgives us an infinite or unlimited number of times, do you think Jesus is saying that after 77 or 70x7 times we no longer need to forgive one another? Why do you think it's so important that we forgive our (brothers/sisters, parents/children, friends, neighbors)?

If it's age appropriate, count by sevens, seventy times (490)!

ConnectTip:

This tool is for the sake of faith conversations. Feel free to get off track if it feels right.

Nighttime

...when you lie down...

An evening devo time.

A grudge is a feeling we hold against someone who's hurt us.

Question:

Are you holding on to any grudges this night? Why do you think it's important to let go of the grudges we're holding against one another before the end of each day?

Put a bedtime snack in a small mouth jar, with an opening large enough for a child to fit their hand inside, but small enough to trap the child's hand if they hold on to the snack.

Say:

Pretend the snack inside the jar is a grudge you're holding against someone. Put your hand inside the jar and try to remove your hand from the jar without letting go of the "grudge." *Once the child realizes he or she must let go of the "grudge" to be free of the burden of the jar,*
Read Ephesians 4:26-27, 32 and Colossians 3:13 together.

Night Time Prayer:

Dear God, please help us forgive the things we're holding against one another. Help us to let go of those grudges, so we can be free of the burden of unforgiven sin. Amen!

Parents are the #1 influence in the lives of their children.

6:7 is a tool to help families engage in those meaningful conversations.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Kodiak, Alaska

Morningtime

...when you get up...

Write Matthew 13:16 on a note card or sticky note and post it on your bathroom mirror, where you'll see and say it each morning.

While you're washing up, brushing your teeth or combing your hair try to count 2-3 ways you've been blessed this past week. Ask God to help you see and be his love during the day ahead.

Blessed are your eyes because you see. - Mt. 13:16

Daily Walk on the Rock

Date: October 1, 2023

Text: Genesis 50:15-21, Matthew 18:21-35

**Theme: Believing Is Seeing!
Mirror of Forgiveness**

Day 1: Monday—God's Heart of Forgiveness and God's Command to Forgive

Read and meditate on Psalm 103:10-12; Romans 5:8; and Colossians 2:13-14. What price did God pay that our sin/your sin might be forgiven? Now consider God's command that we forgive others as you read Matthew 6:9-15; 18:21-35; Ephesians 4:32; and Colossians 3:12-14. Consider that God commands us to forgive because God loves us and knows what will enable us to live the fullest, most joyful lives. Reflect on what forgiveness is and is not. It is not winking at sin, enduring abuse, denying the consequences of sin, or forgetting. Instead it is letting go of the desire for revenge, of bitterness, and of anger which rob us of peace; it is reflecting God's heart to others. Pray.

Day 2: Tuesday—Joseph, Jesus, Stephen, and Us: Forgiveness Is Possible!

Forgiveness is not easy, but it is possible. Joseph suffered much at the hands of his brothers and then as a slave in Egypt, yet he forgave. Read Genesis 37:12-28; 45:1-11; 50:15-21. Such forgiveness could only happen as Joseph fixed his eyes on God and not on the evil that was perpetuated against him. Ponder this as you read about Jesus and Stephen in Luke 23:34 and Acts 7:59-60. Now consider the fruit of forgiveness. Who is blessed when forgiveness is offered; is it only the forgiven who are blessed, or is the forgiver blessed too? Pray for a heart open to God's truth.

Day 3: Wednesday—Bitterness Hurts the One Who Is Bitter

Ponder the story of Joseph again (*texts in Day 2*). Now read Colossians 3:13-14. Do we forgive for God's sake? Actually, it's God's great love that motivates the command to forgive, for God knows that forgiveness sets us free, whereas bitterness destroys like a deadly cancer. Rubin Carter, unjustly imprisoned for 19 years, said, "I've learned that bitterness only consumes the vessel that contains it...for me to permit bitterness to...infect my life... would be to allow those who imprisoned me to take even more than...they've already taken" (*quoted in Our Daily Bread; RBC Ministries Vol.53, #4*). Have you allowed bitterness to reign in your life? Pray for the grace to forgive.

Day 4: Thursday—God Can Re-deem All Things

Read Genesis 45:4-8; 50:19-21; Acts 7:59-8:4; and 2 Corinthians 5:21. Joseph, Jesus, and Stephen suffered greatly, yet God redeemed their suffering and used it for

good. Does that mean their suffering was just or good? Of course not! But God can use even human evil for divine, eternal purposes. Joseph lived to see the children of Jacob (Israel) spared because of his suffering; Jesus, of course, offered himself up as a sacrifice, knowing it was the price of redemption; Stephen never lived to see the spread of the Gospel precipitated by his martyrdom. Read Romans 8:28; pray for understanding about how God can use forgiveness as part of his plan to redeem even the greatest heartaches.

Day 5: Friday—Immeasurable Grace!

Sin, any sin, is an offense to God, who is holy. And we all have sinned (*Romans 3:23*). But God's love is so great that God paid the price of our redemption (*Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9-11*). There is no way we can repay God; the cost of our redemption is beyond measure. But we, who have received God's grace for today and for-ever, can forgive others, and in doing so, reflect God's love, witness with our lives, and bring God glory. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Did you notice the huge disparity between the debt owed to the king and the debt owed to the servant? Are you willing to see offenses against you through the lens of God's total forgiveness of your sin debt? Pray about this.

Day 6: Saturday—First Steps

It's easy to speak of forgiveness, but it's not always easy to forgive. Often we don't even know how to begin. Begin with honest prayer. Ask the Lord to give you an open heart that is willing to forgive. Now read Matthew 5:43-46 and Romans 12:20-21. Are you willing to pray for or bless someone who has hurt you or hurt others? Are you willing to pray he/she will meet Jesus and experience grace? It is a beginning. Consider Saul, the persecutor of Christians, who became Paul, the great apostle. We aren't told, but consider that someone might have been praying for him, in spite of how he destroyed the lives of many. Read Acts 22:2-5; 26:9-18. For whom will you pray?

Day 7: Sunday—His Forgiveness Can Become Ours

Corrie ten Boom suffered much at the hands of the Nazis, yet she traveled the world speaking of and demonstrating forgiveness. Ponder her words, "Why should we hold on to the sins of others while our own sins have been cast into the depths of the sea?" (*Micah 7:19*) When asked how forgiveness is possible, she said, "The love which God has for you in Christ Jesus is the same love that He will pour out into your heart through His Spirit. If you open your heart to receive it, then His love will become your love, and His forgiveness your forgiveness" (*Amazing Love, Christian Lit. Crusade, pp.10,12*). Reflecting again on our forgiveness texts, talk to Jesus about all that's on your heart.



St. Paul Lutheran Church

"Your Refuge from the Storm"

LifeGroup Study

Date: October 1, 2023
Text: Genesis 50:15-21, Matthew 18:21-35
Theme: Believing Is Seeing!
Mirror of Forgiveness

Belong

Forgiveness. Have you ever taken time to really think about what it means? Whether it's a concept or a feeling or even an obligation? Jesus, knowing how important forgiveness is, included it in the prayer he taught us by teaching us to ask God to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Webster's dictionary defines forgiveness as an action, as in the act of forgiving and the word forgive as "to cease to feel resentment against an offender" which makes forgiveness the act of ceasing to feel resentment toward another person. That can be difficult at times.

Each of us has felt resentment or anger toward another person when we've felt we've been wronged. When the wrong is something that is not too serious, we can quickly let go of those negative feelings and restore the relationship. There are also times when the wrong is something so unfathomable that the anger and resentment is so deep within us that we can't move beyond it. The feelings start to eat away at us and become so strong that they start to motivate our behavior even sometimes to the point where they become all consuming, limiting our ability to live life.

Jesus is well aware of the trespasses we inflict on each other and encourages us to do the very thing that can be extremely difficult—to forgive. The texts from Genesis and Matthew help us understand forgiveness not as an obligation or duty but as life-giving.

Prayer... Heavenly Father, you have taught us to forgive one another, yet we still hold on to the resentment, anger, and hurt when we've been wronged. We ask for your help and guidance to realize and understand how forgiveness frees us and is life-giving. Amen.

Believe

Read Genesis 50:15-21. This passage finds Joseph facing his brothers shortly after the death of their father, Jacob. You have to wonder what was going through Joseph's mind as he recalled how close he was to his father when he lived in the land of Canaan and how happy they were. He must have started to think how all that was taken away from him when his brothers, through their own jealousy, sold him into slavery which ultimately sent him to be imprisoned in Egypt.

•*How do you think you would have reacted if you were Joseph?*

You would think resentment and anger would have started to bubble up within Joseph. And yet, when Joseph heard his father's words encouraging him to forgive his brothers, he began to weep at the possibility of reconciliation with his family. When they came

together Joseph welcomed them all with open arms.

- Why did Joseph forgive his brothers?*
- How was God active in Joseph's forgiveness?*

Read Matthew 18:21-35. The text opens with a simple question from Peter about how many times he should forgive someone. Have you ever wondered that? As a Jew, Peter would have been taught that three times was enough. Jesus' answer would most likely have surprised and confused Peter when he said that Peter should forgive someone seventy-seven times.

•*Do you think Jesus meant for us to keep track of how many times we forgive someone or is there something deeper going on?*

Jesus uses Peter's question about forgiveness as an opportunity to go beyond simply answering the question to teach about the kingdom of heaven through a parable.

- How will God treat us if we don't forgive?*
- Do you think God's forgiveness is conditional?*
- How do you think this relates to the kingdom of heaven?*

We lose our ability to love when we allow resentment and anger to fester inside of us, which isolates us and moves us away from our connection with God. Forgiveness allows us to let go of the resentment that traps us and allows us to open ourselves up to loving others.

- How does holding on to resentment impact our lives?*
- How have you felt when you were able to forgive someone?*
- How did you feel when you have been forgiven for something?*
- How does God forgiving us allow us to forgive others?*

Become

God knows us so completely that God is aware of how we can allow resentment and anger to motivate our actions toward retribution and revenge when we've been wronged. God also knows how destructive that can be for us as we become consumed with a desire to get even, not allowing much room for anything else in our lives. God's desire for us to forgive each other isn't out of obligation or duty but to restore ourselves by letting go of the resentment and anger that prevents us from realizing life. God helps us by showing us forgiveness and encouraging us to mirror God's forgiveness of us with each other. God does this so that we may once again realize God's love for us and the life-giving love God has placed within us.

Prayer... Lord God, we realize that when we allow resentment, anger, and hurt to motivate us we move away from you and away from the life you desire for us. We are grateful for your patience and the forgiveness you show us because it allows us to build forgiving hearts so that we are better able to experience the life you intended and be active parts of your unfolding kingdom. Amen.



St. Paul Lutheran Church

"Your Refuge from the Storm"