Preschool–Grade 6

The Unforgiving Servant

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: God forgives me, so I forgive others.
Bible passage: Matthew 18:21–35. Read it yourself before class.
Memory verse: "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." *Matthew 18:22 (KJV).* The old words mean: **saith** means said, **thee** means you, and **seventy times seven** means keep on forgiving.
You need: a Bible, a big paper heart and a small paper heart, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Matthew 18. Cut out a big paper heart and a small one.

1. Opening game: Big and Little (5 minutes)

Call out things to show with your body: "Make yourself big like a tree! Make yourself little like a mouse! Big like an elephant! Little like an ant!" Then hold up the big heart and the little heart. Ask: *Which one is big? Which one is little?* Say: "Today Jesus tells a story about a big debt and a little debt. A debt is money someone owes."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Matthew 18. Say: "Jesus told this story. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

Peter asked, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Matthew 18:21) *(Hold up seven fingers.)*
Jesus said, "Seventy times seven!" (18:22) *(Open and close your hands again and again.)*
A servant owed the king a BIG debt (18:24). *(Stretch your arms wide.)*
He could not pay (18:25). *(Shake your head.)*
He fell down and asked the king to please wait (18:26). *(Kneel down.)*
The king was kind. He forgave the whole debt (18:27)! *(Make a heart with your hands.)*
Then a friend owed that servant a little debt (18:28). *(Hold your fingers close together.)*
The friend asked him to please wait (18:29). *(Kneel down.)*
But the servant would not forgive. He put his friend in prison (18:30). *(Sad face.)*
The king said, "I forgave thee all that debt." He should have been kind too! (18:32–33) *(Shake your finger gently.)*
Say it with me: "God forgives me. I will forgive!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. Was the servant's debt to the king big or little? *(Big, Matthew 18:24)*
2. What did the king do? *(He forgave him, 18:27)*
3. Did the servant forgive his friend? *(No, 18:30)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Peter asked if he should forgive seven times. Jesus said, 'Until seventy times seven.' That means keep on forgiving!" Teach the motion: hold up seven fingers on "seven times," then open and close your hands again and again on "seventy times seven." Say the verse with the motions three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Matthew 18:22" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: The King's Kind Heart (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw a big red heart for the king's kindness, and themselves next to it. While they color, ask: "Who forgave the big debt? Who can you forgive?" Kids who finish early can take turns finding the big heart and the little heart when you hide them in the room.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for loving me.
Help me say 'I'm sorry,' and help me forgive. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep the story moving and simple. Say the prison part quickly and softly. Practice saying "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" with a friend. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

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