



A 4-WEEK STUDY
FROM THE OLD & NEW
TESTAMENTS ON

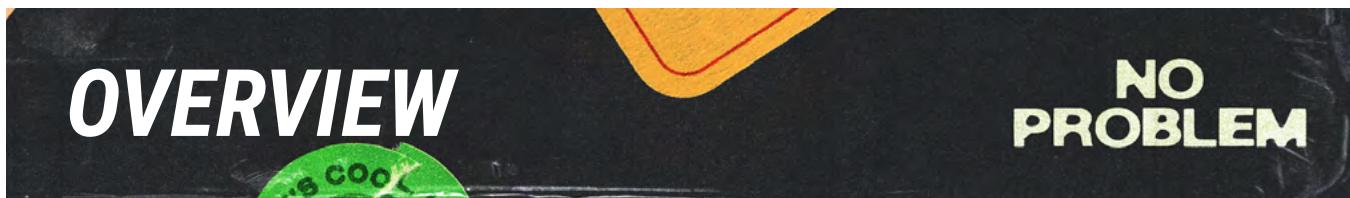
LOVING OTHERS

FROM OUR ANNUAL **TEACHING STRATEGY**

THIS SERIES ALIGNS WITH OUR SERIES FOR GROUPS CALLED...

WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED WITH...
ELLE CAMPBELL & ALEXANDER JAMES

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- ▶ [Stuff to Print](#)

WEEK 3

- ▶ [Game](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Guide](#)
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WEEK 4

- ▶ [Game](#)
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SERIES OVERVIEW

Apologies — they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Old and New Testament, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, **it's not enough to just apologize.** And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of **shifting your perspective**, remembering **God forgave first**, and remembering **Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.**

WEEK 1

This week, we'll examine a psalm of confession, followed by the story of Zacchaeus' repentance.

BIG IDEA: When you need forgiveness, don't just apologize.

BIBLE: Psalm 32:5; Luke 19:1-10; Proverbs 28:13

WEEK 3

This week, we'll explore God's mercy through the eyes of Isaiah and Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant.

BIG IDEA: When forgiveness is needed, remember God forgave first.

BIBLE: Isaiah 12:1-3; Matthew 18:21-33; Romans 7:18-19

WEEK 2

This week, we'll see what a psalm of David, Job's declaration of faith, and Jesus' invitation to pray for our enemies all have in common.

BIG IDEA: When it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective.

BIBLE: Psalm 17:6-7; Job 19:23-25; Matthew 5:43-44; Colossians 3:1-2

WEEK 4

This week, we'll examine an imprecatory psalm and the story of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion.

BIG IDEA: When you've been hurt, know Jesus has too.

BIBLE: Psalm 109:6-15, 147:3; Luke 22:39-23:46

MEMORY VERSE: "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth." – Job 19:25 (NIV)

HOW TO DISCIPLE DURING THIS SERIES

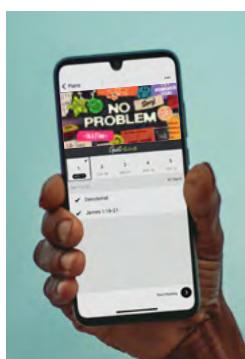
We all know teenagers don't get discipled just by sitting through a message every week. So here's what else we've provided to **help your students develop more consistent spiritual habits.**

THE 4 SPIRITUAL HABITS

We feature one of Grow's 4 Spiritual Habits every month with a unique activity or experience. But the 4 Spiritual Habits show up year-round! **Here are a few of the places you can spot them in this series:**

- **SPEND TIME WITH GOD:** In Weeks 2 and 4, the application encourages students to make prayer and Scripture part of their daily rhythm make prayer and Scripture part of their daily.
- **SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS:** The discussions every week are designed to help students grow in relationships through strategic conversation make prayer and Scripture part of their daily.
- **USE YOUR GIFTS:** In Week 3, the application helps students think about how God has gifted them and how they can use that to serve make prayer and Scripture part of their daily rhythm.
- **SHARE YOUR STORY:** In Week 1, students will be encouraged to identify someone they want to share the hope of Jesus with make prayer and Scripture part of their daily rhythm.

DEVOTIONALS



To help students regularly **spend time with God**, every series comes with daily readings and devotionals through The Bible App. You can access them on your browser or app [right here](#). And don't forget about your [Volunteer Devotional!](#)

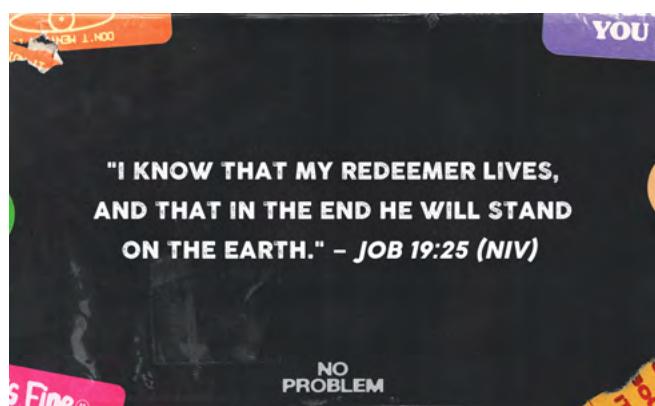
DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITY

If you're following along with our scope and sequence, our discipleship activity this quarter is Community Art Crawl, an activity to help students **use their gifts**. We also made you some [posters and graphics](#) for this quarter's habit you can print, display, or share online.



MEMORY VERSE

Try challenging students to memorize a verse that corresponds with the Big Ideas or themes of this series. Here's the verse we chose – and [we made graphics](#) you can post, print, or show on screen too!



HOW TO PROGRAM FOR THIS SERIES

Outside of your teaching time, we have a few programming ideas to help this series really come to life — everything from how to **design your room**, to which **games to play**, to what **music to play and sing**.



ROOM DESIGN

For this room design, you'll be replicating the series graphic on a large scale, either by printing the image or creating a DIY version of it.

First, you'll need a backdrop. There are tons of ways to create a backdrop that you can re-use multiple times each year. Check out [this post](#) for a list of ideas. While any backdrop will do, for this series, we suggest using a backdrop that is made of a chain-link fence.

If you'd like to create an exact replica of the series graphic, we suggest printing it on wide format paper at your local printshop. When it's printed, cut it out and attach it to the chain link fence by sandwiching the chain link fence between the paper and plenty of packaging tape! If you

decide to go extra big with your backdrop, you may need to mount the paper on cardboard and attach the cardboard with zip ties to keep the paper from falling, tearing, or badly wrinkling.

If you'd like to create a more DIY version of the series graphic, collect [paper of all different colors](#) and use paint, markers, or any medium you'd like to create speech bubbles like the ones in the series graphic. If you take this approach, we suggest letting your students get involved by creating their own speech bubbles and hanging them on the fence.





GAMES

If you have a designated time for games before your worship and teaching time, we have a few suggestions for games you can play! Since this series is all about the problems we create when we hurt each other, the games for this series are all about solving problems. To get the instructions and graphics for each game, click

the images to the right or visit the Games section of your Grow Students dashboard.

- [The Sticky Lunch Problem](#)
- [Musical Word Problems](#)
- [The Balloon Problem](#)
- [These Pose No Problem](#)



MUSIC

Here are a few on-theme worship songs you may want to feature throughout this series . . .

- **"House Of The Lord"** (Phil Wickham)
- **"Finished Work of Christ"** (Life.Church Worship)
- **"Forgiven"** (David Crowder)
- **"Breakthrough"** (Red Rocks Worship)
- **"O God Forgive Us"** (for KING & COUNTRY)
- **"Nothing Else"** (Captial City Music)
- **"God Would You Forgive Us"** (Here Be Lions)
- **"Son of Suffering"** (Maverick City Music)
- **"Love Will Always Win"** (Travis Greene)
- **"How Great a King"** (Bethel Music)

And if you want to sing or sample a non-worship song or

two (maybe as an opener, a closer, a bonus song during your program), try some of these . . .

- **"Praying"** (Kesha)
- **"Sorry Seems to Be the Hardest Word"** (Elton John)
- **"Afterglow"** (Taylor Swift)
- **"Hello"** (Adele)
- **"Last Time I Say Sorry"** (John Legend and Kane Brown)

We've added these songs to our [Grow Students \(Volume 6\) Spotify playlist](#) for your personal use only, according to Spotify's [terms and conditions](#). For more information on how to use copyrighted music in your services legally, [read this!](#)



GRAPHIC DESIGN

We give you editable graphics so you can make everything your own! If you're going to [edit our graphics](#) or [create something brand new . . .](#)

Use this font! Download it [here](#).

**COOCOGOOSE
LETTERPRESS**

And use these colors!

	HEX: #E3E6CC CMYK: 11-5-21-00		HEX: #E5CCAC CMYK: 10-17-32-00
	HEX: #FFA52A CMYK: 2-37-99-00		HEX: #D8CCC7 CMYK: 14-16-17-00
	HEX: #846DB1 CMYK: 56-73-5-00		HEX: #FF7C3B CMYK: 1-61-92-00
	HEX: #4CC344 CMYK: 69-00-100-00		

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS SERIES

SHOPPING LIST

If you want to try all of our suggestions for this series, here's what you'll need to buy, borrow, Google, or dig for in your storage closet . . .

WEEK 1:

- Index cards or poster board
- Permanent markers
- Four chairs
- Classroom-themed props like a chalkboard, desks, and costumes
- The Mad Lib Theater script and instructions in your Week 1 folder
- A short clip (0:47-1:18) of [Gilly](#) from *Saturday Night Live*
- More props and costumes for the Zacchaeus story
- The handouts provided in your Week 1 folder
- The song "Make It Right" by Maverick City Music

WEEK 2:

- Notecards
- Bowl
- A picture of a famous villain
- The handouts provided in your Week 2 folder
- The song "Better" by Tribl

WEEK 3:

- Index cards or poster board
- Permanent markers
- Five chairs
- Props like [microphones](#), cameras, lights, a hair and makeup team, and costumes

- The Mad Lib Theater script and instructions in your Week 3 folder
- [Feelings wheels](#)
- Label paper
- 5-10 small and sturdy cardboard boxes
- Canned goods
- Permanent markers
- The handouts provided in your Week 3 folder
- The song "Mercy" by Elevation Worship & Maverick City

WEEK 4:

- Index cards
- Permanent markers
- [Large pads of paper or canvas](#)
- [Easels](#)
- Markers, paint, or crayons
- Rectangular table
- Black table cloth
- Construction paper in ten colors
- White foam board
- [Table card holder](#)
- Permanent marker
- The handouts provided in your Week 4 folder
- The song "Son of Suffering" or "It's Ok" by Maverick City Music

PREP LIST

WEEK 1:

- Set up a space to play **Mad Libs Theater: In Detention**, print your script, and create your cue cards.
- Prepare your props for **Bible Theater: Zacchaeus Edition**.
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every two students. Cut each handout into halves.

WEEK 2:

- Set up a space to play **On-the-Spot Storytime: Villain Edition**.
- For the **A Google Earth View** object lesson, set up and test the technology required to mirror your device to a screen.
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every four students. Cut each handout into quarters.

WEEK 3:

- Set up a space to play **Mad Libs Theater: Reality TV Reunion**, print your script, and create your cue cards.
- Print enough **Feelings Wheels** for all of our students, preferably on label paper, and cut them out.
- For **The Weight of Unforgiveness** object lesson, fill your cardboard boxes with canned goods, seal them shut, and test the object lesson with a volunteer.
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every four students. Cut each handout into quarters.

WEEK 4:

- Set up a space to play **On-the-Spot Artist: Awkward Injuries** and prepare your art supplies.
- Set up a table and create your **Pain Scale** object lesson. See your Week 4 Teaching Guide for instructions!
- Print one copy of the **handout** provided for every four students. Cut each handout into quarters.

WHAT TO CUSTOMIZE

You know your students better than we do, so there are probably some things you'd like to change about this series before you start teaching. Here's what you'll need to update if you make changes . . .

- **TEACHING:** Add your own stories, jokes, and any pop culture references that make sense for your group. You can edit each message using the Word documents provided or the [Grow Message Builder](#).
- **DISCUSSIONS:** If you make any changes to your teaching, make sure your discussion questions reflect those changes. You can edit these using the Word documents provided.
- **GRAPHICS:** We've provided graphics in your [Graphics & Video](#) folder already, but we've also provided blank slides in case you need to make your own.
- **PRESENTATION:** Customize your weekly presentations in [SLIDR](#) and use it to show images and videos during your weekly program. Each week of Grow Curriculum comes pre-loaded with content to get you started.
- **EMAILS & HUBS:** Customize and send the [volunteer and parent emails](#) as well as the [Volunteer and Parent Hubs](#) content we've provided for this series to keep everyone's grown-ups in the loop.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

To make sure your students, volunteers, and parents are in the loop, follow along with the Marketing Checklist we've provided for this series to make sure you've got everything covered, like . . .

- **STUDENTS:** Throughout the month, post the [Graphics & Video](#) we've provided on social media, like the Big Idea images and Bumper Video. Post the [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#) we've provided or use the **One-Minute Sermon Scripts** to film a recap video each week and post it on social media.
- **FAMILIES:** Before you begin teaching this series, send parents the [Parent Email](#) we've provided (after you've customized it for your ministry, of course). After each week of the series, post the Big Idea images wherever you talk to parents online. And don't forget to update your [Parent Hub](#) with the information they need for this series!
- **VOLUNTEERS:** Before you teach each week of this series, send volunteers the weekly [Volunteer Emails](#) we've provided (after you've customized it for your ministry, of course). Before each week of the series, post the Big Idea images wherever you talk to volunteers online and make sure they have their Discussion Guides in advance! And don't forget to update your [Volunteer Hub](#) with the information they need for this series!

And hey! When you post on social media, **don't forget to use the #growcurriculum hashtag and tag us @stuffyoucanuse** to share your ideas and stories with our team and with other churches who are using Grow!

HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES

Every ministry is different. Whether you're teaching middle schoolers, high schoolers, teenagers with special needs, or all three, here's how to hack this series to fit your unique and diverse audience.

HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

REVISE

To make this week more accessible for middle school students, here's what to adjust . . .

In Week 2, revise how you talk about villains. Since some middle school students might not be able to process morally gray areas, make it clear that we are neither condoning what villains have done, nor suggesting that they were right. We are simply trying to understand what drove them to do the things they have done.

In Week 3, revise the object lesson, The Weight of Unforgiveness. The instructions say to have volunteers participate, but feel free to do this with your middle school students if you think this would go well based on your students and context. Load up a backpack full of books, but be mindful of students ability to carry a certain weight. One by one, let them pass around the backpack and try to shoulder it while you use the talking points. After everyone has had a chance to feel the weight or bear the burden, begin taking books out of the backpack. Once you move on to the talking points that mention what we can hold onto when we forgive, let students shoulder the lighter backpack.

REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

In Week 2, replace showing an image of A VILLAIN YOU CAN ALMOST UNDERSTAND with a video telling the origin story of the Grinch. Rather than just showing a picture or talking about a villain, middle school students might be slightly more engaged if they watch and hear an origin story of a villain. You could show [this short clip](#) (0:00-2:41) of the Grinch's origin story.

REMEMBER

In Week 4, as you do the object lesson, The Pain Scale Part 2, remember that unfortunately, this kind of pain is frequently experienced by middle school students. Lead this lesson with great empathy, remembering that there are wounds in the room that are most likely very fresh.

As you teach the Bible content in Week 2, remember middle school students are at that stage when everything that happens to them can feel like the worst thing in the world, so these examples from Scripture can help put things into perspective without minimizing any pain they might be experiencing.

HACKS FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

REVISE

To make this week more accessible for high school students, here's what to adjust . . .

Revise the improv activities and skits in this series by recruiting your students ahead of time. Asking high school students on the spot to volunteer for these kinds of activities might not get the participation you want. Some high school students might be less inclined to participate on the spot for a skit. If you ask before your teaching time if they want to participate, you might have a better response.

REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

In Weeks 1 and 3, replace any of the improv activities or skits with a video clip from the TV show *Friends*. Maybe you don't have enough people to pull together an improv activity or skit, or maybe you know your high school students would not want to participate. Feel free to replace any of these activities or skits with [this short video clip](#) (0:35-2:58) from *Friends*, where Joey is trying to apologize to Ross.

REMEMBER

As you teach Week 1, remember to be cautious as you navigate conversations regarding hurt and forgiveness. High school students will have experienced hurt or have hurt someone else. Discussing these topics could bring up painful memories such as abuse — current or previous — that can resurface for students when we ask, "Whose forgiveness do you need to ask for?" Consider the preliminary work to be done with students regarding hurt, shame, guilt, and forgiveness.

HACKS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

REVISE

To make this week more accessible for students with special needs, here's what to adjust . . .

In Week 1, revise the activity, Bible Theater: Zacchaeus Edition. Students with visual impairment would require an auditory description of this activity or alternative ways to participate. You could consider using funny sound effects and have the student press the buttons on cue. If those aren't an option, make sure they are in a place where they can listen, or have someone paired with them to describe what is going on.

In Week 2, revise the activity, On-the-Spot Storytime: Villain Edition. Students with significant cognitive impairments may require hands-on assistance with this activity and adjustments in time limitations to prevent frustration. Consider setting a specific number of villains the students can think of. For example, you could have someone say to the students, "Let's think of three or four villains," to prevent time frustration.

REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

In Week 4, replace the activity, On-the-Spot Artist: Awkward Injuries. Depending on the students in your group, some with special needs might have a difficult time playing this activity. To include something for everyone, you could play a short video clip like [this one](#) (0:21-1:04) to talk about awkward injuries.

REMEMBER

As you teach Week 4 of this series, remember it might be helpful to give parents and caregivers an outline of this sermon ahead of time describing the content of this lesson. Parents and caretakers may want to review it with students ahead of time for comprehension purposes. The teaching content for this week is emotionally "heavier" than the other weeks connecting the death of Jesus and the concept of forgiveness.



WRITTEN & DEVELOPED WITH . . .

Elle Campbell is one of the founders of Stuff You Can Use and Grow Curriculum. When she's not creating, she's usually playing games, listening to podcasts, exploring new cities, and looking for things that make her and her husband, Kenny, laugh. If you want to chat with Elle about ministry, entrepreneurship, or pizza, reach out!

Alexander James is the Resource Developer for UYWI (Urban Youth Worker's Institute) in Los Angeles, California. He is an L.A.-born powerhouse speaker, poet, husband, and father and is passionate about issues of justice, love, marriage, fatherhood, and faith. He also enjoys video games.

. . . AND THE REST OF THE TEAM!



SERIES DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW: Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, David Magallanes, Crystal Quintero, Stephen Switzer, Linda Moon, Josh Samarco, Alexander James, Danny Sugimoto, Robert Vore

HACKS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, AND SPECIAL NEEDS: Ida Mundell, Stephen Bay, Liliana Reza, David Magallanes, Alyssa Roberts, Addison Roberts

MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW: Robert Vore

STUDENT DEVOTIONALS: Jada Smith, Crystal Quintero

GAMES: Tyler Grant, Jeremiah Herring

ONE-MINUTE SERMON VIDEOS: Elle Campbell, Jose Rodriguez, Erica Rodriguez, Vanessa Serrano Cruz, Damean Easter, The Rescue a Generation Team, Jules Gray, Jeremiah Herring

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VOLUNTEER DEVOTIONAL

NO
PROBLEM

STUDY

Conversations when it comes to forgiveness can be . . . complicated. It definitely feels more comfortable talking to students about the process than thinking about going through it ourselves. Why? Because forgiveness requires something more of us than a simple apology. Often, an apology is just the beginning of the work. The first steps of reconciliation can be some of the most difficult steps to take.

As you prepare to lead students through a series on the gift of forgiveness, hang out in the stories found in the Gospels. Allow them to speak to you about what forgiveness you may currently need and the kind of forgiveness Jesus is leading you to give.

To get ready for this series, **spend a few minutes reading the stories we'll be teaching students this month.** As you do, think about what God has taught you (and is still teaching you) about forgiveness through these passages, and how these Big Ideas have been true in your life.

WEEK 1: When you need forgiveness, don't just apologize. Psalm 32:5; Luke 19:1-20

WEEK 2: When it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective. Job 19:23-27a; John 16:32-33; Matthew 5:43-45

WEEK 3: When forgiveness is needed, remember God forgave first. Isaiah 12:1-3; Matthew 18:21-33

WEEK 4: When you've been hurt, remember Jesus has too. Jeremiah 23:1-6; Luke 23:33-38; Psalm 46

PRAY

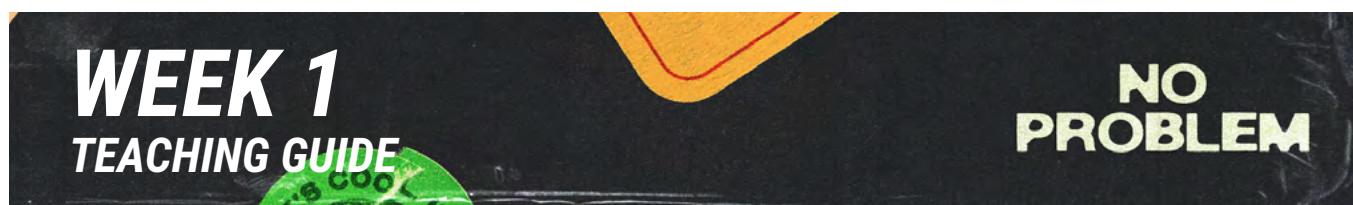
Think about a time you needed someone's forgiveness and you apologized. How did that go? People, when they're hurting, may appreciate an apology – but more often, they want to see what you're going to do to make things right. Jesus was constantly interacting with people who would have been difficult to forgive. They were blatantly against him, spoke poorly of him, and even shamed him publicly. Yet, Jesus' perspective was such that nothing they said or did changed how he felt about them. As you lead students this month, it's possible that your own hurt will surface. Talk to God about the relationship or relationships that caused that pain and consider how God can give you strength to forgive just like Jesus did.

Which passage of Scripture or Big Idea from this month is most relevant to you right now? Spend a few minutes asking God to show you how you've already grown in this area, plus the next step you need to take in order to keep growing.

GROW

So what's your next step? Do you need to make something right between you and someone else? Do you need to shift your perspective about someone you hurt (or someone who hurt you)? Do you need to forgive someone for a hurt you've been holding onto? Do you need to spend some time with Jesus who feels your pain with you?

Whatever your next step is right now, take it. Then help students do the same.



BIG IDEA

When you need forgiveness, don't just apologize.

BIBLE

Psalm 32:5; Luke 19:1-10;
Proverbs 28:13

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

QUESTION | What's the weirdest reason you've ever had to apologize?

- Welcome to *No Problem*, a new series about two words we all hate to say. Apologizing is never fun, but we've all probably had to do it more times than we can count.
 - Most of the time, we're probably apologizing for ordinary things, like bumping into someone in the hallway or finally getting around to returning that text message (three months too late).
 - But have you ever found yourself apologizing for something a little more out of the ordinary?
- **What's the weirdest reason you've ever had to say "I'm sorry"?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond. Encourage stories about funny blunders, embarrassing moments, friendly pranks, or childhood mischief. Then share one of your own!

ACTIVITY | Mad Libs Theater: In Detention

- Some of you have gotten in trouble for pretty weird things, but I think we could come up with a few situations that are even weirder.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask for six volunteers to act in an improvised scripted scene about after school detention. You'll need index cards or poster board, permanent markers, and four chairs for your "students." If you'd like, add classroom-themed props like a chalkboard, desks, and costumes. Use the Mad Lib Theater script and instructions we've provided in your Week 1 folder to crowdsource a script your actors will perform.

VIDEO | A Clip of Gilly from Saturday Night Live

- Okay, maybe you can't exactly relate to any of the situations we just heard about, but we've all had to apologize and receive other people's apologies.
- But don't you hate how awkward apologies are sometimes? It's awkward to say you're sorry and awkward to hear it too.
 - Like when someone says they're sorry but you're still really mad at them.
 - Or when you tell someone "it's fine," "no problem," or "all good," even though you don't actually mean it.
 - Or when someone says they're sorry, but you're one hundred percent sure they don't mean it.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:47-1:18) of Gilly saying "sorry" for throwing a milkshake at her teacher. Be sure to only show a clip, both for time and because there is inappropriate language near the end of the sketch. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - How many times do you think you say you're sorry in a typical day? A week? A year?
 - Why do you think it's easy to apologize for something that doesn't really matter but really difficult to apologize for something big?

POLL | Have you ever given a fake apology?

- We all know when we're giving a fake apology, right? The words "I'm sorry" might be coming out of our mouths, but we don't actually:
 - Feel remorseful.
 - Think we did anything wrong.
 - Intend to change our ways.
- **Have you ever given a fake apology?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask students to respond by raising their hands or shouting "yes."
- We could spend hours swapping stories about the times we've given (or been given) fake apologies. But I don't want to talk about other people's apologies. Today, I want to talk about ours.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

STORY | Talk about a time you gave a half-hearted apology.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you apologized to God or another person, even though you didn't mean it or intend to change. Share what you did, why you apologized, and why you didn't really mean it.
- When you were little, you may have thought the words "I'm sorry" were all it took to resolve a problem.
 - If you took another kid's toy or got caught pulling someone's hair, a grown-up probably stepped in and told you to say those "magic words" that would make everything better.
 - But as you got older, you probably figured out apologies are more complicated than that.
- When we're the one who's been hurt, we want more than just words. But when we've hurt someone else:
 - We hope those "magic words" solve the problem so we can move on and go back to normal.
 - We want "forgive" to also mean "forget."
 - Or sometimes, we're not even willing to say "I'm sorry" in the first place.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - **Have you given any half-hearted apologies recently? What happened and why wasn't your apology more sincere?**

- ⌚ How do you think sincere apologies help our relationship with God? How do you think they help our relationship with others?

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 32:5

- The Bible talks a lot about how important it is to apologize. There are countless passages of Scripture advising us to "confess" when we've messed up or "sinned."
- One of the people who wrote about this was King David, a man who had several big reasons to say "I'm sorry."
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Psalm 32:5.
- I know saying you're sorry can feel like a chore. It feels like a box you have to check so you don't get in trouble or can be forgiven. But I don't think that's why David apologized to God.
 - I think David confessed his sin because he loved God and wanted their relationship to be okay again.
 - So when we mess up, what if took that same approach? What if we didn't think of an apology as something we're required to do? What if we saw it as a gift we can give out of love?
- When we mess up, an apology like David's is a really important step – but it's not the whole picture. If we're not careful, we can make the mistake of believing an apology fixes everything.
- But the more you learn about forgiveness in Scripture, the clearer this becomes: when we've sinned against God or others, an apology has to be followed by a change in behavior.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT TAX COLLECTORS

- When Jesus was on earth, some people thought he had a lot to apologize for. Instead of seeing Jesus for who he was, they saw him as a threat. They were offended by nearly everything Jesus did, like:
 - Claiming he was equal with God. (Even though he is.)
 - Not observing all the rules the religious leaders of the day had added to God's laws.
 - And hanging out with who they considered to be the "wrong" people.
- Jesus did have a tendency to hang out with people other religious leaders wouldn't usually want to be seen with. Some of those people were people who made money in questionable ways – like tax collectors.
 - These days, collecting taxes doesn't sound very evil. But in Jesus' time and location, tax collectors were notorious for cheating, lying, and robbing people. They would take more money than they were supposed to and pocket the extra cash.
 - The worst part was these tax collectors often took the most money from the poorest people because they knew those people couldn't do anything to stop them.
 - So it makes sense why these tax collectors were so hated, and why people were so upset when Jesus decided to hang out with one.

ACTIVITY | Bible Theater: Zacchaeus Edition

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As you read the next passage, have students silently act out the story. You'll need students to play Zacchaeus, Jesus, and members of the crowd. You'll also want a chair or small step ladder for Zacchaeus to climb onto. And props. And costumes. Because those are fun.

SCRIPTURE | Luke 19:1-10

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Luke 19:1-10.
- Zacchaeus made a huge life change. He didn't just say he was sorry. He decided to do everything he could to make his wrongs right, both with God and the people he'd hurt. Pay attention to:
 - **JESUS' RESPONSE:** Jesus didn't do what everyone thought he'd do to a "sinner" Zacchaeus. Jesus didn't scream at him, shame him, ignore him, list all of his sins, or condemn him to death. Instead, Jesus simply asked to spend time with Zacchaeus.
 - **ZACCHAEUS' RESPONSE:** Zacchaeus knew he deserved to be called out for what he had done. He knew people hated him (with good reason), which is probably why Jesus' unexpected kindness changed Zacchaeus so dramatically.
- Zacchaeus' life wasn't changed by Jesus telling him he was a sinner — Zacchaeus seemed to know and accept that already. Instead, Zacchaeus' life was changed when Jesus showed him he was loved. When Zacchaeus realized God loved him even after everything he had done:
 - He didn't give a half-hearted apology or grudgingly say a few "magic words" to get it over with.
 - Zacchaeus took responsibility for what he had done and committed to making it right. He "repented," which means he turned away from the harmful things he had been doing and turned toward Jesus instead.
 - Jesus' love for Zacchaeus motivated Zacchaeus to love others by apologizing and making things right.
- Jesus often invited people to "repent" of their sins, but not because Jesus wants people to be punished. Jesus' invitation to change is always about love.
 - Jesus invites us to turn away from our mistakes and poor choices because they hurt us and others.
 - Jesus invites us to turn toward him instead because, with him, love, forgiveness, and healing are possible.
- Like David and Zacchaeus, you're going to mess up. We all do. But **when you need forgiveness, don't just apologize.** Take a step further in love and choose to make a change.

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - Even if we feel really sorry for something we did, if we apologize but never change our behavior, what might happen as a result?
 - What do you think finally motivated Zacchaeus to change and why?

STORY | Talk about a time you needed to repent.

- When we sin, we all probably want to believe it's "no problem." But it is! These choices or mistakes damage our relationships with God and others.
- We all hurt each other sometimes, but we all have the chance to make it right. When we choose to apologize and change our ways, it's a way to let our actions say (either to God or to another person), "I love you and our relationship matters to me."

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Briefly tell a story from your own life about a time you realized you had hurt someone. Focus first on what opened your eyes to your mistakes. Then focus on what was difficult about apologizing and repenting. For example, were you not sure what to say? Was the conversation awkward or embarrassing? Were you afraid they wouldn't forgive you? How was your apology received? What did you learn about repentance in the process?
- When we see or get called out for our sins, most of us don't usually take it very well. Instead, we might:
 - **DENY IT:** "I didn't do it!"
 - **EXCUSE IT:** "I did it, but I had a good reason."
 - **MINIMIZE IT:** "I did it, but it's not as big of a deal as you're making it out to be."
 - **BLAME-SHIFT IT:** "It's someone else's fault I did it."
- Why is it so hard to admit we were wrong?
 - Maybe because we're afraid to admit we failed. Maybe we think it will make us seem less lovable, perfect, or impressive.
 - Maybe because we like to feel in control. When we admit we've done something wrong, we give another person control over whether or not they'll forgive us. That's scary!
- If you can relate, here's what I hope you remember from the Scripture we've read today:
 - Yeah, you've failed. You're not perfect (no one is), but you are deeply loved by God.
 - Jesus doesn't ask us to repent to punish us. He invites us to change because it's best for us.
 - Jesus knows every single one of your mistakes and unwise choices – and wants to hang out with you anyway.
- When you're surrounded by that kind of love, admitting you were wrong gets a little less scary, doesn't it?

RESPONSE | A Mad Libbed Apology

- So who needs an apology from you right now? Whose forgiveness do you need to ask for? Who is waiting for you to make a change?
 - Is it God?
 - Have you been making mistakes or choices that don't reflect what God would want for you?
 - If so, get honest with God about where you've messed up. But don't just apologize. Choose to make a life change with God's help.
 - Or is it another person?
 - Is there someone you've hurt who's still waiting for an apology or for you to change your ways?
 - If so, let today be the day you begin to repair that relationship.
- Whether you need to ask for forgiveness from God or another person, here's what I've learned about giving a real apology.
 - **UNDERSTAND IT:** To the best of your ability, try to understand what you did and how it impacted the person you hurt. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine what it might have been like to experience what they experienced. As your compassion for them grows, the sincerity of your words will grow too.
 - **ADMIT IT:** Say what you did wrong. This might seem unnecessary – after all, the person you hurt already knows what you did wrong, right? Yes, but saying it lets them know you know what you did wrong. Then say the words. You know the ones. "I'm sorry."
 - **CUT THE "IFS" AND "BUTS":** Resist the urge to say "I'm sorry if I hurt you," or "I'm sorry but –".

Just be sorry!

- **MAKE IT RIGHT:** That could mean offering a solution to help make things right or asking them how they'd like you to fix things.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 1 folder. As you close, play some relevant music while students fill out their Mad Libs. Encourage them to give their completed apology to the person they hurt, maybe through a conversation, note, text, or private message.
- It's never easy to admit we were wrong, but it's how we grow through our mistakes.
- Unfortunately, not every person you've hurt will choose to forgive you. That's not something you can control. All you can control are what you do next.
 - Ask for God's forgiveness. (It's always available to you!)
 - Take responsibility.
 - Say you're sorry.
 - Make a change.
 - Forgive yourself and keep growing.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - Read Proverbs 28:13. When we mess up, what are some of the benefits of both apologizing (to God and others) and making a change?
 - When you need to apologize, which part is most difficult for you and why?
 - Understanding the other person's perspective?
 - Saying the right thing?
 - Making a change?
 - What's one important thing you've learned about apologizing, either from today's conversation or from your own experiences?
 - This week, who needs "more than an apology" from you? What are you going to do and how can we help?

MUSIC | "Make It Right" by Maverick City Music

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** While students write, or as you close, play the song "Make It Right" (Maverick City Music) but make sure you have purchased any licenses required to do so. For more information, [read this!](#) Here's a [link](#) to preview the song for your personal use. Sometime after your teaching time, post a link to the video of this song on social media so students can continue reflecting during the week.
- This week, I hope you'll choose to love God and each other well by going beyond empty apologies and fake forgiveness. **When you need forgiveness, don't just apologize** — like Zacchaeus, choose to love by making

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE

NO
PROBLEM

Apologies — they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Gospels, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, **it's not enough to just apologize.** And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of **shifting your perspective**, remembering **God forgave first**, and remembering **Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

When you need forgiveness, don't just apologize.

BIBLE

Psalm 32:5; Luke 19:1-10;
Proverbs 28:13

QUESTIONS

- How many times do you think you say you're sorry in a typical day? A week? A year?
- Why do you think it's easy to apologize for something that doesn't really matter but really difficult to apologize for something big?
- Have you given any half-hearted apologies recently? What happened and why wasn't your apology more sincere?
- How do you think sincere apologies help our relationship with God? How do you think they help our relationship with others?
- Even if we feel really sorry for something we did, if we apologize but never change our behavior, what might happen as a result?
- What do you think finally motivated Zacchaeus to change and why?
- Read Proverbs 28:13. When we mess up, what are some of the benefits of both apologizing (to God and others) and making a change?
- When you need to apologize, which part is most difficult for you and why?
 - Understanding the other person's perspective?
 - Saying the right thing?
 - Making a change?
- What's one important thing you've learned about apologizing, either from today's conversation or from your own experiences?
- This week, who needs "more than an apology" from you and what are you going to do about it?

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

NO
PROBLEM

Apologies — they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Gospels, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, **it's not enough to just apologize.** And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of **shifting your perspective**, remembering **God forgave first**, and remembering **Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

When you need forgiveness, don't just apologize.

BIBLE

Psalm 32:5; Luke 19:1-10;
Proverbs 28:13

QUESTIONS

- How many times do you think you say you're sorry in a typical day? A week? A year?
- Have you given any half-hearted apologies recently? What happened and why wasn't your apology more sincere?
- Even if we feel really sorry for something we did, if we apologize but never change our behavior, what might happen as a result?
- Read Proverbs 28:13. When we mess up, what are some of the benefits of both apologizing (to God and others) and making a change?
- What's one important thing you've learned about apologizing, either from today's conversation or from your own experiences?
- This week, who needs "more than an apology" from you? What are you going to do and how can we help?

ACTIVITY

Grab a few blank Mad Libbed Apology handouts. To practice your apologizing skills as a group, come up with a few real or imaginary scenarios, fill out the notes together, and talk about how your practice apologies might be received.

WEEK 1

PREPARATION GUIDE

NO
PROBLEM

BEFORE YOUR PROGRAM

1. BUY POSTER BOARD

You'll need 5 pieces of poster board — one for each person. Grab some jumbo permanent markers while you're at it. You may want to use a unique color of poster board or marker for each character, to keep their lines straight. (You can also use index cards that the actors hold during the activity, but if your actors are looking down each time they read a line, they may be hard to hear.)

2. PRINT THIS PDF

Have it handy, along with a pen (for you) and some big markers (for a volunteer) during your program.

DURING YOUR PROGRAM

1. CHOOSE 5 ACTORS

You'll need one teacher and four students. All five will have speaking parts, so choose students who are funny and comfortable in front of a crowd.

2. MAKE YOUR MAD LIB

Ask your students for suggestions as you fill in the blanks together on the next page.

3. MAKE THE CUE CARDS

As your words are chosen, fill in the script so it's all in one place, and ask a volunteer to simultaneously write the words on the cue cards, being careful to put the correct words in the correct blanks. Give them a copy of the script to help them stay on track.

4. ACT IT OUT

Make sure your cards are visible to your actors. Then have them act out the script one line at a time.

ALSO!

We want to see your Mad Lib Theater! We'd love it if you filmed this activity and shared it in the [Stuff You Can Use Facebook group](#)!

FILL IN THE BLANKS

- 1: A FRIENDLY GREETING
- 2: ANY ADJECTIVE
- 3: A PLACE
- 4: A GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURE (LIKE A MOUNTAIN, VALLEY, OR RIVER)
- 5: A COLOR
- 6: AN ANIMAL (PLURAL)
- 7: A SLOGAN OR CATCH PHRASE
- 8: TWO WORDS THAT RHYME
- 9: TWO WORDS THAT START WITH THE SAME LETTER
- 10: A HISTORICAL FIGURE
- 11: WHAT YOUR SCHOOL CAFETERIA SMELLS LIKE
- 12: A WEIRD HOLIDAY
- 13: ANY ADJECTIVE
- 14: A CELEBRITY
- 15: SOMETHING YOU DO WITH A FOOTBALL
- 16: SOMETHING YOU COULD FIND IN A SCIENCE LAB
- 17: ANY NAME
- 18: A BODY PART
- 19: A FICTIONAL CHARACTER
- 20: ANOTHER CELEBRITY
- 21: ANY ADJECTIVE
- 22: ONE WAY TO RUIN A PARTY
- 23: SOMETHING A GRANDMA WOULD SAY WHEN SHE'S MAD
- 24: ANOTHER WAY TO RUIN A PARTY
- 25: A TYPE OF MONSTER
- 26: THE MOST ANNOYING SOUND IN THE WORLD
- 27: A NUMBER
- 28: SOMETHING YOU DO IN GYM CLASS
- 29: SOMETHING LITTLE KIDS DO
- 30: A SONG YOU'VE HEARD A MILLION TIMES

SCRIPT

TEACHER: 1 everyone. You're all looking very 2 today. Welcome to detention here at 3 4 High School, home of the 5 6 , where, like we always say, 7 ! I hope you know why you're all here.

STUDENTS: Yes, Mr./Mrs..... 8 9

TEACHER: Well, 10 , what did you do to deserve this detention?

STUDENT 1: Hi Mr./Mrs. 8 9 I'm here because I've been keeping a bunch of 11 in my locker since 12

TEACHER: Well, that's not very 13 of you. And what about you, 14 ? And why don't you act it out so we can really visualize why you're in trouble?

STUDENT 2: Yes Mr./Mrs..... 8 9 I'm in detention because I 15 ed a 16 across the room and it hit 17 in the 18

TEACHER: And 19 and 20 , what about you two?

STUDENT 3: Well, Mr./Mrs. 8 9 , I think it's really 21 that I'm here, because I didn't do anything. 20 is the one who 22 in the hallway. It wasn't me.

STUDENT 4: Oh..... 23 ! You're the one who 24 !

TEACHER: Stop! Stop it, you little 25 s. Your voices sound like 26 Well, you know what happens next. The traditional punishment here at 3 4 High School, is as you all know . . .

ALL TOGETHER: To say we're sorry 27 times while 28 ing and 29 ing, while you sing 30

TEACHER: Let's begin.

• I ♥
FORGIVE
YOU

NO PROBLEM



• I ♥
FORGIVE
YOU

NO PROBLEM



1. THE NAME OF THE PERSON YOU HURT:
 2. HOW YOU HURT THEM:
 3. HOW YOU THINK IT MADE THEM FEEL:
 4. SOMETHING YOU COULD DO TO MAKE IT RIGHT:
-

"Hi¹..... I'M SO SORRY I HURT YOU WHEN I²..... I'M
GUESSING IT MADE YOU FEEL³....., BUT IF YOU WANT TO
TELL ME MORE I'D LIKE TO LISTEN. I'M REALLY GOING TO TRY
TO NOT²..... AGAIN. HOW CAN I MAKE IT RIGHT? CAN I
.....⁴.....? I HOPE YOU CAN FORGIVE ME."

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0173 8179



BIG IDEA

When it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective.

BIBLE

Psalm 17:6-7; Job 19:23-25;
Matthew 5:43-44; Colossians 3:1-2

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | On-the-Spot Storytime: Villain Edition

- Welcome back to *No Problem*, a series about two words we all hate to say: "I'm sorry."
- Last time, we talked about how our real-life stories might change if we said we were sorry (and meant it) more often. But can you imagine how some of your favorite fictional stories might change with a few more apologies?
 - What if the reason Voldemort returned was so he could tell Harry he was sorry?
 - What if Doc Ock decided to join forces with Spider-Man and — oh wait, we already got that movie.
 - Most of the time though, this idea is ridiculous. Part of what makes our favorite villains so villainous is that they would never say they were sorry.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this game, you'll need a stack of notecards, a bowl, and at least two Storytellers. Before you play, have your students brainstorm as many fictional villains as possible. Write each name on notecards and place them in a bowl. When the bowl is full, call your Storytellers to the front and start a timer. On their turn, each Storyteller should draw the name of a villain from the bowl and explain the plot of the story from the villain's point of view (without saying any character names or titles). The winning team or Storyteller is the one to get the most correct answers before their timer runs out.

QUESTION | "Who's a villain you can almost understand?"

- It's pretty weird hearing these stories told from the villains' perspectives, right? That's because these stories don't exactly encourage us to see things through their eyes.
- Even so, **are there any famous villains you can almost understand? Who and why?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.

IMAGE | A Villain of Your Choice

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Choose a famous villain you can almost empathize with (or can pretend to empathize with). Show their image on screen as you share what makes their perspective or choices almost understandable.

- It probably feels weird to try to see things through the eyes of a villain. When we've already decided who the "bad guy" is, it feels wrong to try to see things with a different perspective. And yet, that's exactly what God challenges us to do! (Sort of.)

DISCUSSION

- INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - Who's a fictional villain you kind of wish would turn into a hero? Why?
 - Without naming names or starting gossip, what are some reasons a person might view someone else as a "villain"?

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

STORY | Talk about a time you struggled to forgive.

- INSTRUCTIONS:** Briefly tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time you struggled to forgive someone who hurt you. As you share why it was so difficult for you to forgive, focus on why it was so hard for you to empathize with them.
- When we're hurt, angry, or offended, forgiveness doesn't come easily. We tend to see ourselves as the "good guy" and the person who hurt us as the "villain" in our story.
 - Of course, there are plenty of times when people kind of are villains in our stories, especially when we're talking about bullying, abuse, or other kinds of serious harm. So before we go any further, it's important we all understand that's not what we're talking about today. We'll get there, but not today.
 - Today, we're only talking about the kind of hurt or offense you might experience on a typical day, like hurt feelings, harsh words, or someone's careless actions.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 17:6-7

- Many of the authors of Scripture are familiar with how difficult forgiveness is when someone has hurt us. Their stories show us how God's people have wrestled with hurt and forgiveness in all sorts of situations.
- Let's start in the book of Psalms, where King David writes a song about being unfairly accused and attacked by an enemy nation.
 - I don't know about you, but if someone accuses or attacks me unfairly, I probably won't take it very well. I might ghost them forever. Or pretend they don't exist. Or roast them with my friends until we're crying laughing. I might post my receipts and defend myself. I might tell everyone I know how horrible they are.
 - I've tried a lot of those things, but they all usually end up making things worse. Let's see what David does instead.
- INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Psalm 17:6-7.
- Okay, yeah, that's a different reaction than I would have had. Instead of focusing on his own anger, frustration, or pain, David shifted his perspective toward God. He reminded himself of these truths:
 - "I can reach out to God."
 - "God will answer me."
 - "God is powerful."

- "God loves me."
- "God will help me."
- That does put things into perspective, doesn't it?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - Ⓐ Have you ever viewed another person like a "villain" in your story? Do you think anyone has ever viewed you as a "villain" in their story? If so, what do you think we could learn from that?
 - Ⓐ Can you think of a time in the past when someone really hurt or angered you, but that situation no longer feels like that big of a deal? What changed?

OBJECT LESSON | A Google Earth View

- When people hurt or offend us, it often feels like a really big deal. It might seem impossible to forget or get over it. But the truth is, in a few days, weeks, or years, a lot of those offenses will be long forgotten.
 - Don't get me wrong. Sometimes we are hurt so deeply that forgiveness is a process. There are some issues that can't and shouldn't be minimized, forgotten, or glossed over.
 - But sometimes the thing that feels like a really big deal right now starts to feel a little bit more manageable when we look at it from a different perspective.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Think of a physical location that represents a moment when someone hurt or offended you that you still haven't forgotten. Open Google Earth on your device, mirror it on your screen, zoom in on that location, and explain that location's significance to your story. As you teach, gradually zoom out until the entire globe is visible. **NOTE: Do not tell a story involving abuse, bullying, or other serious harm, as students could interpret this as minimizing an issue that should not be minimized.**
- When our feelings are freshly hurt and we're angry about what was done to us, the problem seems huge. It might be all we can see. But if we zoom out just a little bit, it helps us see things differently.

SCRIPTURE | Job 19:23-25

- "Zooming out" is exactly what a guy named Job did when his problems seemed too big. Job very suddenly lost everything he loved – his family, his money, his health, his relationships. His whole life fell apart and there didn't seem to be anyone to blame but God.
 - What Job went through was horrific. (In fact, maybe "zooming in" on Job's story will help you "zoom out" on some of the things you're struggling to forgive.)
 - If I went through what Job went through, you can bet I'd be struggling with forgiveness. I'd be angry with God, frustrated at my own situation, and demanding to know why God would allow so many horrible things to happen to me.
 - But let's see what Job did instead.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Job 19:23-25.
- Yeah, once again, not the reaction I would have had. Instead of focusing on how big his struggles were, Job shifted his perspective toward how big God is.
 - When Job says "the end," he's talking about some day very far in the future. That's important because, instead of focusing on the pain he was experiencing in the moment, he chose to focus on the big picture of eternity. In that zoomed out view, Job's problems shrunk in comparison with the bigness of God.

- That word "redeem" is important too. Job wasn't saying his pain wasn't a big deal or that it didn't exist. He was saying he trusted God anyway, knowing God could transform even his deepest pain into something meaningful.
- When you trust your Redeemer will one day right everything that has ever gone wrong, it puts things into perspective, right?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 5:43-44

- One more passage. This time, let's take a look at something that same Redeemer, Jesus, said about shifting our perspective.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Matthew 5:43-44.
- You might be wondering why Jesus wants us to pray for the people who hurt us. In part, it's because *they* need it — but it's also because we need it.
 - Praying for someone **helps us see the person we're praying for differently.** It helps us imagine their perspective, experience, and needs instead of focusing only on our own. It helps us learn to be curious and about other people — even the ones who've hurt us.
 - Praying for someone **helps us process our pain.** It helps us put into words why we were hurt and how we're feeling.
 - Praying for someone **makes our hearts a little softer.** The more we pray for someone, the more likely we are to see our anger and bitterness shift toward forgiveness and healing.
- I know it's tempting to hang onto unforgiveness when we've been hurt.
 - Sometimes it feels good to have a "villain" in our stories so we can think of ourselves as the "good guys."
 - But there is a better way. When someone hurts you, Jesus invites you to see things in a new way so healing can really begin.
- So **when it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective.** Then watch how God transforms your heart and mind.

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - In Psalm 17, the author prays about his enemy in an honest way, while Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies. How are those things different — and are they both okay?
 - What do you think can change when we pray for the people who have hurt or angered us?
 - Read Colossians 3:1-2. When someone hurts or angers us, what are some truths about God we can focus on? Why is focusing on those truths is helpful?

DISCUSSION | When It's Hard to Forgive

- We all know it's hard to forgive sometimes. But most of the time, our situation isn't quite as serious as a whole army attacking us, like King David — or our whole lives falling apart, like Job — or a person we'd actually call an "enemy," like Jesus talked about.
- So if we were to rewrite these passages using examples from our own lives, what might we write about?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this discussion, you'll need either a large board and something to write with. You can either use a dry erase board or the images provided in your Week 2 folder. If you're using them, print and cut

out the printables before your program. During the discussion, write on them and stick them to your board with tape or push pins. To begin the discussion, brainstorm situations or offenses students can relate with by asking "**What is something that would be hard for you to forgive?**" When you've brainstormed a variety of real or imagined scenarios, discuss a few of them by asking questions like these:

- **How would you feel if this happened to you?**
- **Why would it be hard to forgive this person?**
- **What's one way shifting your perspective could make it easier to forgive them?**

OBJECT LESSON | A Villain Callback

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Return to the bowl of villains you and your students created earlier in your teaching time. Draw a few names from the bowl, read them, and incorporate them into the questions and examples you give below.
- Maybe it seems impossible to shift your perspective or try to understand the person you're so angry with right now. But many of us were already doing this a few minutes ago.
 - Rather than seeing these "villains" solely as our enemies, we practiced seeing them in a new way.
 - Instead of assuming they were evil and hopeless, we tried assuming they had reasons for the choices they made.
 - Rather than defining them only by the wrong they did, we wondered if there might be more to them and their stories than we previously imagined.

REFLECTION | Perspective Shift

- When you've been hurt or offended, it's not easy to shift your perspective. But when it's hard to forgive, here are a few ways to get started.
 - **LOOK TO GOD:** Like David and Job did, when you're struggling with anger, bitterness, or unforgiveness, remind yourself who God is! God is:
 - With you.
 - Listening.
 - Strong and powerful.
 - Able to help.
 - **LOOK FOR THE BIG PICTURE:** Like Job, when it's hard to look past the things that are hurting or angering you, try zooming out. When you look for the big picture, you realize many of your problems aren't as big as you thought they were.
 - **LOOK AT PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY:** Like Jesus said, when we're tempted to hate or dismiss someone as an enemy, we have the choice to see them with God's love instead.
 - **Be curious.** What's going on in their life? Were they having a bad day? Are they struggling with something you might not know about? How might their perspective on the situation be different from yours?
 - **Believe the best.** Maybe they didn't mean to hurt you like they did. Maybe they don't even know you're hurt! Could there be another explanation for what they did or said besides the one you've come up with?
 - **Pray for them.** You've probably heard the phrase "prayer changes things," but sometimes the most important thing prayer changes is you. Try praying big, kind, loving prayers for the person who hurt you. Ask for God to show them love, protect them, encourage them, and give them good things. Even if you're not sure you mean it right now, try praying for them anyway. Then see what God does through those prayers.

- The person who hurt you may never apologize. They may never even admit they were wrong. But you don't have to wait for their apology to let God begin to transform your pain into something new. You can start now by shifting your perspective.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 2 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. Encourage students to fill it out while listening to some reflective music.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - Without naming names, is there anyone you're struggling to forgive right now? What's making that so difficult for you?
 - If a friend was struggling to forgive someone who hurt them, what words of advice or comfort would you give them?
 - This week, what's one thing you'll do to shift your perspective on someone who has hurt or angered you? How can we help?

MUSIC | "Better" by Tribi

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As students complete their reflection handouts, play or perform the song "Better" (Tribi) but make sure you have purchased any licenses required to do so. For more information, [read this!](#) Here's a [link](#) to preview the song for your personal use. Sometime after your teaching time, post a link to the video of this song on social media so students can continue reflecting during the week.
- When we've been hurt, it's tempting to hold onto anger, bitterness, and resentment. But Jesus invites us to try a much better way – the way of loving our enemies by choosing to see them through God's eyes.
- **When it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective.** Look to God. Look for the big picture. And try to look differently at the person who hurt you. Then watch how God heals and transforms you.

WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE

NO
PROBLEM

Apologies — they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Gospels, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, **it's not enough to just apologize.** And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of **shifting your perspective**, remembering **God forgave first**, and remembering **Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

When it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective.

BIBLE

Psalm 17:6-7; Job 19:23-25;
Matthew 5:43-44; Colossians 3:1-2

QUESTIONS

- Who's a fictional villain you kind of wish would turn into a hero? Why?
- Without naming names or starting gossip, what are some reasons a person might view someone else as a "villain"?
- Have you ever viewed another person like a "villain" in your story? Do you think anyone has ever viewed you as a "villain" in their story? If so, what do you think we could learn from that?
- Can you think of a time in the past when someone really hurt or angered you, but that situation no longer feels like that big of a deal? What changed?
- In Psalm 17, the author prays *about* his enemy in an honest way, while Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies. How are those things different — and are they both okay?
- What do you think can change when we pray for the people who have hurt or angered us?
- Read Colossians 3:1-2. When someone hurts or angers us, what are some truths about God we can focus on? Why is focusing on those truths is helpful?
- Without naming names, is there anyone you're struggling to forgive right now? What's making that so difficult for you?
- If a friend was struggling to forgive someone who hurt them, what words of advice or comfort would you give them?
- This week, what's one thing you'll do to shift your perspective on someone who has hurt or angered you? How can we help?

WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

NO
PROBLEM

Apologies — they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Gospels, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, **it's not enough to just apologize.** And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of **shifting your perspective**, remembering **God forgave first**, and remembering **Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

When it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective.

BIBLE

Psalm 17:6-7; Job 19:23-25;
Matthew 5:43-44; Colossians 3:1-2

QUESTIONS

- Who's a fictional villain you kind of wish would turn into a hero? Why?
- Without naming names or starting gossip, what are some reasons a person might view someone else as a "villain"?
- What do you think can change when we pray for the people who have hurt or angered us?
- Read Colossians 3:1-2. When someone hurts or angers us, what are some truths about God we can focus on? Why is focusing on those truths is helpful?
- If a friend was struggling to forgive someone who hurt them, what words of advice or comfort would you give them?
- This week, what's one thing you'll do to shift your perspective on someone who has hurt or angered you? How can we help?

**I AM
SHIFTING MY
PERSPECTIVE BY ...**

**NO
PROBLEM**



**I AM
SHIFTING MY
PERSPECTIVE BY ...**

**NO
PROBLEM**



**I AM
SHIFTING MY
PERSPECTIVE BY ...**

**NO
PROBLEM**



**I AM
SHIFTING MY
PERSPECTIVE BY ...**

**NO
PROBLEM**



WEEK 3 TEACHING GUIDE

NO
PROBLEM

BIG IDEA

When forgiveness is needed, remember
God forgave first.

BIBLE

Isaiah 12:1-3; Matthew 18:21-33;
Romans 7:18-19

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Mad Libs Theater: Reality TV Reunion

- Welcome back to *No Problem*, a series about some words we all hate to say: "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you."
- We could probably swap stories all day about the times we've had to give and receive forgiveness, but some of those stories might still be a little fresh. So let's see if we can improvise a fictional story instead.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask for five volunteers to act in an improvised scripted scene that parodies a reality television reunion show. You'll need index cards or poster board, permanent markers, and six chairs for your "contestants." If you'd like, add props like microphones, cameras, lights, a hair and makeup team, and costumes. Use the *Mad Lib Theater* script and instructions we've provided in your Week 3 folder to crowdsource a script your actors will perform.
- Okay, maybe you've never had to give or receive an apology for any of the reasons we just witnessed. But if you thought about it, I'm guessing you could come up with a few reasons from the past week — or even 24 hours!

QUESTION | "What's a minor inconvenience you suffered this week that you think deserved an apology?"

- Whether it's because someone accidentally bumped into you in the hallway or intentionally ate that cookie you were saving for later, we all annoy or frustrate each other in small ways all the time. **What's a minor inconvenience you suffered this week that you think deserved an apology?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond. Keep this fun and light and be sure to shut down or redirect any responses that start to sound like gossip.
- From minor inconveniences to bigger frustrations, there are probably tons of reasons we've all deserved apologies recently.
 - Sometimes people hurt or frustrate us accidentally.
 - Sometimes they do it intentionally.
 - Sometimes they continue doing it even when we've asked them to stop.
- When these things happen to us, it's only natural that we feel some feelings about it — maybe even some big feelings.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!
 - What's something small that makes you really mad, even though you know it's not a big deal?
 - When you're really mad, how do you usually act?

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

OBJECT LESSON | The Feelings Wheel

- Before we go any further, it's important we all understand what we're talking about (and what we're not talking about) today.
 - When we talk about hurt and forgiveness today, we're not talking about bullying, abuse, or other kinds of serious harm. We'll get there next time.
 - Today, we're only talking about the kind of hurt or offense you might experience on a typical day, like hurt feelings, harsh words, or someone's careless actions.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, print enough *feelings wheels* for all of your students (we suggest printing them on label paper and cutting them out into stickers), or show an image of it on screen. For each of the following questions, give students a chance to name some feelings without the use of the wheel. Then provide the wheel and encourage them to use it to get more specific about their feelings. Keep track of some of the most common feelings students named during this exercise. You'll use them in another object lesson later in your teaching.
- When someone hurts, offends, or angers us, it can trigger some big feelings. When someone hurts you or makes you angry ...
 - Which unpleasant emotions do you feel?
 - Which pleasant emotions do you struggle to feel?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - When you're experiencing a lot of unpleasant emotions, what helps you calm down or get refocused?

SCRIPTURE | Isaiah 12:1-3

- Maybe this seems strange, but the Bible talks a lot about God's emotions. Yes, God has feelings! But in Jesus, God is both human and divine, so we shouldn't assume his emotions work in the same way ours do.
 - For example, Scripture says God sometimes gets angry at humans for their choices — especially when their choices hurt others.
 - If you've ever gotten angry at someone when they hurt you or someone you love, guess what? You and God have something in common. But God's anger doesn't work quite like ours does.
- In the book of Isaiah, we see God get angry when people:
 - Behaved unjustly.
 - Harmed people who were poor or vulnerable.
 - Led people away from God.
 - Refused to obey God's guidance.

- But the book of Isaiah isn't just about God's anger at humans who needed forgiveness. It's about so much more.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read *Isaiah 12:1-3*.
- The book of Isaiah is prophetic, which means it had something to say both about the time it was written and about the future. Isaiah had a lot to say about God's plan of salvation and the Savior who would one day come and rescue us from our sin and brokenness.
- We don't like to talk or think about this, but we need to: we all need God's forgiveness. We aren't perfect, but because of our pride, fear, or insecurities, no one likes to:
 - Admit they were wrong.
 - Feel guilty or ashamed.
 - Feel like a failure.
- When some people think about God, they think about a religion that wants them to feel guilty and ashamed all the time. They think Christianity is about constantly beating themselves up for their mistakes. They think God is always watching them suspiciously, waiting for them to mess up so they can be punished.
 - As a result, a lot of people are either not interested in "religion" at all, or are completely terrified of God. And I get it! It would be really difficult to love, trust, or want to follow a God like that.
 - But that's not the kind of God we meet in the pages of Scripture. We don't meet a God who holds grudges against us. We meet a God who is quick to comfort us and rescue us, just like Isaiah said.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - ⌚ When we damage our relationships with God or with others, which emotions do you think God feels? Why do you think so?
 - ⌚ What would you say to someone who believed God was always angry with or disappointed in them? Why do you think that's an important message for them to hear?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 18:21-33

- God's solution to our forgiveness problem was and is Jesus. Through him, Scripture says, we can find forgiveness and rescue for the harmful mistakes and choices we've made. But when Jesus was here on Earth, his followers didn't fully understand what Jesus came here to do.
 - They trusted and followed Jesus, but were often a little slow to put all of the pieces of Jesus' teaching together.
 - Because of this, there are lots of times when Jesus' followers (even his best friends) ask Jesus questions that are a little silly. When they do, Jesus often replies with them understand.
 - On one of these occasions, one of Jesus' best friends Peter came to him with a question about forgiveness.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read *Matthew 18:21-33*.
- When Peter asked Jesus if he should forgive someone "up to seven times," he probably thought he was being pretty generous.
 - The number seven in his culture had a lot of significance. It's a number associated with God, holiness, and completion. Peter would have considered it a pretty "godly" number, so forgiving someone seven times probably would have seemed like a super godly thing to do.

- But Jesus took it even further. Jesus wasn't saying 77 is the exact number of times we should forgive someone. He was saying, "Peter, you're not getting it yet. You think you're being generous? No. God's idea of forgiveness, mercy, and love is so much bigger and more generous than you can even imagine."
- The story Jesus then tells isn't really a story about a king and some servants, of course. It's a story about God's love for us and our love (or lack of love) for each other.
 - In this parable, the king showed extravagant love and mercy by forgiving someone of the debt they owed. But unfortunately, the king's love and mercy didn't inspire his servant to do the same.
 - With this story, Jesus is challenging Peter (and the rest of us) not to be stingy with our forgiveness. Instead, we should remember how much forgiveness God has given to us and then give that same amount of forgiveness to those who've angered, offended, or hurt us.
- You probably don't owe money to a king, but here's why this story matters to us today.
 - **We all need forgiveness.** With this story, Jesus is reminding us we've all racked up debts we couldn't pay and made mistakes we couldn't fix. That's why we need a Savior.
 - **We can all give forgiveness.** When you've been forgiven so much, you have so much forgiveness to give. You don't have to, of course. It's your choice. But forgiveness is a gift you can give to God, to others, and even to yourself. Because choosing to live without forgiveness, mercy, or compassion hurts you just as much (or maybe even more) than the person you won't forgive.
- When we've been hurt, I know it's hard to let go of unforgiveness. But there is so much freedom and joy in letting go. So **when forgiveness is needed, remember God forgave first.** Then go and do the same.

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS (AND ISN'T)

- Forgiveness can be complicated. Sometimes it can be a long process. So when we talk about forgiveness, here's what we're definitely not saying:
 - You have to forgive or God will be angry with you.
 - You have to forgive whether you want to or not.
 - You have to forgive right now even if you're not ready.
 - When you forgive, you also have to forget what they did to you and go back to the way things were.
- Here's what we are saying:
 - Forgiveness doesn't mean you have to forget how people have hurt you. Remembering is often the wisest thing you can do.
 - Forgiveness doesn't mean you have to continue being close to the person who hurt you. You might need to set new boundaries or end some relationships in order to protect yourself.
 - Forgiveness won't always change the situation, but it will change how you feel about it — and help you find some peace in the middle of it.
 - When we want to forgive but find it difficult, God isn't angry with us. Scripture says God is always patient, kind, and gentle with us when we're hurting or weak.
 - Because he loves you, Jesus has forgiven you. Now he invites you to love others by sharing his forgiveness.
 - And while forgiveness is a gift you can give to others, it's also a gift you can give yourself.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!
 - When we forgive someone who has hurt us, what do you think we gain?
 - Read Romans 7:18-19. Do you ever feel this way? If so, how do you think this verse could help us be more merciful and forgiving to each other?

OBJECT LESSON | The Weight of Unforgiveness

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, identify an adult who can help you with this demonstration and prepare your supplies. You'll need 5-10 small and sturdy cardboard boxes, canned goods, and permanent markers. Fill each cardboard box with canned goods to make them heavy and seal them shut. The total combined weight should be light enough for your adult volunteer to hold, but heavy enough that they can only hold it for a short period of time. During your teaching time, label each box with one of the feelings your students identified earlier in your teaching time (like anger, sadness, stress, or bitterness). As you teach, hand the boxes to your volunteer one at a time. Have them hold the boxes for as long as they can, or until you tell them to set the boxes down. Encourage them to be expressive when the boxes begin to feel heavy.
- I've made the mistake of holding onto the weight of unforgiveness for too long. Maybe you have too.
 - But as long as we choose to hold onto unforgiveness, we choose to hold onto the feelings that come with it, like anger, sadness, stress, or bitterness.
 - When someone hurts us, our pride might tell us we can't forgive them — that forgiveness is weakness. So our unforgiveness becomes a weight we hold onto and refuse to let go of.
 - We might think carrying that weight makes us stronger or tougher, but in reality, it's only hurting us. No one is capable of carrying that kind of weight for long.
- So do you see why forgiveness isn't only a gift we give to the people who have hurt us? When we choose to put down the weight of unforgiveness, it's a gift we give to ourselves too.
- When we let go of unforgiveness, we're finally free to grab onto things like:
 - Love.
 - Mercy.
 - Freedom.
 - Peace.
 - Joy.
 - Healing.
- And those things are so much easier to carry.

REFLECTION | A Mad Libbed Prayer of Forgiveness

- So what do we do about all of this? I want you to reflect on one, two, or all three of these questions:
 - **HOW HAS GOD FORGIVEN YOU?** Maybe today you need to spend time asking God to forgive you or thanking God for how you've already been forgiven.
 - **WHO CAN YOU FORGIVE?** Have you been holding onto the weight of unforgiveness? If so, who do you think God is inviting you to forgive today — not out of obligation, but out of love for God, love for others, and love for yourself too?
 - **WHO NEEDS HELP FORGIVING YOU?** Is there someone who might be struggling to forgive you right now? If so, is there something you can do to make things right and help them find freedom from the weight they've been carrying? Is there a trusted friend or adult who can help or go with you?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, print and cut the prayer handouts provided in your Week 3 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. Encourage students to complete the prayers during the next song.

MUSIC | "Mercy" by Elevation Worship & Maverick City

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As students complete their reflection, play or perform the song "Mercy" (Elevation Worship & Maverick City) but make sure you have purchased any licenses required to do so. For more information, [read this!](#) Here's a [link](#) to preview the song for your personal use. Sometime after your teaching time, post a link to the video of this song on social media so students can continue reflecting during the week.
- This week, I hope you'll fully embrace God's mercy and forgiveness for you and then share God's mercy and forgiveness with others. **When forgiveness is needed, remember God forgave first.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - Which of these questions is easiest for you to think about and which is most difficult? Why do you think that is?
 - How has God forgiven you?
 - Who do you need to forgive?
 - Who needs help forgiving you?
 - This week, what's one step you're going to take to either embrace God's forgiveness for you or share it with someone else? And how we can we help?

WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE

NO
PROBLEM

Apologies — they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Gospels, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, **it's not enough to just apologize.** And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of **shifting your perspective**, remembering **God forgave first**, and remembering **Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

When forgiveness is needed, remember
God forgave first.

BIBLE

Isaiah 12:1-3; Matthew 18:21-33;
Romans 7:18-19

QUESTIONS

- What's something small that makes you really mad, even though you know it's not a big deal?
- When you're really mad, how do you usually act?
- Think about a time you recently got really mad. In the moment, which unpleasant emotions were you feeling? Which pleasant emotions were most difficult for you to feel?
- When you're experiencing a lot of unpleasant emotions, what helps you calm down or get refocused?
- When we damage our relationships with God or with others, which emotions do you think God feels? Why do you think so?
- What would you say to someone who believed God was always angry with or disappointed in them? Why do you think that's an important message for them to hear?
- When we forgive someone who has hurt us, what do you think we gain?
- Read Romans 7:18-19. Do you ever feel this way? If so, how do you think this verse could help us be more merciful and forgiving to each other?
- Which of these questions is easiest for you to think about and which is most difficult? Why do you think that is?
 - How has God forgiven you?
 - Who do you need to forgive?
 - Who needs help forgiving you?
- This week, what's one step you're going to take to either embrace God's forgiveness for you or share it with someone else? And how can we help?

WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

NO
PROBLEM

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THIS WEEK

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- Read Romans 7:18-19. Do you ever feel this way? If so, how do you think this verse could help us be more merciful and forgiving to each other?
- This week, what's one step you're going to take to either embrace God's forgiveness for you or share it with someone else? And how can we help?

FILL IN THE BLANKS

- 1: A REALITY SHOW
- 2: A TERRIBLE PLACE FOR A FIRST DATE
- 3: A CARTOON CHARACTER
- 4: A WEIRD WORD
- 5: A CELEBRITY
- 6: A FAMOUS FICTIONAL CHARACTER
- 7: A NUMBER
- 8: AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION
- 9: A PLACE
- 10: A WEBSITE OR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM NO ONE USES
- 11: A PERIOD OF TIME
- 12: AN ADJECTIVE THAT IS A COMPLIMENT
- 13: A HISTORICAL FIGURE
- 14: HOW YOU'D FEEL IF SOMEONE TOOK THE PIZZA YOU WERE GOING TO EAT
- 15: A PRIZED POSSESSION
- 16: SOMETHING YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO TOUCH WITHOUT GLOVES
- 17: SOMETHING WITH A STRONG SMELL
- 18: A WEIRD SOUND
- 19: A CELEBRITY PEOPLE LOVE TO HATE
- 20: A WEIRD AND SPECIFIC INTEREST
- 21: A LENGTH OF TIME
- 22: THE MOST BORING THING YOU CAN IMAGINE
- 23: SOMETHING YOU'D FIND IN A JUNK DRAWER (PLURAL)
- 24: AN EMBARRASSING HABIT OR INTEREST
- 25: 5 FUNNY WORDS
- 26: AN ADJECTIVE YOU'D USE FOR A KID WHO WAS MISBEHAVING
- 27: A FOOD THAT STARTS WITH THE SAME LETTER AS THAT ADJECTIVE
- 28: A MADE-UP BRAND NAME
- 29: SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT FOR CHRISTMAS
- 30: A SLOGAN

SCRIPT

HOST: Welcome back to the Reunion Episode of Celebrity 1: Lost on 2 Island and my name is 3 4 It's been a wild season filled with plenty of drama, so let's get into it 5 I hear there's something you want to say to 6

CELEBRITY 1: Yeah, I do. 4 way back in episode 5 I specifically asked you not to tell anyone about the time I 6 at 7 but you posted it on 8 just 9 later!

CELEBRITY 2: Okay, I can see why that was not very 12 of me, but --

CELEBRITY 3: Hang on, 5! You might be mad at 6 but I (..... 11) am 12 with you! You borrowed my 13 and when I asked for it back, it was covered in 14 and smelled like 15 What were you even doing with it? 16!

CELEBRITY 4: Now, wait a second, 11! I am, as you all know, 17 , and I've got a problem with you, 11! When I asked you to follow the fan account I started for 18 , you told me you'd rather watch a 19 long live stream of 20

CELEBRITY 2: Can I talk or are you 21 going to keep interrupting me? I was going to say to 5 that the only reason I told everyone about the time you 6 at 7 was because 11 told me if I didn't, they'd tell everyone I talk about how much I love 22 in my sleep.

CELEBRITIES: [All stand up and yell some of these words at each other.] 23 !

HOST: Stop! Stop! Please. We'll be back after this break to find out if this bunch of 24 25 can get it together. But first, a word from our sponsor, 26 27 , who wants us to remember: 28 Once again, you're watching Celebrity 1: Lost on 2 Island and my name is 3
4

• I ♥
FORGIVE
YOU

NO PROBLEM

2

• I ♥
FORGIVE
YOU

NO PROBLEM

2

1. WHAT YOU CALL GOD WHEN YOU PRAY:
2. SOMETHING GOD HAS FORGIVEN YOU FOR:
3. THE PERSON YOU'RE TRYING TO FORGIVE:
4. THE THING YOU'RE TRYING TO FORGIVE:
5. HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THEM NOW:.....
6. HOW YOU WANT TO FEEL ABOUT THEM:.....

-
- " ... 1 ..., BECAUSE YOU'VE FORGIVEN ME FOR ... 2 ..., I WANT
TO FORGIVE ... 3 ... FOR ... 4 ... HELP ME LET GO OF
... 5 ... SO I CAN HOLD ONTO ... 6 ... "

WEEK 4 TEACHING GUIDE

NO
PROBLEM

BIG IDEA

When you've been hurt,
know Jesus has too.

BIBLE

Psalm 109:6-15, 147:3;
Luke 22:39-23:46

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | On-the-Spot Artist: Awkward Injuries

- Welcome to our final week of *No Problem*, a series about something uncomfortable: forgiveness.
 - Most people are pretty uncomfortable with the words "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you." We'd usually rather step on a LEGO than have to say them.
 - So to get us ready for today's conversation, let's see how good you are at drawing (and interpreting) a few other uncomfortable scenarios.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** To play this game, you'll need index cards and a permanent marker. For each artist, you'll need a [large pad of paper](#) or [canvas](#), an [easel](#), and markers, paint, or crayons. Before your teaching time, set up a station for each artist, each with their own set of supplies. During your teaching time, choose your artists and brainstorm three categories of things with all of your students. For each category, have students list 5-10 things: **people** (celebrities, fictional characters, or historical figures), **places** (the grocery store, Saturn, Space Mountain – any location goes), and **funny or annoying injuries** (like stepping on a LEGO, getting a paper cut, or accidentally falling into a pool). When you have all of your people, places, and injuries, make three separate piles and draw one card from each pile for each artist. Each artist should end up with a different combination of a person, place, and injury (like Drake stepping on a LEGO on the moon). Give the artists 2-5 minutes to draw their scenes while the rest of your students guess what the artists are drawing.

STORY | Share a few five-word stories about your memorable injuries.

- You've probably never stepped on a LEGO on the moon, but we all have some memorable injury stories. **In exactly five words, tell us about one of your most memorable injuries!** But, uh, let's not get gory, people.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give a few students a chance to respond.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!
 - **What's the most awkward or embarrassing way you've ever hurt yourself? On a scale of 1-10 how much did it hurt? On a scale of 1-10 how embarrassing was it?**

- When we get injured physically, there are a lot of ways to get help or healing – but why is it more difficult when we've been hurt emotionally?

OBJECT LESSON | The Pain Scale (Part 1)

- Maybe you've experienced some of the injuries we just shared. Maybe some you hope to never experience. But let's see if we can agree on just how painful some of those injuries were.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before you teach, learn how the [numeric pain scale](#) works in medical settings so you can apply the same rules to this object lesson. To create your scale, you'll need a large table covered in a black table cloth, construction paper in ten colors, white foam board, a [table card holder](#), and a permanent marker. Cut the construction paper into approximately 4" x 11" strips and fold them in half. On the bottom halves of the strips, write the numbers 1-10, one on each strip. Space them evenly, in order, along the edge of your table so the numbers hang over the table edge and create a scale. Use tape to secure them in place. Cut an arrow or map marker shape out of foam board and attach it to the table card holder so it stands upright. Use this pain scale throughout the remainder of your teaching time.
- Some injuries hurt a lot more than others. It's not always easy to explain how painful it is when we're hurting, so we're going to use this scale to help us talk about it.
 - Most of the pain we feel is probably a 1-3 on the scale. It hurts, but we'll be fine.
 - Sometimes, if we're hurt more seriously, it's a 4-6.
 - And once in a while, when something truly devastating happens, we'll use the numbers 7-10 to talk about our pain.
- As we wrap up this series on forgiveness, we're going to talk about the times it feels impossible to forgive someone who hurt us – but I'm not just talking about physical pain.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - Has someone ever hurt you and you got over it quickly? Why do you think that hurt required such little time to heal?
 - Has someone ever hurt you but it took you a long time to get over it? How did you eventually begin to heal?

OBJECT LESSON | The Pain Scale (Part 2)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Continue moving your arrow along the pain scale as a visual aid as you teach.
- We've talked about physical injuries, but we can use this scale for emotional pain too.
 - Someone might experience Levels 1-3 if a person annoys, offends, accidentally hurts, or says something rude to them. It's painful or frustrating, but they'll be fine.
 - Someone might experience Levels 4-6 if a close friend hurts them, a loved one betrays them, or someone embarrasses or lies about them publicly. It really hurts. It might even be difficult to feel normal or get through the day.
 - And then there's Levels 7-10. I hope no one in this room has ever been hurt like this, and I hope you never will be. But it's possible some of us here already understand this level of pain. It's the kind of hurt that doesn't just go away with a little time.

- Whether it's bullying, abuse, abandonment, violence, or some other kind of cruelty you experience at the hands of another person, sometimes:
 - The pain stays with you.
 - The person who hurt you won't make it right.
 - There is no apology, repentance, or resolution.
 - What happened to you changes you forever.
- The things we're going to talk about today will apply to any kind of pain that other people cause us – both big and small offenses. But because forgiveness gets more difficult the more seriously we've been hurt, if you think you know what it's like to feel anything close to a Level 10 kind of pain, I want you to listen extra carefully.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 109:6-15

- Some people talk about forgiveness as if it's simple. "God wants you to forgive and forget," they'll say. They might even tell you not forgiving someone who hurt you is a sin.
- But I wonder if those people have ever read the Psalms. It's a book in the Bible filled with really honest prayers, and sometimes the authors of these psalms don't seem very good at forgiveness.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Psalm 109:6-15.
- This is the kind of prayer you'd probably only pray silently, and only about your worst enemy, and you'd probably never admit you prayed it. So why is it in the Bible?
 - Is it because God likes it when we pray for horrible things to happen to people? Uh, no. Probably not.
 - The Bible is filled with even more passages like this. More than one-third of the psalms are "laments," or people crying out to God in pain and frustration. The prophets did it too. There's even a whole book of laments called Lamentations.
 - Maybe these passages are there because God wants us to know we can be honest about our pain. Maybe we don't need to act like we're okay when we're not. Maybe we don't need to pretend we're not angry or hurt when we are.
- When we're hurting, it's only natural we react, cry, yell, scream, or grieve. So maybe these examples are all over the Bible to let us know God isn't afraid of us expressing our pain. After all, even Jesus did that.

SCRIPTURE | Luke 22:39-23:46

- In the hours before Jesus' death, Jesus experienced extreme, Level 10 kind of pain. At once point he literally sweat blood because he was so anxious about what people were about to do to him. One of the last things he did was to cry out to God, asking why he had been abandoned.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read or summarize Luke 22:39–23:46. Because this is a long passage, we recommend summarizing the full passage and supplementing it by reading only a few key verses.
- Have you ever stopped to think about all the ways people hurt Jesus in the final hours before his death?
 - When he was most anxious, his best friends let him down.
 - One of his closest friends got him killed – and got paid good money for it.
 - Another one of his' best friends pretended he never even knew Jesus, three times.
 - Soldiers, government officials, religious leaders, and a whole mob of people mocked him over and over again.
 - His government sentenced him to death when he was innocent.
 - A whole crowd of people celebrated his death sentence.
 - They stripped off his clothes to humiliate him.

- They tortured him.
- They stole his possessions and turned it into a game in front of him.
- And they killed him.
- Despite the abuse he endured, Jesus spent his dying breaths asking God to forgive the people who had hurt him.
 - But before you decide the moral of this story is, "Jesus forgave the people who hurt him, so I have to do that too," hang on. Maybe there's more to it than that.
 - Jesus' response to the pain people inflicted on him was not human because he is more than human. He's God. So maybe this account of Jesus' death isn't demanding you to be superhuman in your forgiveness.
 - Of course, forgiveness matters — it's what we've been talking about for weeks. But maybe Jesus' example on the cross demonstrates that superhuman forgiveness isn't what God expects from us. It's what Jesus did for us.
- Because you're human, sometimes forgiveness will be difficult. That's especially true the more deeply you've been hurt. So when forgiveness seems impossible, remember you're not talking to a God who doesn't understand your pain. **When you've been hurt, know Jesus has too.**

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - When you see harsh passages like Psalm 109:6-15 in the Bible, what is your reaction? What do you think these passages can teach us?
 - What is your reaction to thinking about the ways Jesus was hurt by others, both physically and emotionally?
 - What is your reaction to hearing God won't rush you to forgive someone who has really hurt you?

OBJECT LESSON | The Pain Scale (Part 3)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Move your arrow near a 10 on the pain scale as you teach.
- Things like bullying, abuse, abandonment, violence, and cruelty can cause the Level 10 kind of pain we've been talking about. When you've been hurt that severely, sometimes:
 - The pain feels like it's too much.
 - The hurt feels like it won't go away.
 - You're not sure forgiveness will ever be possible.
- If any of those words describe the pain you've experienced, please listen. Jesus' message to you today is not:
 - "Hurry up and forgive them."
 - "Don't be mad."
 - "It's not a big deal."
 - "Just love them."
 - "Make peace with them."

- God is not abusive. God is not okay with what happened or is happening to you. So imagine Jesus saying these things to you instead:
 - "I know what it's like to hurt like that."
 - "I want you to be safe and protected."
 - "I want you to be healed and whole."
 - "I want you to know you're loved."
 - "I want your pain to stop."

RESPONSE | Sending Out an SOS

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Before your teaching time, print the double-sided handouts provided in your Week 4 folder on card stock. Cut and place one under each seat, along with a pen. Encourage students to fill them out and give them to an adult if they need help, advice, or prayer.
- Whether the pain other people have caused you is a Level 1 or a Level 10, sometimes we all need help healing, forgiving, or figuring out our next steps.
 - **IF YOU'VE BEEN HURT:** When we get hurt by others, our pain can make us bitter, angry, defensive, self-absorbed, afraid, lonely, or detached. But Jesus can redeem our pain into something better.
 - Have you been hurt? Jesus knows what that's like. When your fear or pain feels loud, look for peace in the words and presence of Jesus.
 - Are you struggling to forgive someone? God wants you to find freedom in forgiveness, but isn't angry with you when it's difficult. You're only human. God knows that.
 - Can you not get over what happened to you? God wants to help you find healing and help for the pain you've experienced.
 - Have you been hurt (or are you still being hurt) by someone? Please tell an adult you trust today and let us help. And be gentle with yourself this week – we've talked about some really hard things today.
 - **IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS BEING HURT:** You may not be able to relate to the kind of Level 10 pain we've been talking about today, but there are people in this room, in your family, or at your school, who can.
 - Sometimes, when someone is being hurt, they don't know how to ask for help. They might never ask for help because they don't believe anyone cares. Or if they try, their attempts might seem imperfect, awkward, or confusing.
 - If you think someone could be hurting and need help, tell an adult you trust right away. It might be scary or uncomfortable. You might be worried you're wrong. But if you're right, and you can help them find help and safety, it's worth the risk, isn't it?
 - **IF YOU'VE HURT SOMEONE:** When we've been hurt, sometimes we react by hurting others. If you can relate, I hope you know Jesus loves you so much – but he does not overlook it when we hurt another person he loves.
 - No matter what you've done, God hasn't given up on you. Jesus is ready to not only forgive you, but to help you find healing for your own pain too.
 - If you've hurt someone and you're not sure how to make it right, talk to one of the adults in the room tonight. We'll help you take the next right step.

MUSIC | "Son of Suffering" or "It's Ok" by Maverick City Music

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** While students write, pray, or sing, play the song "Son of Suffering" or "It's Ok" (Maverick City Music) but make sure you have purchased any licenses required to do so. For more information, [read this!](#) Here's a link to preview the song "[Son of Suffering](#)" and "[It's Ok](#)" for your personal use. Sometime after your teaching time, post a link to the video of this song on social media so students can continue reflecting during the week.
- Forgiveness is hard to give and receive. But this week, I hope:
 - When you need forgiveness, you won't just apologize – you'll make a whole life change.
 - When it's hard to forgive, you'll shift your perspective to see others through God's eyes.
 - When forgiveness is needed, you'll remember God forgave first.
 - And **when you've been hurt, you'll remember Jesus has too.** That means, no matter how much it hurts, you're never alone – and you're always understood.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!
 - Read Psalm 147:3. **What are some ways God does this for us? What are some ways we can partner with God in doing this for others?**
 - **If you or someone you know is being hurt, hurting themselves, or hurting others, do you know what to do or how to get help?**
 - **This week, what's one thing you're going to do in response to what we talked about today?**

WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE

NO
PROBLEM

Apologies — they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Gospels, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, **it's not enough to just apologize.** And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of **shifting your perspective**, remembering **God forgave first**, and remembering **Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

When you've been hurt,
know Jesus has too.

BIBLE

Psalm 109:6-15, 147:3;
Luke 22:39-23:46

QUESTIONS

- **What's the most awkward or embarrassing way you've ever hurt yourself? On a scale of 1-10 how much did it hurt? On a scale of 1-10 how embarrassing was it?**
- **When we get injured physically, there are a lot of ways to get help or healing — but why is it more difficult when we've been hurt emotionally?**
- **Has someone ever hurt you and you got over it quickly? Why do you think that hurt required such little time to heal?**
- **Has someone ever hurt you but it took you a long time to get over it? How did you eventually begin to heal?**
- **When you see harsh passages like Psalm 109:6-15 in the Bible, what is your reaction? What do you think these passages can teach us?**
- **What is your reaction to thinking about the ways Jesus was hurt by others, both physically and emotionally?**
- **What is your reaction to hearing God won't rush you to forgive someone who has really hurt you?**
- **Read Psalm 147:3. What are some ways God does this for us? What are some ways we can partner with God in doing this for others?**
- **If you or someone you know is being hurt, hurting themselves, or hurting others, do you know what to do or how to get help?**
- **This week, what's one thing you're going to do in response to what we talked about today?**

WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE for middle schoolers

NO
PROBLEM

Apologies — they're hard to give, but they're sometimes hard to receive, too. When you're the one who has hurt someone else, saying you're sorry (and actually meaning it) takes work and practice. But when you're the one who's been hurt by someone else, things get even more complicated. What if you don't want to forgive them? What if they don't seem sorry? What if they won't even admit they're wrong? What if they've moved on, but you're still not over it? In this 4-week series from the Gospels, we'll find out what it means to truly give (and receive) forgiveness. We'll discover that when you need forgiveness, **it's not enough to just apologize.** And when you've been hurt and need to forgive, we'll explore the importance of **shifting your perspective**, remembering **God forgave first**, and remembering **Jesus knows what it's like to be hurt.**

THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

When you've been hurt,
know Jesus has too.

BIBLE

Psalm 109:6-15, 147:3;
Luke 22:39-23:46

QUESTIONS

- **What's the most awkward or embarrassing way you've ever hurt yourself? On a scale of 1-10 how much did it hurt? On a scale of 1-10 how embarrassing was it?**
- **When we get injured physically, there are a lot of ways to get help or healing — but why is it more difficult when we've been hurt emotionally?**
- **When you see harsh passages like Psalm 109:6-15 in the Bible, what is your reaction? What do you think these passages can teach us?**
- **Read Psalm 147:3. What are some ways God does this for us? What are some ways we can partner with God in doing this for others?**
- **If you or someone you know is being hurt, hurting themselves, or hurting others, do you know what to do or how to get help?**
- **This week, what's one thing you're going to do in response to what we talked about today?**

ACTIVITY

As a group, look up some of the warning signs of abuse, neglect, bullying, or self-harm so students will be better equipped to notice when a peer is experiencing a crisis. Then review the steps they should take to get help and report their concerns.



- I NEED HELP
- I THINK SOMEONE ELSE NEEDS HELP
- I NEED HELP FORGIVING SOMEONE
- I NEED ADVICE
- I NEED PRAYER



- I NEED HELP
- I THINK SOMEONE ELSE NEEDS HELP
- I NEED HELP FORGIVING SOMEONE
- I NEED ADVICE
- I NEED PRAYER



ONE-MINUTE SERMONS

After you teach each week, we recommend **filming a video of yourself re-teaching your message in one minute or less**. Then post it on social media! We've written the beginnings of a script for you each week, and we've also filmed complete [One-Minute Sermon Videos](#) for you too, in partnership with [Rescue a Generation](#). Make your own or post ours — whatever you want!

WEEK 1

Can we talk about apologies? And how awkward they are? It's awkward to say you're sorry and awkward to hear it too. But the Bible talks a lot about how important it is to apologize. There are countless passages of Scripture advising us to "confess" when we've messed up or "sinned" — but not because an apology is a task we just have to complete in order to be forgiven. It's because an apology is a gift we can give out of love for the person we hurt. But an apology by itself doesn't fix everything. There's a guy named Zacchaeus in the Bible who learned this. He was a tax collector who stole a lot of money from people in need, but when he met Jesus, all that changed. Jesus' love for him inspired him to make his wrongs right by giving it all back to the people he hurt, and then some. So like Zacchaeus, **when you need forgiveness, don't just apologize**. Take a step further and make a change.

WEEK 2

You know that Spider-Man movie where all the bad guys become good guys? It's not something you see everyday, right? Maybe that's because we kind of like having villains we can dislike — both in the movies and in our real lives. But in the Bible, we're challenged to take a different perspective. Scripture is filled with stories and reflections about forgiveness after being hurt. In many of these passages, you see something interesting: a shift in perspective. Instead of focusing on the bigness of our hurt, we're encouraged to focus instead on the bigness of God and of Jesus' love and grace. Jesus actually tells us to pray for the people who have hurt us. I know it's tempting to hang onto unforgiveness when we've been hurt, but there is a better way. When someone hurts you, Jesus invites you to see things in a new way so healing can really begin. So **when it's hard to forgive, shift your perspective**. Then watch how God transforms your heart and mind.

WEEK 3

Do you ever feel like you want to do the right thing, but – well, it's really hard? And you keep doing things you regret? Yeah, I think we all have that in common. We all need forgiveness, both from God and from each other. But for some reason, while we're eager to accept God's forgiveness for our mistakes, we're not always very generous when it comes to forgiving someone who hurts us. Jesus tells a story about that in Matthew 18, where a king shows extravagant love to someone by forgiving them of a debt they owed. But the king's mercy didn't inspire them to do the same for anyone else. You probably don't owe money to a king, but here's why this matters: we all need forgiveness and we can all give forgiveness too. I know it's hard to let go of unforgiveness. But we can find so much freedom and joy when we do. So **when forgiveness is needed, remember God forgave first.** Then go and do the same.

WEEK 4

Have you ever stopped to think about all the ways people hurt Jesus in the final hours before his death? Today, we'd call the things he went through "abuse." "Bullying." "Violence." "Injustice." "Murder." Despite the abuse he endured, Jesus spent his dying breaths asking God to forgive the people who had hurt him. But before you decide the moral of this story is, "Jesus forgave the people who hurt him, so I have to do that too," hang on. Of course, forgiveness matters and is what Jesus invites us to do for those who have hurt us. But maybe Jesus' example on the cross demonstrates that superhuman forgiveness isn't what God expects *from* us – it's what Jesus did *for* us. Jesus is God, but you're human. So sometimes forgiveness will be difficult for you. That's especially true the more deeply you've been hurt. So when forgiveness seems impossible, remember you're not talking to a God who doesn't understand your pain. **When you've been hurt, know Jesus has too.**



BEFORE THE SERIES

✓ TO DO

	Print your Series Promo Poster and Series Promo Cards and display them where families and volunteers can see them.
	Customize your Volunteer Hub and Parent Hub web pages for this series.
	Customize and send the Parent Email for this series.
	Send the Volunteer Email for Week 1 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.
	Review the suggested Social Media Posts and Captions for this series.
	Post the Bumper Video on social media with this caption: We're starting a new series this week called No Problem! We're talking about apologies, forgiveness, and the times we can't manage to say, "It's no problem."

AFTER WEEK 1

✓ TO DO

	Post the 1-Minute Sermon Video for Week 1 on social media with this caption: In case you missed it, this week we're talking about two words that are pretty uncomfortable to say: "I'm sorry." Here's a recap!
	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 1 on social media and/or send with this caption: It's never easy to admit we were wrong, but it's how we grow through our mistakes. If you want to give a real apology, try this: understand it, admit it, cut the "ifs" and "buts," and make it right.
	Send the Volunteer Email for Week 2 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.

AFTER WEEK 2

✓ TO DO

	<p>Post the 1-Minute Sermon Video for Week 2 on social media with this caption: In case you missed it, this week we shared some ideas about shifting our perspective when it's hard to forgive. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 2 on social media with this caption: When we've been hurt, it's tempting to hold onto anger, bitterness, and resentment. But Jesus invites us to try a much better way — the way of loving our enemies by choosing to see them through God's eyes.</p>
	<p>Send the Volunteer Email for Week 3 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 3

✓ TO DO

	<p>Post the 1-Minute Sermon Video for Week 3 on social media with this caption: In case you missed it, this week we talked about finding freedom in forgiving others like God has forgiven us. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 3 on social media with this caption: When we hold onto unforgiveness, we hold onto the feelings that come with it, like anger, sadness, stress, or bitterness. We might think carrying that weight makes us stronger or tougher, but no one is capable of carrying that kind of weight for long.</p>
	<p>Send the Volunteer Email for Week 4 of this series. Then text your volunteers a link to the email.</p>

AFTER WEEK 4

✓ TO DO

	<p>Post the 1-Minute Sermon Video for Week 4 on social media with this caption: In case you missed it, this week we saw that Jesus understands our pain — especially when we've been deeply hurt. Here's a recap!</p>
	<p>Post the Big Idea Graphic for Week 4 on social media with this caption: Are you struggling to forgive someone? God wants you to find freedom in forgiveness, but isn't angry with you when it's difficult. You're only human. God knows that.</p>
	<p>Get ready for the next series!</p>

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS & CAPTIONS

**NO
PROBLEM**

Need some help deciding what to post on social media before and during this series? Here's our suggestion: each week, share the media we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder using the captions below.

BEFORE THE SERIES



BUMPER VIDEO

We're starting a new series this week called No Problem! We're talking about apologies, forgiveness, and the times we can't manage to say, "It's no problem."

AFTER WEEK 1



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 1)

In case you missed it, this week we're talking about two words that are pretty uncomfortable to say: "I'm sorry." Here's a recap!

AFTER WEEK 2



TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 2)

In case you missed it, this week we shared some ideas about shifting our perspective when it's hard to forgive. Here's a recap!



BIG IDEA (WEEK 1)

It's never easy to admit we were wrong, but it's how we grow through our mistakes. If you want to give a real apology, try this: understand it, admit it, cut the "ifs" and "buts," and make it right.



BIG IDEA (WEEK 2)

When we've been hurt, it's tempting to hold onto anger, bitterness, and resentment. But Jesus invites us to try a much better way — the way of loving our enemies by choosing to see them through God's eyes.

AFTER WEEK 3

TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 3)

In case you missed it, this week we talked about finding freedom in forgiving others like God has forgiven us. Here's a recap!

AFTER WEEK 4

TEACHING VIDEO (WEEK 4)

In case you missed it, this week we saw that Jesus understands our pain – especially when we've been deeply hurt. Here's a recap!


BIG IDEA (WEEK 3)

When we hold onto unforgiveness, we hold onto the feelings that come with it, like anger, sadness, stress, or bitterness. We might think carrying that weight makes us stronger or tougher, but no one is capable of carrying that kind of weight for long.


BIG IDEA (WEEK 4)

Are you struggling to forgive someone? God wants you to find freedom in forgiveness, but isn't angry with you when it's difficult. You're only human. God knows that.

What We're Teaching



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE

What We're Teaching



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE



ADD YOUR LOGO HERE



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