

Acts-Revelation

Philemon

Philemon
Colossians 4:9

Younger Verse

Forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against. Mark 11:25

Older Verse

Forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too. Mark 11:25

Bible Story

*The following is a summary of the Bible story to help you with your preparation. Please do **NOT** read to the children. Instead, study your Bible, using this summary as a guide, and make a note page to help you remember your plans for the lesson or questions you want to ask.*

What do you do when someone wrongs you? Do you say mean things or swear to never speak to them again? (Give children a chance to answer - honestly.) Let's see what we can learn from the Bible about how we should act!

We are going to talk about two familiar places today. Who remembers what city Paul was in when he was imprisoned? (Rome) And who remembers what city the Colossians lived in? (Colossae) Well, there was a man in Colossae, named Philemon, whom Paul told about Jesus - and who believed! Philemon had something in common with Timothy and Titus, Paul's other friends. Paul wrote a letter to Philemon and his church, just as he did with Timothy and Titus, but Philemon's church was in his house! Many people think that Philemon might have been a rich man because his house was large enough to meet in and because he had servants and slaves. One of Philemon's slaves, Onesimus, had run away and had probably taken some of Philemon's money! What is amazing, though, is that Onesimus was in Rome at the same time Paul was imprisoned there. Paul and Onesimus met somehow, and Paul shared the good news of God with Onesimus just as he had with Onesimus' master, Philemon. And just like Philemon, Onesimus believed! Onesimus believed in Jesus and began helping Paul. Onesimus was a huge help to Paul, but Paul knew that he was still Philemon's slave, even if he had run away. Paul knew that Onesimus must return, no matter how much Paul wanted him to stay in Rome and continue helping. For this reason, Paul wrote his letter to Philemon.

Paul wrote to tell Philemon and told him how wonderful it was that he loved Jesus and trusted Him, and that he also loved the saints. Saints are anyone who believes in Jesus and trusts Him. Paul was a saint. Philemon was a saint. And now, Onesimus was a saint! Paul asked Philemon to receive Onesimus, not just as a runaway slave, but as a much loved brother in Christ.

But Onesimus had run away. And he had even stolen Philemon's money. He had even been useless to Philemon! How could Philemon accept Onesimus back as more than a slave, even more than a friend - as a brother? Philemon could accept Onesimus by forgiving him. What is forgiveness? Well, if you owed me two dollars from buying ice cream last week and I forgave what you owed me, you wouldn't owe me anything anymore. Forgiveness is removing what we owe. How could Philemon forgive all that Onesimus had done to him, his running away and stealing?

Lesson Goals

Understand that we should offer to others the same forgiveness God has offered us.

Philemon could forget Onesimus' debt and wrongdoing because God had forgiven Philemon's debt and wrongdoing. The Bible tells us in Romans 5:8 that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Did Jesus die as punishment for something wrong He had done? (No!) He died to forgive us of our sins. He died to forgive us for the wrong things we have done, like Onesimus when he stole and ran away. He also died to forgive us for the things we haven't done but should have, like Onesimus when he was useless to his master.

Paul wrote something amazing to Philemon about Onesimus. Paul asked Philemon to accept Onesimus like he would accept Paul. Paul also told Philemon to hold Paul responsible if Onesimus had done anything wrong or owed him anything. Can you imagine writing a friend and saying, "I know Juan really upset you when he took your new tennis shoes, but I'll pay for them. And when you see him again, please treat him just like you treat me.?" It doesn't sound like anything anyone would want to do today, but it does sound a lot like what Jesus did for us. When He died on the cross, He was saying to God, "Hold me responsible for Rebecca, and Jose and Karen (add your name and the names of your students, as well). Whatever they have done wrong, punish me for it. And accept them just like you would me!" That is the only way we can have a friendship with God. That friendship doesn't just start automatically. We have to tell God that we know we have sinned (done bad things and not done good things). We also must believe that God sent His one and only Son Jesus to take the punishment we deserve. When we do that, God will accept us just like He does His very own Son, Jesus, and He wipes away from our record all of our sin. Believing that, we must tell Him we want to follow Him and be obedient to Him. Part of being obedient means forgiving people when they wrong us. If God can forgive you, and me, then we can forgive others!

**Memory Verse
Activity**

Print the memory verse minus a word or two on strips of paper, varying the missing words per strip. Print enough for each student to have one. Laminate these strips or cover with clear contact paper. Distribute a strip to each student and have them complete it by writing in the missing word with a dry erase marker (or the equivalent). Then have each student erase their answers and trade with a fellow student.

Prayer Time

Be sure to pray for those people for whom each of you need to forgive.

Clean Up/Snack time

Remind students to be helpful, in church as well as at home. As your students leave, remind them to be obedient in the area of forgiveness by seeking out someone whom they need to forgive.

Planning for October 31st
Hebrews

Preschool Lesson for Philemon

Paul Helps His Friends Do the Right Thing

Do you remember Paul? We have talked a lot about Paul and the trips he made, the friends he had and the letters he wrote.

Paul had a friend named Philemon. Paul told Philemon about Jesus and he believed! Another friend of Paul's, Onesimus, had done things to Philemon that were not right. A cool thing happened, though! Paul had a chance to get to know Onesimus as well, and told him about Jesus. And guess what?! Onesimus believed in Jesus, too! Onesimus became a good friend to Paul and Paul wanted Onesimus to stay and help him in Rome.

But Paul also knew that Onesimus had done wrong things to Philemon. Paul talked to Onesimus and told him that he needed to go back to Philemon and do the right thing - to tell him he was sorry for the things he had done and that he didn't want to do those bad things again. But Paul also wrote a letter to Philemon and sent it with Onesimus. In Paul's letter he asked Philemon to do the right thing, too. He asked Philemon to welcome Onesimus back!

Do you know someone who has done something wrong to a friend? Can you help them? Talk to them both and encourage them to do the right thing!

Activities for Philemon

- Make a memory verse chain. You will need 6" - 8" strips of colored construction paper; 9 for the younger children's verse or 20 for the older children. On each strip of paper, write one word from the memory verse and its reference. With the first word "Forgive," form the letter "O" for Onesimus by bringing the ends together. Fasten the ends with glue, tape or staples. Do the same with the second while catching the first "O" in the loop of the second. Continue until all strips have been added.
 - Make a necklace of "O's." Provide students with Cheerios, Fruit Loops, Apple Jacks or the like and a piece of yarn long enough to hang around their necks and tie. Apply tape to one end of the yarn and have students string the cereal onto the yarn. Tie their necklaces around their necks. Encourage your students to wear their necklaces and remember to help each other do the right thing.
 - Provide Word Search or Crossword Puzzles for your students to reinforce the lesson's concepts and memory verse.
 - Role play with your students. Make up fictional disagreements and have your students role play in such a way that they help the disagreeing pair to do the right thing. Prompt them with truths from the story as needed.
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