

# WEEK 3

# GOD IS GRACIOUS

GOD FORGIVES THE DEBT WE CANNOT PAY

PRIMARY LESSON GUIDE



## THE FOUR KEYS

### KEY VERSE

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.  
Psalm 86:5

### KEY IDEAS

1. We cannot earn God's forgiveness by doing good.
2. God graciously forgives even though we cannot earn it.
3. God commands us to graciously forgive others who have not earned it.

### KEY PASSAGE

Matthew 18:21-35

### KEY PRINCIPLES



EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW . . .

we cannot earn God's forgiveness by doing good, but He graciously offers it anyway no matter what we've done if we repent and follow Him.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD FEEL . . .

thankful that God is so gracious to forgive us.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO . . .

understand their need for forgiveness.



EVERY CHILD SHOULD WANT . . .

to forgive others who do not deserve it either.

# INTRODUCTION

The Bible says in Romans 3:23 that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. This means that every person who has ever lived has chosen to reject God and our sin deserves punishment. We deserve complete separation from God because we have chosen to worship ourselves over Him, the One who created us all and has given us life. However, God is so full of grace that He gives us exactly the opposite of what we deserve. 1 Peter 3:9 tells us that it is not God's will that anyone should die, but that we should all have eternal life in Him. Instead of punishing us all for our sin, God made a way for us to be saved by sending His only Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for us. Instead of receiving punishment, we are given the ability to receive God's grace, a gift we could not earn. We receive God's grace through forgiveness when we repent of our sin and trust in Him.

## OPENING ILLUSTRATION

Surprise the kids by telling them they get to enjoy a snack during today's lesson. After passing out snacks and giving them a few minutes to enjoy it, tell them, "Okay, your snack for today will be \$5. You'll need to pay it before you leave class." When children realize they cannot pay for their snack, have the runner come in with play money, enough for \$5 per child and say, "I will pay for them." Explain that just like they had a debt they owed and could not pay, we have a sin debt we owe to God and we cannot pay it. We cannot save ourselves from our sin, but Jesus paid for our debt by dying on the cross for our sins and taking the punishment for us.

## STORY

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

Jesus shared a story with his disciples about a servant who owed a debt to his master that was so great he could never repay it. When the time came for the servant to settle his debt and pay, the servant was unable to. So, the king ordered that the servant and his family be sold as slaves. The man begged the king for mercy and the king showed him mercy. Not only did the king spare his family from being sold, but he forgave the debt against him. God is like the king in this story. We owe Him a debt because of our sin that is so great we could never repay Him. He forgives the debt against us because Jesus paid the price!

When the servant was shown mercy, he had a chance to show mercy to others. But instead, he chose not to and demanded that the person who owed him repay it in full. He chose to hold that person responsible instead of showing grace and mercy like the king had done for him. God desires for us to forgive others just as we have been forgiven in Jesus. This means that we forgive as many times as we are given the chance to because we were forgiven by God even though we never deserved it.

## ACTIVITY

Using the jar of sand in the teacher's closet, ask the children to guess how many grains of sand are in it. After several guesses, explain that there are far too many grains of sand for us to be able to count them all. Tell the children to think of ways others have sinned against them. Peter asked Jesus how many times we should forgive others. Explain Jesus's response, that as many times as we are wronged by others, we should forgive because Jesus forgives every time we repent, no matter what we've done. God's forgiveness is unlimited, and He wants us to forgive others just the same.

## PRAYER

Thank God that He forgives us of our sin debt when we repent of our sins. Ask God to help you forgive others the same way He has forgiven you in Jesus.

## SONG

"Amazing Grace"

# FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

Ephesians 1:7a, Col. 2:13-14, Isaiah 59:2

## ACTIVITY

This week as you put your child to bed each night, spend a few moments talking through your day. Try to help them identify on their own at least one way in which they were disobedient. Remind your child that God forgives our debts when we are truly sorry, just like you forgive their disobedience. You can also ask them if someone did something to them that hurt their feelings or made them upset. (This might be a good opportunity to show your child that you sometimes need forgiveness, too, if you have done wrong as a parent. None of us are perfect!) Encourage your child to consider how they have been forgiven and ask them what they should do. Encourage them to offer forgiveness.

## DISCUSSION

- What does it mean to have our debts forgiven?  
Read Psalm 103:11-13 together. The Bible says that as far as the east is from the west (to infinity!) is how far away our debts are when we repent. God is quick to forgive and He does not hold our debts against us once they have been forgiven.
- What does it mean to forgive others?  
Read the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15). We should forgive others just as God forgives us and remember their debts no more. This does not mean we actually forget what they have done, but rather it means that we do not hold what they have done against them any longer. We are giving up the desire to seek revenge. True forgiveness means we do not hold grudges or remind them of how they have done wrong against us, and we ask God to help us by His Spirit in us to stop being angry in our hearts.

## PRAYER

Thank God for offering us forgiveness through Jesus for the debts we cannot pay. Ask God to help you forgive others the way that He forgives. Ask God to help you remember that we are all sinners in need of grace!



