



## Forgiveness - content ideas for Christian collective worship

**Definition:** *Forgiveness cannot be given or received unless it is asked for, and the asking must be genuine and from the heart. Too often 'sorry' is said very easily, implying: 'All I need to do is say I'm sorry and everything will be OK'. **Real repentance demands that we take what we have done wrong with the utmost seriousness and have a deep desire not to do it again.** Jesus was uncompromising in his command to forgive. Forgive, he said, 'seventy times seven' (Matthew 18:21). In other words, forgive and keep on forgiving without limit. **Watch this video***



**Key Bible Character - The forgiving father.** Jesus loves us and will welcome us just like the son was welcomed back home by his father.

**Questions –**

When did I last say sorry? Whom do I need to forgive?  
Why is it hard to forgive? What does it feel like to be forgiven? How do I know I am forgiven? How many times must I forgive someone? Is it really possible to forgive and forget? Is there a limit to forgiveness?

The Lord's Prayer <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/lords-prayer>

**Key Bible verse:**

Forgive us for doing wrong, as we forgive others -Matthew 6:12

Bible stories/verses linked to forgiveness		Bible chapter and verse	Key message
	<a href="https://request.org.uk/issues/ultimate-questions/big-questions-why-should-i-forgive/">https://request.org.uk/issues/ultimate-questions/big-questions-why-should-i-forgive/</a> - forgiveness is more than just words		
1	Jacob and Esau  Lion Storyteller Bible – The Bad Brother p.18	Genesis 25-27 <a href="#">video</a>	Esau forgave Jacob even after he tricked his father and stole his birth right. This is a display of brotherly love. The past is behind them and the future lay ahead for these two brothers and their descendants. There is no mention of the past, of hurts felt, or of fears, but a coming to terms with what has been, what is, and what shall be. Forgiveness isn't mentioned, but it's definitely demonstrated.

2	Parable of the unforgiving servant  Lion Storyteller Bible – The Unforgiving Servant p.108	Matthew 18:21-22  <a href="#">video</a>  <a href="#">video</a>	Jesus explained to his friend Peter that God is like the king in the story: Christians believe God forgives us every time we tell him we are sorry for the wrong things we have done, and he wants us to treat our friends in a similar way – forgiving them each time they say 'sorry' to us.
3	Joseph forgives  Lion Storyteller Bible – Joseph the ruler p.-26	Genesis 45  <a href="#">video</a>	Joseph's brothers had sold him into slavery when he was a teen. He not only forgave them; he offered them kindness: " 'So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.' Also he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. What made him react to such cruelty with forgiveness and kindness?
4	Zacchaeus  Lion Storyteller Bible – Jesus and the Taxman p.30	Luke 19:1-10  <a href="#">video</a>	After he was forgiven, Zacchaeus wanted to give back all the money he took from the people that didn't really belong to him. He was even going to give more away to help the poor people. Being forgiven by Jesus made him happy and made a real difference to how he lived his life. It changed him.
5	Prodigal son  Lion Storyteller Bible – The Big Spender p.120	Luke 15: 11-32  <a href="#">video</a>	The son has to seek forgiveness from his father, which the father gives unconditional despite all the son had done. Jesus told this story to show how much God loves us. Just like the son in the story, we often want our own way and do not think of the consequences. We make foolish mistakes and come to regret them later. Just like the father in the story, though, God never stops loving us and is always ready to forgive us when we admit our wrongdoing.
6	The gift of perfume	Luke 7:36-39  <a href="#">video</a>	This woman knew that she had done some things that were wrong and she wanted Jesus to forgive her. So she wanted to show Jesus she was sorry by cleaning his feet for Him. In the end, Jesus told her that she had been forgiven. That means she did not have to worry about the wrong things she had done in the past. Jesus was not going to remember any of it! The woman was probably very happy she had come to see Jesus. She did not have to be sad anymore.
7	Taking responsibility for our actions	Ephesians 4:29	Saying sorry is really important, but if we thought more carefully about what we said and did before we did it, we might not cause hurt and need to say sorry.

8	<p>The story of Jonah</p> <p>Lion Storyteller Bible – Jonah the Groaner p. 66</p>	<p>Jonah 1-2</p> <p><a href="#">video</a></p>	<p>God forgave Jonah for not obeying him. God wanted Jonah to give the people in Nineveh a message to seek forgiveness of their sins.</p>
9	<p>Jesus forgives Peter</p>	<p>John 21:1-19</p> <p><a href="#">video</a></p>	<p>After Peter had said that he didn't know Jesus he went and cried. He felt so awful about what he had done. But when he met Jesus again after the resurrection, he was given a second chance. Jesus gave Peter a chance to put things right. What about us? We are ordinary people like Peter was, who will mess up from time to time. The good news for us is that even when we have messed up, Jesus still loves us and wants us to be his followers.</p>

**Other free resources on forgiveness to explore:**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cN1xDhrqZRI>
- The Forgiveness Project collects and shares stories from both victims/ survivors and perpetrators of crime and conflict who have rebuilt their lives following hurt and trauma. <https://www.theforgivenessproject.com/>
- <https://www.brf.org.uk/topics/forgiveness/>
- Google 'forgiveness artwork'