



Diocese of Bristol

## Families growing faith at home

**Church@Home** is a simple all-age resource that has been created to encourage and help families enjoy a time of worship, explore the Bible, pray together and grow in their faith in the comfort of their own homes.

**Church@Home** provides a fun, engaging and easy-to-follow session every Sunday using a Bible reading selected from the Church of England Lectionary. Each session lasts approximately twenty minutes and provides age-related material for toddlers to teenagers to accommodate everyone in the family. Thought-provoking questions, fun activities and crafts bring the Bible story to life as well as creative prayer ideas to help families focus, learn and grow in their faith together. Additional teaching and craft suggestions are also provided for families with very young children.

**Church@Home** can also be used as a fun way to help families connect with other families on Sunday mornings too during this time of distancing. Invite everyone to begin **Church@Home** at the same time and perhaps set up a WhatsApp group where families can share what they have done, or discuss the topic further together.

If your family or families in your church are using **Church@Home** please let us know. We would like to keep in contact, find out how you are doing as well as hear how **Church@Home** is helping families grow in their faith, so that we can share and inspire others during this time of distancing.

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Thank you 



Sunday 13 September 2020  
15th Sunday after Pentecost

## Forgiveness

### Matthew 18:21-35

#### Time to focus...

Find a place in your home where the family can all sit comfortably - around the table, on the lounge floor etc. As you gather, if possible, light a candle to mark the beginning of your worship time. Quietly stare at the candle watching the flames flicker and glow.

#### Set the scene...

Do you like to listen to a good story? A parable is another word for the stories Jesus used to help his disciples, and the crowds, understand more about God. Parables are not always easy to understand and in today's reading, Jesus tells a tricky parable about a King and his servants to explain forgiveness...

#### Watch the story...

Saddleback Kids are back retelling the parable of '[the unforgiving servant](#)'.

#### Explore the story...

How many times do you think someone should be forgiven for doing something wrong? Once? Twice? Three times? If you could ask Jesus how many times you should forgive someone, what do you think he would say? Well, the answer is in Matthew's gospel...

One day, Peter asked Jesus, "How many times should I forgive someone who sins against me? Should I forgive them seven times?" Peter probably thought he was being pretty generous to forgive someone seven times. Guess what? Jesus didn't agree.

Jesus answered Peter, "Not seven times, but seventy times seven."

Wow! Seventy times seven! That's four hundred and ninety times. How many would you get to before you lose count? That's probably what Jesus was trying to get Peter to understand and he wants us to understand it too. We shouldn't worry about keeping count of how many times we have forgiven someone - we should just keep on forgiving.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13:5 that love keeps no record of wrongs. The Bible also tells us that God is love: "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love". (1 John 4:8). Remember last Sunday we learnt that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves. So if we love everyone, and keep no record of wrongs, then we shouldn't be keeping a record of the number of times we forgive someone, should we?

We all make mistakes and we all do things that we should not do. So, let's forgive others when they do something to us - at least four hundred and ninety times!

#### End with prayer...

Dear Father, we are thankful that you love us and forgive us without keeping count. Help us to love and forgive others as you have forgiven us. In Jesus' name, Amen.



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## Forgiveness

Creative ideas / toddlers to teenagers

0-5s...

**Creative Prayer:** Using paints or water-based markers, paint/draw a symbol on your hand that represents the things that you have done wrong or upset someone in the family - a cross, angry/upset face etc. When everyone has finished, wash your hands clean together as a reminder that when we ask Jesus to forgive us, He always forgives us and makes our hearts clean.

5-11s...

**Worship:** Listen to "[You forgive me](#)" by Lifetree Kids.

**Activity:** Have a go breaking the code on the next page to see what Colossians 3:13 says about forgiveness >>>

**Creative Prayer:** Get a jug of water and some effervescent vitamin tablets (or something that dissolves like dishwasher tablets/detergent or sugar or salt). Talk about how when we are hurt and angry it hurts us too, but we can ask God to help us to let go of these feelings. Put the tablet in the water (or take turns putting a teaspoon of sugar or salt) and get the children to imagine asking God to help them forgive. As the bubbles start to come off the tablets, imagine giving the hurt feelings to God. If the water changes colour, this illustrates that it's not as if the thing that hurt you had never happened, it's just been changed by God.

11-18s...

- 1) Is there anything that is unforgiveable? Why?
- 2) Why does Jesus imply that you must forgive someone so many times?
- 3) What does the reading say about forgiveness and not forgiving?

 Pray God helps you forgive something you have found hard to forgive.

 Start each day this week saying The Lord's Prayer.

*"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart." **Matthew 18:35***

