

A Happy Sunday

The empty tomb

Mark 16:1-4; Matthew 28:5-8; John 20:3-10; Luke 24:1-12, 36-49

Character Trait: Forgiveness

(Estimated Lesson Time: 90 minutes)

Objectives:

- Children will identify that forgiveness from sin is possible because of what Jesus did.
- Children will share different ways to communicate forgiveness.
- Children will express how choosing to forgive helps heal a hurting heart.

Supplies:

- *A Happy Sunday* loaded onto a tablet or phone in the *Bible App for Kids*
- A heavy object *(such as a large chair or desk)*
- Paper
- Pens and/or pencils

Welcome Activity:

(5 minutes)

Welcome the children. Explain that today you would like them to lift something very heavy. Allow a few volunteers to try. Explain that the object is too heavy for one person to lift.

SAY: This is what sin does to each of us: It creates a problem too big for any of us to fix on our own.

Review:

(5 minutes)

Guide the children in a brief review of the previous lesson by asking the following:

- **Did Jesus deserve to die on the cross?** *(No. Jesus was innocent. There was no reason to kill Him. He had never sinned.)*
- **Why did Jesus willingly die on the cross?** *(He loved us so much. Jesus wanted to complete God's plan to fix our sin problem.)*

Today's Bible Story:

(10-15 minutes)

Show *A Happy Sunday* from the *Bible App for Kids* or share the story aloud:

- Sunday morning, some women went to put burial spices on Jesus' body.
- They knew a big stone was covering the tomb's entrance and wondered how they would move it.
- When they arrived, the stone had already been moved, Jesus' body was gone, and there were angels in the tomb!
- "Jesus is alive!" the angels said. "Go tell His disciples."
- The women told the disciples, and Peter and John ran to Jesus' tomb to see for themselves.
- All they found were Jesus' burial cloths.
- They went back home, confused.
- Later, the disciples were gathered together in a room.
- They were talking about what had happened, when Jesus appeared to them.
- They were terrified.

- They thought He was a ghost.
- "Don't worry," said Jesus. "See My hands and feet. It's Me! Touch Me! Go on! You can't touch a ghost. And ghosts don't eat either, but I'm feeling really hungry."
- So He ate some fish.
- Then He taught them.
- "The Scriptures are clear," He said. "The Messiah was supposed to suffer and die, and then be raised from the dead."
- "Now tell the world what you have seen. Let everyone know that their sins can be forgiven if they turn to God! It's possible because of what I have done."



Discussion:
(15 minutes)

Encourage the children to think more about the story by asking the following:

- **Who were the first people to discover that Jesus' tomb was empty?** *(Some women)*
- **On what day of the week did the women go to Jesus' tomb?** *(Sunday)*
- **What did the angels say to the women when they arrived?** *("Jesus is alive! Go tell His disciples.")*
- **What did Jesus say was now possible because of what He had done?** *("Everyone's sins can be forgiven if they turn to God and trust in Me.")*
- **What else did Jesus tell the disciples to do?** *("Tell the world what you have seen.")*

SAY: Sin leads to death. But when Jesus died, He was completing the plan God had all along. Jesus fixed our sin problem. Jesus sacrificed Himself for our sins and rose from the grave. He is stronger than sin or death! Instead of punishment, we can now have complete forgiveness from God and live with Him forever. Jesus loves each of us enough to give us the greatest gift He could give. And He allows each of us to choose to accept this free gift or not.

We can accept Jesus' free gift by choosing to repent. To repent means to choose to say "no" to sin and "yes" to God. When we repent, we confess our sin, accept Jesus' free gift, and put our trust in God. When we accept Jesus' free gift of forgiveness, we are also choosing to put our trust in God and depend on Him.



God's Bigger Story:
(5 minutes)

SAY: Jesus physically died on the cross but rose from the dead three days later, proving He had defeated death. By dying in our place, Jesus paid the price for our sins. When Jesus rose from the dead, He defeated sin and death! Forgiveness from sin is a free gift that anyone can receive when they place their faith *(trust)* in God.



Memory Verse:
(10 minutes)

"The time *(pretend to tap a wristwatch)*
promised by God *(point both hands up)*
has come *(beckon with hand)* **at last! ...**
The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins *(sweep arms out in front of you)*
and believe *(bring hands together in heart shape)* **the Good News!"**

Mark 1:15 (NLT)

Activity:
(15 minutes)

SAY: Imagine all the different emotions the women who first found Jesus' empty tomb must have felt. First, they might have been very sad as they walked to the tomb to place burial spices on His body. As they walked, they might have worried about how they would move the big, heavy stone guarding the tomb's entrance. Imagine how surprised they were when they saw the stone moved, Jesus' body gone, and angels in the tomb instead! How joyful they must have been after hearing the good news that Jesus was alive again. And finally, how incredibly eager they must have been to reach the disciples to tell them the news.

Have the children line up in a straight line in a corner of the room. Together, slowly walk around the room, stopping at various points to act out the different emotions the women must have felt at each of these different points in the story. *(These emotions include sad, worried, surprised, joyful, eager, or excited.)*

SAY: The women at Jesus' tomb must have experienced a lot of different emotions! So do we. Feelings and emotions are a normal part of being human.

Show me with your face how you feel when someone hurts or wrongs you. *(Provide an opportunity for the children to make sad, facial expressions. Invite them to look around at one another, too.)*

When someone hurts us, we have a choice: We can hold on to the hurt and keep hurting, or we can let go of the hurt by choosing to forgive. Forgiveness does not mean allowing someone to continue hurting us. In fact, forgiveness is not about other people's actions. It is about our attitude. Choosing to forgive means choosing love over more hurt. We can ask God to help us forgive.

Ask the children to turn to someone next to them and share words that communicate forgiveness.

Response Activity:
(10 minutes)

Explain that this activity can be kept private. Have the children draw a large heart in the middle of a sheet of paper. Ask them to write down or draw something they have said or done that they feel ashamed of. When finished, invite the children to crumple it up and throw it away. Then, give them a new piece of paper. Have them draw another large heart in the middle of the paper. Ask them to write down or draw something that they would like God's help with. Explain that this can be a personal problem, a goal for the future, or a challenge they are currently facing.

SAY: When we accept Jesus' forgiveness, we may never really forget our sins. But we can let go of the shame because Jesus already paid the price we owed. With God, we can have a new life,and we never have to do life alone!

Character Trait: Forgiveness
(10 minutes)

SAY: Forgiveness means to not hold something against someone. Silently think about a time when you hurt someone else. How did you feel afterward? Did the other person forgive you? How did it feel to accept the forgiveness? Now, imagine how wonderful it feels to experience the gift of complete forgiveness that Jesus offers.

Encourage the children to think more about purpose by asking the following:

- **Why should we choose to forgive someone who has hurt us?** *(God can help change our hearts and heal our hurts. He can help us not to be bitter even though we may continue to hurt.)*

- **How can we show forgiveness to others when they hurt or wrong us?** *(Answers will vary but may include choosing to act kindly, not seeking revenge, and not allowing our hearts to grow bitter.)*
- **How did Jesus pay our debt so that we could have forgiveness from sin?** *(He willingly died on the cross for us even though He did not deserve it.)*
- **How can we know that Jesus paid our debt in full?** *(Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus said, "Let everyone know that their sins can be forgiven if they turn to God! It's possible because of what I have done.")*
- **Is Jesus' forgiveness from sins available to you? How can you know?** *(Yes, because Jesus said "everyone" can be forgiven if they turn to God.)*



Connect with Others:

(5 minutes)

SAY: Choosing to forgive someone does not mean forgetting what they did or letting them continue to cause hurt. Forgiveness does not just help the person who caused the hurt. It helps heal our hearts, too.

SAY: Think about someone who has hurt you recently. Silently think about a specific way that you can show forgiveness to this person. *(Provide a few moments of quiet think time.)* Now, think about how choosing to forgive can help you also. *(Call on a few volunteers to share aloud; then, provide an opportunity for those who have not shared to turn and do so with someone near them.)*

SAY: Forgiveness means making the decision to let go of the hurt. This does not mean that we forget the pain. Instead, it means focusing on our healing rather than our continued hurting. If we are too busy seeking revenge or trying to get even, then we cannot take care of our hurting hearts. When we choose to forgive, we also show humility. Only God has the right to judge and punish others. We should not seek revenge because God will do this for us (Leviticus 19:18, Deuteronomy 32:35, Hebrews 10:30).



Closing:

(2 minutes)

SAY: Sin breaks our relationship with God, but Jesus' love and power is stronger! When Jesus came back to life, He proved that He had overcome sin forever!

Ask the children if any of them would like to receive Jesus' gift of forgiveness. *(Lead the children who express interest in the short prayer of salvation below.)*



Prayer:

(2 minutes)

SAY:

Dear God,
Thank You for sending Jesus to die on the cross to pay the price for my sins. I want to accept Your free gift of forgiveness. I want to love, follow, trust, and obey You.
Amen.

Notes