



# **I Can Love!**

## **A Building Block of Forgiveness**

**A Guided Curriculum for Children Ages 4-5  
(Grade K-4 in the US, P1 in the UK)  
within a Christian Context**

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# I Can Love: A Building Block of Forgiveness

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## **I Can Love: A Building Block of Forgiveness**

### **A Guided Curriculum for Children Ages 4-5**

You are about to embark on a truly exciting adventure: you will help your students to lay a foundation for their future forgiveness of those who are unfair to them. I cannot think of a more worthwhile activity for them. Forgiving people who hurt us deeply can lift the weight of revenge that has been strapped to our backs for years. I have known people who have resented family members for 50 years. One man, whose father was very unkind to him when he was a child, had a recurrent dream for 22 years of his father chasing after him. He knew what he was going to dream about upon retiring nightly! Once he learned to forgive his father, that dream left. He inherited a sense of peace.

Forgiveness is like that. It has a way of cutting through our anger, disappointment, and resentment to give all involved persons a fresh start. As you forgive, you are set free from the prison of resentment. As you offer forgiveness to another, he or she has the chance to begin anew with you, trying to be more civil, more respectful, and more kind. Those around you benefit because you are less likely to carry your anger into other situations. You are less likely to displace your anger onto those who don't deserve such treatment.

Forgiveness is full of surprises. With about twenty-five years of forgiveness research experience, I have seen remarkable improvements in the emotional health and well-being of children, adolescents, young and middle-aged adults, and the elderly as they learned to forgive. We have seen lives transformed.

Forgiveness, of course, has a long history, dating back to the oldest preserved record, which we find in the Hebrew text of Genesis. In that story, which has appeared both in modern day film and on Broadway, Joseph forgives his brother and half-brothers for selling him into slavery in Egypt. Some of the important themes in that story are as follows:

1. Joseph forgave unconditionally. He did not await repentance or an apology from his brothers. The same unconditional forgiveness is seen in another ancient story, that of the Prodigal Son in the Christian New Testament.
2. Joseph's forgiveness was not easy. He went back and forth from anger to mercy, to anger again. Forgiveness can take time and it certainly makes room for some initial anger toward the person who was (or people who were) unjust.
3. Joseph's forgiveness was filled with love. He did not just accept what happened or simply cast aside a gnawing anger. He wept and embraced his brothers, showing them lavish mercy. Again, this same theme resounds in the story of the Prodigal Son.
4. Joseph's forgiveness was life-giving for the ones forgiven. His forgiving was a gift that benefited all.

In our search to understand forgiveness, we have never examined any ancient text with a moral basis to it that did not value forgiveness. Christianity, Muslim (afo), Confucian (shu), and Buddhist all teach on the merits of forgiveness.

Forgiveness can be defined this way: When you are unjustly hurt by another person, you forgive when you struggle to give up the resentment (to which you are actually entitled because you were unfairly treated) and you strive to offer the offending one compassion, benevolence, and love (knowing that yours is an act of mercy and therefore not necessarily deserved by the person). Please note that we are not saying here that the person is not worthy of receiving forgiveness. We are saying that forgiveness is a gift, unearned.

Forgiveness has three paradoxes embedded in it:

1. A forgiver gives up resentment even though the world might tell him or her to cling to the resentment. Why cast off the resentment? Common sense might say, “Be strong,” “Show your anger,” or “Don’t let the person get away with this!” A forgiver gives up resentment nonetheless.
2. A forgiver seems to be doing all of the giving and the offender all of the taking. After all, that person hurt you, so why should you give the gift of compassion, benevolence, and love? Is it not the offender’s turn to give to you, not the other way around? A forgiver gives these gifts nonetheless.
3. A forgiver, who reaches out to the other person with concern and care, often finds that he or she (the forgiver), is the one who is emotionally healed.

As you learn more about forgiveness, you will see that it is not always what it seems to be. Forgiveness is not something weak; instead, it is strong. Giving a gift to one who was unfair is a lavish act of love and mercy. Forgiveness does not make us a doormat, to be walked on by others. When we forgive, we can and should stand up for our rights.

Forgiveness is not the same as condoning or excusing. When we forgive, we do not find an excuse for another person’s actions. Instead, we label the other person’s actions as wrong. Forgiveness does not equal forgetting. We have observed many people forgive, and we can say that we have never—not once—seen anyone who forgets the offense. Yes, people may remember in new ways, but they do not develop a curious moral amnesia upon forgiving.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are not one and the same. When a person forgives, he or she unilaterally offers an end to resentment and acts with compassion and love. The other person might spurn this gift, but the gift-giver is the one who decides whether or not to give it. When two or more people reconcile, they come together again in mutual trust, since to reconcile is to trust the other person again. To forgive is to offer love, but not necessarily to trust the other person unless he or she resolves 1) not to offend in the same way again (within reason); 2) to repent; and 3) to offer recompense. One can forgive and then not reconcile if the other remains in his or her hurtful ways.

As you work with children on forgiveness, please keep in mind some basic issues to guard the children's rights and safety. Consider four ideas below:

1. Forgiveness is a choice of the forgiver. Teachers, parents, or anyone else should not demand that a child forgive someone. If a child does not want to forgive, we must respect that decision. This is what I mean when I say that forgiveness is a choice:

- ✦ All people are free to choose or to reject forgiveness. Society, groups, or individuals must not force a person to engage in forgiveness. The person must willingly and freely choose the good of forgiveness. We realize that at times such a choice is painfully difficult and that the person needs some time to more clearly make such a choice.
- ✦ When a person chooses forgiveness, that choice has to be a gift given freely from the heart. It should not be given because of external rewards, expectations, or pressure from others.

This is what we do **not** mean when we say that forgiveness is a choice:

- ✦ I do not mean by "choice" that this is some kind of superficial decision such as, "Should I have peas or carrots tonight?" This decision is superficial primarily because in the big picture, it almost doesn't matter which vegetable you choose. Because forgiveness is a moral virtue, it matters greatly whether we choose it or not.
- ✦ When we use the word "choice", we do not mean that we will leave the moral virtue of forgiveness entirely behind if today we are so angry that we refuse to forgive our neighbor for an injustice against us." In other words, it is not that we are choosing to leave forgiveness behind with our neighbor for all time with regard to this particular injustice. We may choose to come back to this issue when we are not so angry.
- ✦ When we use the word "choice," we do not mean that the one who is considering forgiveness is exclusively deciding between two or more virtues. For example, we do not mean that if a person decides to seek justice against one's neighbor for this offense, then forgiveness can be put on the shelf. Forgiveness is not a dichotomous virtue in that the person is choosing one and only one virtue and if forgiveness is not the choice, then forgiveness is put far away in the closet.
- ✦ When we use the word "choice", we are not suggesting that a choice against forgiveness is the only moral good and that forgiveness itself, once rejected, has somehow mysteriously lost its moral quality. Let us explain: some people do not realize that forgiveness is a moral virtue, but instead consider it to be some kind of morally-neutral behavior, which it is not. Every choice that involves a rejection of a moral virtue must be pondered carefully because all moral virtues are concerned with the good in this life. Whenever a moral virtue is rejected in a particular situation, such as rejecting patience, rejecting fairness, or rejecting forgiveness, the choice involves rejecting something that is morally good. Let us clarify further: If the person rejects forgiveness, but then has a

different response of moral goodness, this in no way makes the person's behavior immoral. At the same time, it may be a challenge for the person to realize that he or she, in rejecting an appropriate moral response, such as forgiveness, might mean that he or she is not living according to his or her best self.

- ✦ Finally, we come to a big picture issue. If a person chooses to reject forgiveness toward one's neighbor for any and all injustices by that neighbor and continues to choose against forgiveness for any injustice from any person, this itself could present a considerable moral dilemma for the person. To reject any moral virtue under all circumstances is to reject goodness.

2. Forgiveness does not mean that a child automatically enters into a relationship with a person who is a danger to the child. Please remember that forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same thing.

3. Please avoid putting pressure on the class as children learn to forgive. Forgiveness is not like other subjects (e.g., math, science, etc.) where children get good grades for performing better than others. We should avoid making forgiveness into a competition. Try to get the children to enjoy this, again keeping in mind that it is their choice.

4. Even if a child does not want to forgive someone, you should decide whether or not it is appropriate for the child at least to learn about forgiveness. Understanding forgiveness is not the same as practicing it. A skeptic might say that this tactic is just a subtle way of getting a child to practice it. We disagree. When handled sensitively, you can encourage the child to listen and learn without the pressure to perform acts of forgiveness.

### The Curriculum

In the first four lessons, rather than concentrating on forgiveness per se, the children will be focusing on **major foundational principles involved in forgiving another person**: the ideas of inherent worth and love. These are explained below.

*Inherent worth.* This is the important idea that all people have deep worth and this is because they are people. This deep worth cannot be earned nor taken away. It is an essential part of each person. Within the context of forgiveness, it is akin to the idea that we are to love the offender, but dislike the offense. As children learn that all people have deep worth (even following injustice), they will be laying an important foundation for forgiving.

*Genuine Love* (Agape Love). When we genuinely love someone, we love him or her unconditionally, despite his or her flaws. Certainly, someone who genuinely loves another can ask fairness of him or her. Yet, the one who loves in this way has the other person's best interest at heart. Genuine love is not a selfish or self-centered. Genuine love underlies true forgiveness.

In the final four lessons the students will learn about forgiveness. They will learn about feelings (especially feelings that follow unfairness like anger, sadness, and disappointment), the

meaning of forgiveness, and that in forgiveness, one learns to see the great worth of the person who was unfair and offer love.

A word on the choice of curricular materials is in order. The intent here is to make the exploration of forgiveness interesting and fun. One does not learn to play football by being thrust into highly competitive, serious situations too early. At first, it is sufficient for the children to run out onto the field on a warm afternoon, kick the ball around, and not yet worry about all the rules and regulations. It is the same with forgiveness. Its introduction should be somewhat light, free from lots of rules, and fun.

To that end, we have chosen many interesting and fun stories. Our colleagues and we have found that if the children can begin to understand inherent worth and genuine love, if the children can begin to understand how these are part of forgiveness, and if the children can practice forgiveness using these principles, you as the teacher will have laid the foundation for a lifetime of forgiving. You will have done something very important for your children.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the forgiveness lessons in this guide, please contact us (rd.enright@yahoo.com).

Best Regards,

*Jeanette A. Knutson*

*Robert D. Enright*

## **Book List**

**You Are My I Love You** by Maryann K. Cusimano

**No Matter What** by Debi Gliori

**Fill a Bucket** by Carol McCloud and Katherine Martin

**I Love My New Toy** by Mo Willems

**A Birthday for Frances** by Russell Hoban

**Papa, Do You Love Me?** By Barbara M. Joosse



## Lesson One

### **Family Love as the Place Where We Learn to Give and Get Love**

#### Main Ideas

In this lesson we will be discussing family love. Family love is typically a love shown by a parent toward his or her child and a love shown by a child toward his or her parent(s). We will expand the definition to include the love siblings have toward one another (sister for sister, sister for brother, brother for brother, brother for sister) as well as the love extended family members have toward one another. We will discuss family love apart from forgiveness.

The love parents have toward their children teaches, protects, encourages, comforts, cares for, and brings into membership.

Children *need* to be taught, protected, encouraged, comforted, cared for, and given security by being brought into family membership. Children *need* their parent's gift of love. It is this *need* that completes the parent's love.

Genuine family love is warm, comfortable, and safe. There is a natural satisfaction in simply being together. It cannot be walled out by age, education, gender, or socioeconomic status. We do not choose our family members. Family love overlooks faults (genuine love overlooks faults, but does not overlook inappropriate behaviors or unfairness toward self and others) and appreciates the people who are in our lives. It opens our eyes to the deep worth of the other. Family love is both a gift love and a need love. Family love teaches, protects, cares for, brings a person into membership, and comforts.<sup>1</sup>

**Caution:** As you are well aware, some children will have different family compositions than the one depicted in the story, *I Love You Stinky Face*. The principle of family love can be illustrated with any kind of close relationship, whether it is between siblings or between a child and foster parent, or other kinds of situations. Please be ready to discuss family love in specific ways for the children.

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<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*.

## **General Objectives**

### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Learn the meaning of family love and how it is given.
- ❖ Learn how family love can benefit people and communities.

## **Behavioral Objectives**

### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Listen to a story written by Lisa McCourt entitled, *You Are My I Love You* by Maryann Cusimano.
- ❖ Participate in the class discussion.
- ❖ Participate in “The Big Heart Little Heart” activity.

## **Materials**

The book, *You Are My I Love You* by Maryann Cusimano  
Blackboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers

## **Procedures**

The following procedures are to serve as guidelines for the teacher. Please feel free to make adjustments and/or improvements to the procedures, discussion questions, or activities if it will help you more effectively meet the needs of your students. To maintain the integrity of the curriculum, please make certain that the objectives of the lesson are met.

1. Tell the students, “Today you are being given a special opportunity to begin a journey that will teach you about *love and forgiveness*. In this lesson, we will talk genuine love—especially love toward family members.
2. Introduce today’s story, *You Are My I Love You*, written by Maryann Cusimano. Tell the students that this story is about family love. It is about the love parents have for their children and the love that children have for their parents [we will also talk about the love siblings have toward one another (sister for sister, sister for brother, brother for brother, brother for sister) and the love extended family members have for one another (grandparents) as part of

*family love*]. A note to the teacher: Do your best to focus the students on the very special and loving relationship that the mother and her son have in today's story. The mother loves the child and the child loves the mother. It is a very sweet, gentle love. Please notice how each gets great comfort from that love.

3. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
4. Have the students participate in the "What Is Sweeter?" activity. See the Activities section.
5. Conclude by summarizing the main points of the lesson.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What did you like about this story on family love?
2. *Hold up the final picture in the book and ask the children, "Do you see the mother and her little bear cub here? Are they showing love toward each other or are they showing anger? How do you know? Soft eyes, tender touch, comfort, and peace.*
3. Are BOTH the mother and the child showing love toward each other? How do you know? Both have the comfort and peace on their faces and in their actions.
4. *Does family love go back and forth that way---from the mother to the child and from the child to the mother?*
5. Do you think this kind of love goes to the father in the family, too? Do you think the mother and the bear cub love the father? Do you think he loves them? If the father were in the picture, how would he look? Comforted and peaceful.
6. *What if the grandfather and the grandmother were in the picture, would they have love on their faces?*
7. Let's say we could look at the Mom's heart (as the teacher, please form your index fingers and thumbs into the shape of a heart that the children can see). Let's pretend that this heart I am showing you is the Mother's heart. [Now hold up a small piece of candy or a drawing of a piece of candy that the children recognize as just that---a piece of candy.] What do you think is sweeter and more important to the child, his mother's love or this piece of candy? Why do you say this? What makes love so important? *It protects, comforts, and makes us feel great.*
8. *Then repeat this line of questioning for the child's love toward the Mother.*
9. Do you think the child's heart is filled with sweet love BECAUSE his Mother poured love into him? Why or why not?
10. *Do you think the Mother's heart is filled with sweet love BECAUSE her son and others poured love into her heart? Why or why not?*
11. What is family love? *It is the special warm glow you feel in your heart when with your family. It is thinking of some of your family members when you are away from them and feeling warmth inside your heart. It is happiness when you think of some of your family members.*
12. *Tell me what your heart feels like when it is filled with love?*
13. Are you someone who loves? Whom do you love?

**Continued on next page**

14. How can you make your love the sweetest of all? *Try to make the other person happy, be kind to each person, make each person smile.*
15. This is not a question, but a statement to the children---You can love. Can you say that? "I can love!"

### **Activity**

The teacher may decide whether or not to include an activity in the lesson.

#### **What Is Sweeter?**

##### ***Objective***

The students will continue to learn about the importance of family love.

##### ***Instructions***

On a blackboard or some other kind of board draw a big heart and say to the children: "This big heart is the big love that you have in your own heart. Over here we have five other things that I want to ask you about. [Draw the following objects on the board---an apple, a toy, sunshine, a bicycle or tricycle, and some money.] Point first to the heart and to apple and ask, "What is sweeter, the love in your heart or a juicy apple?" *The love in my heart because it is warm and soft and never disappears like an apple does once I eat it.*

Then point to the heart and the toy and ask, "What is sweeter, the love in your heart or a really fun toy?" *The love in my heart because we usually get tired of certain toys, but we never get tired of loving.*

Then point to the heart and to the sun and ask, "What makes you feel better, your heart filled with love or a sun-shiny day?" *Love makes me feel warm inside and all over. The sun only warms me on the outside.*

Then point to the heart and the tricycle or bicycle and ask, "What makes you happier, your heart filled with love or a shiny new tricycle/ bicycle?" *The heart filled with love never disappoints me. Sometimes I can fall off of a bike and it hurts. Besides, a tricycle or bicycle cannot love be back.*

Next, point to the heart and the money and ask, "What is better, lots of love in your heart or lots of money in your pocket?" *The love never runs out while the money does. Money does not buy happiness.*

Finally, point to the heart and at the same time to all of the other objects and ask, "What is sweeter, all of this big love in your heart or all of these other things over here?" *Love is sweeter than all of this because it never dries up, we do not grow tired of love, and it makes us warm all over.*

## **In a Christian Context**

As with the previous sections of Lesson 1, this section is for those teachers seeking ideas about family love within their own Christian tradition. We present some general ideas followed by some specific scriptures. Teachers should feel free to use these sections as they wish.

### **General Ideas**

God teaches us many lessons of family love in the Bible. One of the most important lessons of love is the Holy Family of Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. When Jesus is born, Mary and Joseph wrap him in swaddling cloths to keep him warm, they protect him, and love him no matter what. They all have sweet love in their hearts for one another.

### **Scripture**

The following references may be used for thought and/or discussion to support the main ideas of the lesson.

***Luke 2: 1--20:*** The birth of Jesus is filled with love. Mary and Joseph pour out love for Jesus and Jesus returns love to them. The shepherds come and also offer love to them.

Try to find a beautiful picture of the Holy Family in Bethlehem to show to the children.

## **Evaluation of the Students**

- ❖ Did the students listen attentively to the story?
- ❖ Did the students actively participate in the group discussion?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the “The Big Heart Little Heart” activity?
- ❖ Did the students learn the meaning of family love?
- ❖ Did the students learn how family members show love toward one another?
- ❖ Did the students learn the importance of family love?

## **EVALUATION OF LESSON ONE**

**Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught:\_\_\_\_\_**

**The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:**

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**I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:**

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**The students responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**The students did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**General Comments:**

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## **Lesson Two**

### **Seeing People through the Eyes of Love: Inherent Worth**

#### **Main Ideas**

In this lesson, the students will focus on the great worth of their family members. This lesson is an important foundation for forgiveness.

What does it mean to say that all people have great worth? It means that *all people* have great value and that they have great importance in this world. This great worth is not based on appearance, possessions, behavior, position in life, place of residence, or other differences. These differences contribute to one's personality, but they are not the source of great worth.

One's great worth cannot be earned and it cannot be taken away. All people have great worth simply because they are people.

We are to treat all people—including our family members—as people of great worth.

Lessons one through five will provide a solid “forgiveness foundation” that will help the students as they learn to forgive in the later lessons.

#### **General Objectives**

##### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Learn that our family members have great worth.
- ❖ Learn that this great worth is not based on personal differences like appearance, possessions, behavior, position in life, place of residence, and so forth.
- ❖ Learn that we have great worth because we are people.
- ❖ Learn that we are to treat all people as they are—people of great worth.

#### **Behavioral Objectives**

##### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Listen to Debi Gliori's story entitled, *No Matter What*.
- ❖ Participate in the class discussion.
- ❖ Participate in the “The Gummy Child” Activity.

## **Materials**

The book, *No Matter What* by Debi Gliori

Clay large enough to make a child's face, visible to all students

Gummy candies for placing on the clay

## **Procedures**

The following procedures are to serve as guidelines for the teacher. Please feel free to make adjustments and/or improvements to the procedures, discussion questions, or activities if it will help you more effectively meet the needs of your students. To maintain the integrity of the curriculum, please make certain that the objectives of the lesson are met.

1. Introduce the lesson by telling the students that they will be listening to the story, written by Debi Gliori entitled, *No Matter What*. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
2. Have the students participate in the activity. See the Activity section for further instructions.
3. Conclude by summarizing the main points of the lesson.
  - What does it mean to say that all of our family members have great worth? *It means have great value. This worth is not based on appearance, possessions, behavior, position in life, place of residence, or other such external differences.*
  - It is important that we treat the people in our families as people of great worth.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. In the book, *No Matter What*, does the Mother love her son? (Show the cover page of the Mom hugging her child.)
2. Does the Mom think the son is special? Why or why not?
3. Let's play pretend as the author of the story, *No Matter What* did. Let's suppose that the son became a scary vulture flying through the sky. Would the Mother think that the son is any less special now? Why or why not?
4. Let's suppose that the son became a porcupine with very sharp quills. Would the Mother think the son is any less special now? Why or why not?



5. Let's suppose that the son became a swimming shark with sharp teeth. Would the Mother think the son is any less special now? Why or why not?

No matter what, the Mother thinks the son is special. No matter how the son looks or acts.

No matter how good he is in football, no matter what, the Mother thinks the son is special.

That is what family love is all about. When you see through the eyes of love, you see beyond how someone looks. You see beyond how they are behaving. You see beyond how good they are in things like reading to seeing who they really, really are—special!

6. Do you think the son in the story sees the Mother as special and important? Why or why not?
7. What if the Mother had a big limp where she could not walk around very well? Would the son still think she is special? Why or why not?
8. If the Mother had very little money and they had only a little food to eat, would the son still think the Mother is special? Why or why not?
9. Are you special in your family no matter what? Why or why not? (Note to teacher: The answer is always yes. When some children are not treated as if they're special then they will not see themselves as special. This is our opportunity to help them to see, even if they have to fight cognitively, that they are special no matter what.)

### **Activity**

The teacher may decide whether or not to include an activity in the lesson.

### **The Gummy Child Activity**

#### ***Objective***

The students will think about the deep worth of their family members. They will learn that this deep worth is not based on physical appearance, possessions, career, or other external features. They will learn that we should treat others as people of deep worth.

#### ***Instructions***

Take a piece of clay and form it into a large circle to represent the head and face of a clay-child. Have next to you a box of gummy candies. Say to the children, "See this round piece of clay? It is our **Gummy Child**. We will make the child different by putting different gummy candies on him (or on her). Watch carefully because I will have some questions for you each time."

1. First, arranging the gummy candies in the form of a big, happy smile. Ask the children, “Is our Gummy Child special here? Is he (she) special **because of** the smile on the face?” Why or why not?” *The child would be special whether or not he is smiling.*
2. Now, let’s re-arrange Gummy Child. See, he is having a bad day and so he is grumpy. Now is he special? Why or why not?
3. Next, please place the gummy candies in such a way that they represent a party hat on top of Gummy Child’s head and say, “Today it is Gummy Child’s birthday. See his party hat? Does having a birthday make him MORE special than his brothers and sisters?” *No. Even though it is a special day, all of the children are special.*
4. Next, take all of the green candies and place them on the lower end of Gummy Child’s chin. Say to the children, “See what Gummy Child has? These candies are now lots of money. Gummy Child is rich, but his brothers and sisters are not. Does this make Gummy Child even MORE special than all of his brothers and sisters? Why or why not?”
5. “What else can we put onto Gummy Child to make him different than he is right now?” (Listen for the answers and if possible arrange the candies to make what the children suggest. “Do you see that no matter what we do to make Gummy Child different he is still a very special Gummy Child just because of who he is. It is the same with you. You are of great worth because you are you and not because you are good in sports or anything else. You are special.”

### **In a Christian Context**

This section is for those teachers seeking ideas about inherent worth within their own Christian tradition. We present some general ideas followed by some specific scriptures. Teachers should feel free to use these sections as they wish.

#### **General Ideas**

All people are children of God. God sees that with regard to each one of us, “a person is a person.” God loves all people regardless of how they look, what they do in life, what they can or cannot do, the possessions they have, or their level of health. God does not show favoritism. All are precious and of great value in God’s sight. Age does not matter to God, as He loves adults and children.

#### **Video**

All people are loved by Jesus. The song, Jesus Loves Me, is one way to get that message across. You can begin sharing this with the children by going to the following video on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKz4JmMU1vI&feature=related) : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKz4JmMU1vI&feature=related>  
Have the children learn the song so that they can sing it together.

### **Scripture**

If you do a word study of the Bible, you will see that the word “children” is mentioned hundreds of times. Children are very important to God. Please let the children know this. The verses below make this point clear.

**Mark 10:14** Then the children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; but Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

### **Evaluation of the Students**

- ❖ Did the students listen to the story or a review of the story?
- ❖ Did the students participate in a class discussion?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the activity?
- ❖ Did the students focus on the deep worth of family members?
- ❖ Did the students learn that this great worth is not based on personal differences like appearance, possessions, behavior, position in life, place of residence, and so forth?
- ❖ Did the students learn that we are to treat all people as people of great worth?

## **EVALUATION OF LESSON TWO**

**Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught:\_\_\_\_\_**

**The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:**

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**I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:**

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**The students responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**The students did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**General Comments:**

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## **Lesson Three**

### **Taking Family Love into the World of School, Playground, and Other Places**

#### **Main Ideas**

In this lesson, the students will continue to learn about genuine love. As in the previous lessons, the topic of forgiveness will not yet be discussed.

Love is defined by Webster's dictionary as a feeling of strong attachment, liking, or fondness for another person. Love is more than a feeling. It is also a decision to treat others as we want to be treated. Love involves seeing the great worth of all people. Genuine love is not selfish or self-centered.

Love can be shown through thoughts, words, and behaviors (gifts in the form of things, time, kindness, respect, and generosity). We can also show love by refraining from thinking harsh thoughts, performing unkind behaviors, and withdrawing gifts.

All people are worthy of love. Entire communities can benefit from loving people.

#### **General Objectives**

##### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Learn the meaning of genuine love.
- ❖ Learn how to think, act, and feel in loving ways.
- ❖ Learn that love can help us to see others' great worth.
- ❖ Learn that all people are worthy of love.

#### **Behavioral Objectives**

##### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Listen to the story, *Fill a Bucket* by Carol McCloud and Katherine Martin.
- ❖ Participate in the class discussion.
- ❖ Participate in the activity.

#### **Materials**

The book, *Fill a Bucket* by Carol McCloud and Katherine Martin

Construction paper, one for each student

Scotch tape

Approximately 7 small cut-out hearts for each child

## Procedures

As you now know, the following procedures are to serve as guidelines for the teacher. Please feel free to make adjustments and/or improvements to the procedures, discussion questions, or activities if it will help you more effectively meet the needs of your students. To maintain the integrity of the curriculum, please make certain that the objectives of the lesson are met.

1. Briefly review the main ideas of the previous lesson. The people in our families and school and neighborhood all have great worth. They have great worth because they are people and not because of the ways they look, how they act, or what they can do.
2. Introduce today's lesson. Let the students know that they will be discussing love. *Love is a feeling, but it is also a decision to treat others with respect, kindness, generosity, and so forth. All people are worthy of love.*
3. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
4. Conduct the activity. See the Activities section.
5. Review the main ideas of the lesson. Love is a feeling, but it is also a thought and an action. Respect, kindness, and generosity are offered in love. All people are worthy of love. Love can help individuals and communities.

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you think of the story, *Fill a Bucket*? What was put in the bucket on most pages of the story? *Love was put into the bucket.*
2. One thing the story told us was that family members can have a lot of love for each other. Daddy (page 9), Mommy (page 10), and sister (page 11) all put love into the bucket of the child. (Show the pictures as you say this.) When love is put in the bucket, how do the people's faces look? *Happy, filled with joy.*
3. What are some of the ways that the people show love for each other? Show page 10 (*by a big hug*); show page 11 (*by reading to the child and putting one's arm around his shoulder*); show page 12 (*by blowing bubbles together*); and show page 15 (*by helping each other*).
4. Just as family members can love one another, is it possible to take that love, which you learned in the family, and give the love away to others in the world? Show page 19. The story children are waving to us and smiling at us. We are not members of the family and they are filling our buckets.

5. Of course, we will not wave at everyone in the world. We will fill the buckets of those our parents tell us is all right to do this, right? This is stated for the purpose of safety.
6. Look at this picture (page 21 with a lot of people in the background). See how the child is filling all of these people's buckets by being kind and loving?
7. Tell me some of the people you know outside of the family whose bucket you can fill with kindness and love. (Allow the children to mention neighbors, friends, school mates, teachers, and others.) List back to the children all the different people mentioned to show that we can fill buckets in our neighborhood, in school, and on the playground.
8. Do you think all of the love that was poured into the child (who is pictured on page 21) in her home by the Mother, Father, sister, and the grandmother and grandfather helped fill her bucket with such love that she could then pour out that love to other people outside the family? Why or why not?
9. Can you take the love in your heart and pour it into the buckets of others in this classroom and in this school? How can you do that?
10. Do you see----You Can Love!

### **Activities**

The teacher may decide whether or not to include an activity in the lesson.

#### **The Bucket of Hearts Activity**

##### ***Objective***

The students will learn the ways we can think, act, and feel in loving ways. The students will each add a paper heart to their own buckets every time they have a loving feeling, thought, or behavior toward someone in the classroom and school today.

##### ***Instructions***

**Materials needed:** construction paper (one per child), tape, and cut-out hearts (seven for each child) small enough to fit into the construction-paper buckets.

The teacher will begin the activity by making a funnel (closed on the bottom) from one piece of construction paper and then securing it with scotch tape. This will be the bucket, which will lie on its side. Each child, with help, will make a funnel-bucket and secure it with tape.

1. Then the teacher will say to the children, "This paper bucket is your love bucket, just like we read in the story. These hearts represent the love you have in your own heart. Remember the story----As you fill up others' buckets with your love, your bucket also gets filled up.
2. I will give each of you seven hearts for today. Please keep them on your desk. When you do or say something loving toward someone else, then you will put one heart into your bucket.
3. Once you do or say seven loving things and have seven hearts in your bucket, then we will pretend that it is full for today.

4. But remember, love keeps going. It doesn't actually fill up so much that you cannot get more into your love bucket. You can always give more love to others and they can give more love to you. Our love given and given and given to others makes the love grow and grow and grow out into the world."

### **In a Christian Context**

As you now know, in this section we present some general ideas for a discussion within a Christian context. Teachers should feel free to use these sections as they wish.

#### **General Ideas**

God has given all people the command to "love one another." The Bible tells us to demonstrate this love through kind, generous, caring, compassionate, and merciful behaviors. By sending Jesus to earth, God gave us "light" instead of darkness. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. We can learn what it means to love and how to love through faith, by receiving God's love, by getting to know Jesus, and by learning from his life. One person whom we should love is Jesus, who first loved us.

#### **Video**

Here is another rendition of Jesus Love Me from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DYDvyBKZJA&feature=related) :  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DYDvyBKZJA&feature=related>.

Please play it and then teach the children the following song, based on the same melody:

I love Jesus, this I know  
For my warm heart tells me so  
Little ones to him belong  
They are weak but He is strong.

Yes, I love Jesus  
Yes, I love Jesus  
Yes, I love Jesus  
My warm heart tells me so.

I love Jesus, He who died  
Heaven's gates to open wide  
He will wash away my sin  
Let this little child come in



Yes, I love Jesus

Yes, I love Jesus

Yes, I love Jesus

My warm heart tells me so.

### **Scripture**

The following scriptures may be used for thought and/or discussion to support the main ideas of the lesson.

**1 John 4:7:** Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God...God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

### **Evaluation of the Students**

- ❖ Did the students listen to the story?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the discussion?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the activity
- ❖ Did the students learn the meaning of love?
- ❖ Did the students learn how to think, act, and feel in loving ways?
- ❖ Did the students learn that all people are worthy of love?
- ❖ Did the students learn that love can help people and communities?

### **EVALUATION OF LESSON THREE**

**Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught:\_\_\_\_\_**

**The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:**

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**I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:**

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**The students responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**The students did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**General Comments:**

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## **Lesson Four**

### **Making Our Love Bigger**

#### **Main Ideas**

In this lesson we will learn that there are many different ways to show love and that the children can grow in loving in a bigger and bigger way. When we begin to learn any virtue, such as patience, we are not always good at expressing that virtue well.

With practice, we get better in our expression of patience, kindness, fairness, or any other virtue. It is the same with love. As we begin to think about love, we are not as good at understanding or expressing it as we are after we have practiced that virtue over and over again.

The point of this lesson is to introduce children to the learning that if they will love well, they will have to practice it over and over----in the family, at school, and everywhere they go.

#### **General Objectives**

##### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Learn that if we are to love well, we have to practice it over and over again.
- ❖ Learn that all people need to practice love to get better at it
- ❖ Learn that as more and more people practice love, we make the world a better place.

#### **Behavioral Objectives**

##### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Listen again to parts of the story, *Fill a Bucket*, by Carol McCord.
- ❖ Participate in a class discussion.
- ❖ Participate in the activity.

## **Materials**

The book, *Fill a Bucket*, by Carol McCord

Three cut-out hearts for each child

(please make one small, one medium, and one large)

tape strong enough to adhere to the cut-out heart and the child's shirt

## **Procedures**

The following procedures are to serve as guidelines for the teacher. As in lessons 1-3, please feel free to make adjustments and/or improvements to the procedures, discussion questions, or activities if it will help you more effectively meet the needs of your students. To maintain the integrity of the curriculum, please make certain that the objectives of the lesson are met.

1. Conduct a review of the previous lesson. Love is a feeling, but it is also a thought and an action. Respect, kindness, and generosity are offered in love. All people are worthy of love. Love can help individuals and communities.
2. Re-introduce the story, *Fill a Bucket*, by Carol McCloud.
3. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
4. Have the students participate in the "Bigger and Bigger Heart" activity. See the Activity section for further instructions.
5. Conclude by summarizing the main ideas of the lesson: All people have great worth simply because they are people.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. I have a "Let's Remember" question for you about the *Fill a Bucket* story. I want you to try and remember how many different ways that love was shown in this story. Who can remember the kinds of love shown in the story? (Start on page 9 and show the pictures as the children name the expressions of love). They are: A father's kisses (page 9); a mother's smiles and hugs (page 10); a sister's reading aloud to her sister (page 11); grandpa blowing bubbles with his grandson (page 12). This is sufficient for now.

2. The teacher should now give each child three hearts of three different sizes. Note: You will only be using the smallest and the biggest heart. The middle-sized heart is only used as a point of comparison---to make clear that the smallest and the largest hearts are very different in size. Say to the children. “I just gave you three different hearts. How are they different?” *They are of different sizes.*
3. “Yes, you have three different sized hearts. Let’s pretend that the smallest heart encourages you to show just a little love. The middle sized heart encourages you to show a medium sized love to people. The biggest heart encourages you to show a great big love, ok?”
4. Now let’s go back to the story. See the Mom and her son here (page 10)? Let us suppose that she has the small heart that you have (hold up the smallest heart). What kind of a hug might she give if she has a small heart? *She would give a little hug.*
5. Now, let us hold up the biggest heart. Suppose the Mom now has the biggest heart. What kind of a hug might she give to her son now? [Let the children act out a giant hug on themselves.] Love is like that. We can give a little love (hold up the little heart) or we can give great big love (hold up the biggest heart).
6. Now, let’s look at the big girl who is reading a book aloud to her sister (page 11). Let us suppose that she has the small heart that you have (hold up the smallest heart). What might she say to her little sister if the big girl has a small heart? *I like you. I like reading books to you.*
7. Now, let us hold up the biggest heart. Suppose the big girl now has the biggest heart. What might she say to her sister now? Remember, when she had the little heart, she said, “I LIKE you. I LIKE reading to you.” What might she say now? *“You are very important to me. You are a great sister. I love you.”*
8. Can you love in small and big ways? Each time you are with another person, you have a chance to love in a big way.

## Activity

The teacher may decide whether or not to include an activity in the lesson.

### **The Big Heart Activity**

#### ***Objective***

The students will continue to learn that they can love a little or a lot with every person he or she meets today. Each student will practice loving others with a “big heart” today.

#### ***Instructions***

**Materials needed:** big cut-out hearts (one per child), tape strong enough to adhere to the cut-out heart and the child’s shirt.

You will be using the biggest of the three hearts (from the previous Discussion section of this lesson) for this activity. Take some tape and make a loop of the tape on the back of the heart so that the tape sticks to the paper heart and to the child’s shirt. The type of tape selected is important---the goal is to keep the hearts stuck to the shirts.

1. As you are preparing the tape on each heart, say to the children, “On which of the three hearts are we preparing this tape?” *The biggest heart.*
2. “Yes, the biggest heart. What did we learn about the biggest heart compared with the other two (smaller) hearts?” *The biggest heart helps us remember to love in the biggest way that we can.*
3. “Today, we will be taping the biggest heart over our own heart. This tape will keep the big heart stuck to your own heart. What are you supposed to remember as you wear the very biggest heart?” *I am to love in the biggest way that I can today.*
4. “Let’s suppose that someone today is having a bad day and bumps into you without meaning to do it. What will the big heart remind you about big love?” *I will be patient with the person.*
5. “Suppose that a person says something unkind to you. What will the big heart remind you about big love?” *I can try to be kind to the person.*
6. “Suppose one of your classmates asks for your help and I give permission for that help. What will the big heart remind you regarding big love?” *I can help the person in a big way.*
7. “Remember---when you are loving, you still will protect yourself. If someone is unfair, you can and should let a teacher know. Big love is not a substitute for fairness. You can love big AND be fair, right?”
8. “So, let us put on our big hearts and try to show big love to our classmates today.”

## **In a Christian Context**

Again, this section is for those teachers seeking ideas about inherent worth within their own Christian tradition. We present some general ideas followed by some specific scriptures. Teachers should feel free to use these sections as they wish.

### **General Ideas**

The great worth of each person is a result of God's great love for all. He has created us, blesses us all and gives us each unique talents to glorify His name. We are united as God's children in Christ.

### **Scripture**

The following scriptures may be used for thought and/or discussion to support the main ideas of the lesson

***1John 4: 7, 9, and 11.*** (Verse 7) Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. (Verse 9) In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. (Verse 11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

(You might want to have the children stretch their arms out wide as you ask them, "How much does Jesus love you?" As they stretch, say, "Oh, He loves you even more than that. How much does He love you?" Make the point that His love goes way, way out as far as Heaven. You should try to convey the idea that Jesus' love for each student is infinite.)

## **Evaluation of the Students**

- ❖ Did the students listen to the story?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the group discussion?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the activity?
- ❖ Did the students continue to learn that all people have great worth because they are people?

### **EVALUATION OF LESSON FOUR**

**Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught:\_\_\_\_\_**

**The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:**

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**I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:**

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**The students responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**The students did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**General Comments:**

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**Lesson Five**  
**When Someone Is Unfair,**  
**We Sometimes Do Not See Them through Eyes of Love**

**Main Ideas**

In this lesson, we will focus our attention on helping the students develop an awareness of their *feelings*. All people experience a variety of feelings like happiness, love, excitement, sadness, fear, and anger. Feelings are a normal part of life. Some feelings we like and some we do not like. They can cause positive or negative outcomes. In this lesson, we will pay special attention to feelings of anger, sadness, and disappointed since they tend to follow unfairness.

It is important to change excessively deep and long-lasting anger, sadness, or discouragement so that it is not so deep or long-lasting.

**General Objectives**

***The students will:***

- ❖ Learn that people are sometimes angry, sad, or disappointed.
- ❖ Learn that when we are angry, sad, or disappointment, we may not see others' great worth.
- ❖ Learn that through love, families often become stronger and we become healthier.

**Behavioral Objectives**

***The students will:***

- ❖ Listen to the story, *I Love My New Toy* by Mo Willems (**up to page 27 only**)
- ❖ Participate in the class discussion.
- ❖ Participate in the activity.

## **Materials**

The book, *I Love My New Toy* by Mo Willems

One sheet of paper (with copied drawings on it) for each child

(You will draw Piggie twice on the same sheet, using the front cover of the book as your guide)

Crayons for each child

## **Procedures**

1. Review the main ideas of the previous lesson. We can love with big hearts---even when someone did an unfair thing to us.
2. Introduce the book (and read up to page 27), *I Love My New Toy* by Mo Willems . As with previous lessons, please orient the children to the primary lesson of this book. *Feelings* are a natural part of being human. Some feelings we like: happiness, excitement, and love to name just a few. Some feelings we do not like: anger, sadness, or disappointment. Feelings can cause us to behave in ways that will be either helpful or hurtful.
3. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
4. Have the students participate in the activity. See the Activities section.
5. Conclude by summarizing the main points of the lesson. *Feelings* are a natural part of being human. Some feelings we like: happiness, excitement, and love. Some we do not like: anger, sadness, or disappointment. Feelings can cause us to behave in ways that will be either helpful or hurtful.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Please tell me about the story, *I Love My New To*, so far.
2. Show the picture (page 3) of Piggie hugging her new toy. Ask the children this question, “Was Piggie feeling happy or sad about her new toy on this page?” *Happy. We can see that through her smile and hug.*
3. Now what is Piggie feeling on this page? (page 4) *She is showing excitement*
4. There are different kinds of feeling, aren’t there? Name some other happy feelings for me. *Joy, love, warmth.*
5. Sometimes, our feelings are not happy. Look at Gerald the elephant here (page 9). What does he seem to be feeling toward Piggie and her toy? *He is envious. He wants the toy.*

6. What are Gerald the elephant and Piggie now feeling here (pages 18 and 19)? *They are feeling shock and surprise and horror. They are upset and alarmed.*
7. Is there anything wrong with sometimes being a little angry, a little sad, and a little disappointed? *No, because sometimes life is hard and sometimes people are unfair to us. That can be annoying and disappointing.*
8. As you continue to hold up the book, turn to pages 24 and 25, and ask, “Was Piggie looking at Gerald through the eyes of love at this point?” *No, she was mad at him and says so.*
9. Look at pages 23, 24-25, and 27 and Piggie’s response to Gerald. Ask the children, “Does Piggie seem to be getting more and more angry or more and more loving? *More and more angry.*
10. Remember in our last lesson with the book, *Fill a Bucket*, we talked about how love can grow bigger and bigger? Well, **anger, too, can grow bigger and bigger unless we stop ourselves.** See how Piggie’s anger is growing and growing?
11. Piggie had a choice. She can continue to get more and more angry or she can choose to put on her big heart and respond to Gerald in love. There is nothing wrong with being angry about a broken toy, but HOW you do that and HOW LONG you do that and HOW STRONG your anger is can be controlled. Eventually, she may need to see Gerald through the eyes of love.
12. What do you think would happen to someone if they continued and continued and continued to be angry and even angrier with her friend? *They might not stay as good friends.*

### **Activity**

The teacher may decide whether or not to include an activity in the lesson.

### **The Two Sides to Piggie**

#### ***Objective***

The students will continue to learn about feelings and their consequences. The students will draw Piggie today as angry, sad, and disappointed. (In the next lesson, they will draw her once she is forgiven by Gerald the elephant and is happy).

#### ***Instructions***

You, the teacher, will draw an outline of Piggie using the front cover of the book as your guide. You will actually be drawing two exact replicas of her (one for this lesson and one for Lesson 6). Please only draw her **outline** and not her facial features, which the students will do. Turn the paper on its side and draw Piggie’s outline first on one-half of the paper and then on the other half of the same sheet of paper (both pictures of Piggie are on the same side of the paper). Make enough copies of these drawings so that each student has one sheet of paper with the two pictures

of Piggie. After you have drawn the outlines, fold each sheet of paper in half before giving to the students. Tell the students:

1. Show the left side of the paper folded over and say, “Do you see that I have folded the paper so that there are two sides to it? You will be working only on this side today. Please draw Piggie’s face as you picture her so far in the story when she is angry, sad, and disappointed. Try to show her feelings on her face.”
2. When you are through with your drawing, please do not draw her face on the other half of the paper. We will do that next time.
3. When the children are finished with the drawings, ask them the following questions, “What does Piggie’s face look like in your drawing? What do you think Piggie’s heart is like? Is it happy and light or not? Why?”
4. Do you think there’s a big difference deep in her heart when she is angry and when she is happy and peaceful?”

Please tell the students that anger all of the time might make a person look like Piggie when she is angry, sad, and disappointed all of the time. Trying your best to see through the eyes of love might change the way you feel and the way you look.

### **In a Christian Context**

In this section, we include some scriptures that can be used by the teacher to reinforce the main ideas of the lesson. Each teacher should feel free to use these sections as he or she wishes.

#### **General Ideas**

People described in the Bible experienced many different feelings, including anger, sadness, and disappointed. The Bible teaches us that we will feel anger, but we are not to hold on to our anger. Even Jesus felt anger some times at others’ deep injustice.

#### **Scripture**

The following Bible passage may be used for thought and/or discussion to support the main ideas of the lesson.

**Mark 3-5:** Again, he [Jesus] entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come here.” And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?” But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

### **Evaluation of the Students**

- ❖ Did the students listen to the story?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the group discussion?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the activity?
- ❖ Did the students learn that all people have a variety of feelings?
- ❖ Did the students learn that some feelings we like and some we don't?
- ❖ Did the students learn that they should not let anger, sadness, and disappointment be excessively long-lasting or deep?

## **EVALUATION OF LESSON FIVE**

**Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught:\_\_\_\_\_**

**The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:**

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**I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:**

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**The students responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**The students did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**General Comments:**

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## Lesson Six

### Restoring Love through Forgiveness

#### Main Ideas

In this lesson, we will learn what forgiveness **is** and what forgiveness **is not**.

Following is the definition of forgiveness: “When unjustly hurt by another, we forgive when we overcome the resentment toward the offender, not by denying our right to the resentment, but instead by trying to offer the wrongdoer compassion, benevolence, and love; as we give these, we as forgivers realize that the offender does not necessarily have a right to such gifts.”<sup>2</sup>

Forgiveness is **not** excusing or condoning the person’s hurtful behavior. When we forgive, we do **not** decide simply to put up with the hurt, take the blame for the person’s behavior, pretend that we weren’t hurt by the person’s actions, or pretend that the person didn’t mean to cause us hurt. Forgiveness is **not** reconciliation. Reconciliation is the act of two people coming together in friendship following hurt. Forgiveness can bring us closer to reconciliation with a person who was unfair. True reconciliation following unfairness can only take place through forgiveness.

Forgiveness is **not** forgetting the hurt. It is remembering the hurt in a different way, through the eyes of forgiveness. Remembering the hurt can serve as a protection, to a certain degree, from similar future hurts. When a person forgives, he or she may experience an improved relationship with the one who caused the unfair hurt, reduced anger and sadness, and greater levels of hope.

We’d like to remind you that it is important to approach the subsequent lessons with the knowledge that forgiveness is a choice. Without a doubt, forgiveness is an important virtue that may have emotional, psychological, and physical benefits for the forgiver, as well as for the one being forgiven. The students must not be forced to forgive anyone, but must be allowed willingly to move forward in their own time. Please see page 3 of this curriculum guide.

#### General Objectives

*The students will:*

- ❖ Learn what forgiveness **is** and what it **is not**.
- ❖ Learn some of the benefits of forgiveness.
- ❖ Learn that forgiveness is a choice.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert D. Enright, *Forgiveness Is a Choice* (2001), p. 25.

## **Behavioral Objectives**

### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Continue to read the story, *I Love My New Toy* by Mo Willems. Start on pages 18 and 19 as review and continue to the end of the book.
- ❖ Participate in the class discussion.
- ❖ Participate in the activity.

## **Materials**

The book, *I Love My New Toy* by Mo Willems

The exact same sheet of paper (with copied drawings of Piggie on it)

for each child from Lesson 5

Crayons for each child

## **Procedures**

As in previous lessons, we have included a list of procedures to serve as guidelines for the teacher. Please feel free to alter the procedures, discussion questions, and/or activities if it will help you more effectively meet the needs of your students. It is important, however, that you continue to address each of the general and behavioral objectives of the lesson.

1. Review the main ideas of the previous lesson. All people have feelings. Some we like: love, happiness, and excitement. Some we do not like: anger, sadness, and disappointment. We do not want anger, sadness, or disappointment to be long-lasting or too deep.
2. Continue reading the story, *I Love My New Toy*. Tell the children, “Through this story, we will learn that when we are angry and disappointed, we can forgive. When we forgive, we often have less anger toward a person who was unfair and we become ready to offer love.”
3. Conduct the class discussion. See the Discussion section.
4. Conduct the activity. See the Activities section.



5. Conclude by summarizing the main points of the lesson. When we forgive, we can become less angry, sad, and disappointed. We become ready to give love.

Please note\* It is important that students are allowed to forgive when and if ready. Please see pages 4 and 5 of the Introduction.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How did you like today's story? What was it about? *Friendship, love, and forgiveness.*
2. At first, Piggie was very angry. She was sad and angry. Turn to pages 36 and 37. How did Piggie's anger affect Gerald and her? *They both cried.*
3. Why do you think they cried? *Gerald probably felt badly that he broke the toy. Piggie probably felt badly that she made Gerald feel badly.*
4. Can you see the beginning of Piggie forgiving Gerald? What does it mean to forgive? *When a person forgives, he or she begins to be more loving toward someone who was unfair.*
5. How did Piggie think that Gerald was unfair? *She thought that Gerald broke her toy.*
6. What is one way (page 38) that Piggie **showed** forgiveness? *Even though she THOUGHT that Gerald broke her toy, she hugged him and cried with him.*
7. Was Gerald actually unfair to her? Did he break the toy? *No, it was a snap toy.*
8. When Piggie realized that Gerald did not break the toy, there was nothing to forgive. Why was there nothing to forgive? *Gerald actually did nothing wrong. He never intended to break the toy.*
9. We only forgive someone when he or she did something **wrong or wants to deliberately do wrong.**
10. Look at this page (page 47). Who is angry now? *Gerald.*
11. Why is Gerald angry with Piggie? *Because Piggie accused him of breaking her toy and he did not.*
12. Now Gerald is angry. Might he try to forgive Piggie for accusing him of breaking a toy that he did not break? *Yes, he might choose to forgive her.*
13. How does Gerald show forgiveness toward Piggie? (See page 54). *Gerald says that he wants to play with Piggie. He sees her through the eyes of love. (Show page 55).*
14. What happens when one person forgives another person (Show page 55). *They become happy and can become friends again.*
15. How do you think Gerald's forgiveness felt to him? How did it feel to Piggie? How is Piggie feeling now?
16. Can you forgive those who are unfair to you? When you forgive, what do you do? *Smile, talk in a kind way, see the person as special and important, have love in your heart for the person.*
17. How does it feel inside when you forgive?

## Activity

The teacher may decide whether or not to include an activity in the lesson.

### **A Picture of Loving Forgiveness**

#### ***Objective***

The students will continue to learn about forgiveness. They will draw a picture that shows loving forgiveness by drawing Piggie's face on **the other side of the paper used for the previous lesson.**

#### ***Instructions***

The teacher will ask the students to think back to the story, *I Love My New Toy!* He or she will ask them to focus on the loving forgiveness which Gerald gave to Piggie.

1. Pass out the same paper to each child on which he or she drew Piggie when she was angry.

2. Say to them, "Please turn the sheet to the part where Piggie does not yet have a face. Please keep the other side, when she was angry, folded over so that you do not see it."

3. Now, please draw a new picture of Piggie when she has been forgiven by Gerald, when she feels what it is like to be forgiven.

4. After the children have finished drawing, then say, "Now please open up your paper so that you see Piggie in the two ways, the one in which she is angry and **not forgiving** and the other where she **is forgiven** by Gerald. What is the difference between the two pictures? *She is unhappy in one and happy in the other.*

5. If we drew a picture of Gerald after he forgave Piggie, how do you think his face would look? *Happy, filled with joy.*

6. Do you see that forgiveness makes the person happy who forgives **AND** makes the person happy who is forgiven? *Forgiveness makes us happy.*

7. Remember—You can love and you can show that love by forgiving.

## **In a Christian Context**

This section includes a Bible Story for those teachers seeking ideas on how to discuss what forgiveness is and is not within the context of their Christian religious tradition. Please feel free to use this section as you wish.

### **General Ideas**

The Bible repeatedly teaches us to forgive as we have been forgiven. The Bible does not give us an explicit definition of forgiveness nor does it give us the “steps to forgiving,” but it teaches us about forgiveness through the lives of important people in the Bible.

### **Scripture**

The story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-31) may be used for thought and/or discussion to help students further understand what forgiveness is and is not. The son, who had caused his father a deep hurt by leaving home, living a careless life, and wasting his entire inheritance, was forgiven by his father. The father, who had a right to be angry with his son, greeted his son with a hug, planned a feast, saw that his son had great worth, and loved him. The older son became offended, but did he have anything to forgive? No, because the father did not act wrongly. The older brother misunderstood what was happening. Rather than forgive the father, the older brother’s task was to understand that his younger brother was lost (in sin) and is now found.

## **Evaluation of the Students**

- ❖ Did the students participate in the discussion?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the activity?
- ❖ Did the students learn the meaning of forgiveness?
- ❖ Did the students continue to learn that forgiveness is a choice?

## **EVALUATION OF LESSON SIX**

**Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught:\_\_\_\_\_**

**The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:**

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**I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:**

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**The students responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**The students did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**General Comments:**

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## **Lesson Seven:**

### **Seeing through Eyes of Love in Forgiveness**

#### **Main Ideas**

When people forgive, they see the great worth of the one who caused an unfair hurt. This makes possible a soft and loving heart toward the offender.

Even when angry because of an unfair hurt, people are still capable of seeing the great worth of that person. If we can see the great worth of the one who caused the hurt, then it is possible to begin feeling love toward that same person.

#### **General Objectives**

##### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Learn that when we forgive, we see the great worth of the person who hurt us.
- ❖ Learn that when we see the great worth of one who unfairly hurt us, our hearts can soften toward that person.

#### **Behavioral Objectives**

##### ***The students will:***

- ❖ Read the book, *A Birthday for Frances* by Russell Hoban .
- ❖ Participate in a class discussion.
- ❖ Participate in the activity.

#### **Materials**

The book, *A Birthday for Frances* by Russell Hoban

Construction paper (one for each child)

Pencils or crayons

Scissors for the teacher

## Procedures

As with the previous lessons, a list of procedural guidelines has been provided for the teacher. Please feel free to make adjustments to the discussion questions and activities. To maintain the integrity of the curriculum, we ask that you meet the objectives of the lesson.

1. Review the main ideas of the previous lesson. When we forgive, we reduce our anger toward the one who hurt us and extend love. Forgiveness can result in less anger, sadness, and disappointment. It can fill out heart with love.
2. Read the book entitled, *A Birthday for Frances* by Russell Hoban.
3. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
4. Have the students participate in the activity. See the Activities section.
5. Conclude by summarizing the main ideas of the lesson. Forgiveness allows us to see the great person of one who was unfair and give love.

## Discussion Questions

1. Tell me about the story, *A Birthday for Frances*.
2. In much of the story, was Frances showing love toward her sister or was Frances acting at least a little selfishly? Let's take a look. [Show page 4 where Frances is in the broom closet.] Why is Frances in the broom closet? *She does not want to take part in the birthday party because she is jealous of her sister.*
3. What does it mean to be jealous? *She wants what her sister has and she is angry about it.*
4. Does Frances think it is fair for Gloria to have a party and she, Frances, does not? *No. She wants a party, too.*
5. Has Gloria done anything wrong by having a birthday and a party? *No. It is her time to have a party.*
6. When we forgive, we do so when someone is **unfair** to us, right? *Yes. Forgiveness occurs when people treat us unfairly.*
7. Because Gloria did **nothing at all unfair** to Frances, then Frances has nothing to forgive. Can you see that? Only if Gloria was unfair would Frances forgive, but Gloria was not unfair.
8. Who is being unfair, Frances or Gloria? *Frances is being unfair by not helping get ready for the party.*
9. If Frances is unfair to Gloria can Gloria forgive her if she chooses to forgive? *Yes.*

10. For what will Gloria forgive Frances? (See page 8, as an example. Frances accuses Gloria of kicking her under the table, but Gloria did not do that. Gloria says, “Mean Frances.”) *She will forgive Frances for acting in a selfish way and for telling a lie about her.*
11. If Gloria forgives Frances, what might she say and do? *Gloria could say, “I forgive you.” She could give Frances a big hug out of love for her---not because of what she did but because she is her sister.*
12. What might Gloria be **thinking** about Frances when she forgives? *She would think that Francis is her special sister. She would see Frances through the eyes of love.*
13. Look at these pictures (Show pages 26 and 27). It is Gloria’s birthday party. Frances has been somewhat mean throughout the day. Yet, how is Gloria thinking about her sister? *Gloria hopes that Frances will be nice and not mad (read that part from page 27).*
14. When Gloria wishes that Frances would not be mad, is Gloria showing forgiveness toward Frances? *Yes. She is loving her sister even though she has been mad for much of the day.*
15. Is it important to look at others in our family and in our school through the eyes of love even when they do things that are not fair to us and even when they sometimes make it hard for us? Why?

### **Activity**

The teacher may decide whether or not to include an activity in the lesson.

### **Seeing through the Eyes of Loving Forgiveness**

#### **Objective**

The students will continue to learn about forgiveness. They will begin to see people, who are unfair to them, through the eyes of loving forgiveness.

#### **Instructions**

**Materials needed:** construction paper and a crayon for each child. You, the teacher, will need a scissors to cut the paper for each child.

1. Pass out a sheet of construction paper and a crayon to each child.
2. Say to the students, “Do you remember the story, A Birthday for Frances? We will be making a very special set of eyes today. We will draw a very big heart on our paper and pretend that this special heart helps us to see through loving eyes.
3. After you have drawn the heart, I will help you cut out holes for your eyes to look through the paper at other people and at the characters in the story.

4. Once all hearts are drawn and eye-holes cut out, say this to the children, “You now have a very special set of eyes that allows you to see others with love and forgiveness. Let’s see if it works. Look through your paper with the heart on it as I read parts of *A Birthday for Frances*. You will pretend that you are Gloria and can see everything that Frances is doing in the story. Your new eyes will help you to see Frances with love and forgiveness. Are you ready?

5. Here is my first question to you. Remember: You are now Gloria and can see what Frances is doing. [Turn to page 5 and read, starting with “Frances was in the broom closet....” Say to the children, “Is Frances happy for Gloria who is having a birthday party?” *No. She is jealous.*

6. With our new eyes, how will you, pretending to be Gloria, see Frances? *Frances is hurting. She is sad. She does not understand that it is Gloria’s turn to have a happy birthday party. She is still my special sister even though she is jealous.*

7. Now read page 8 where Frances wants to draw three-legged cats and accuses Gloria of kicking her. Say to the children, “As you see Frances sitting at the table, use your new eyes of love and forgiveness to look at her. What can you think that is loving and forgiving?” *Frances is having a bad day. She is hurt and confused.*

8. Now turn to pages 16 and 17 and say to the children, “As you look through the paper heart which helps you to see Frances in a new way, what is happening in these pages?” (Read pages 16-17). *Frances is not thinking about Gloria as she chews the gum.*

9. How do you see Frances, when you use the eyes of love and forgiveness? Do you think Frances is happy here (pages 16 and 17)? *Frances is not taking the time to think about Gloria and that is not making Frances happy at all.*

10. Ask the children, “Even though you see Frances here thinking only about herself and not about Gloria, can you think loving thoughts about Frances anyway? What might some of those thoughts be? Remember, you are thinking as Gloria might think” *She is my sister and so she is special. I can love her even though she is not being considerate of (loving toward) me right now.*

11. Now show page 30. Look at Frances and Gloria now. How are they feeling about each other? *They seem happy and loving.* Do you think that they are looking at each other through the heart of love and forgiveness?

12. Remember—You can love and you can show that love by forgiving.



## In a Christian Context

### **General Ideas**

We have provided an example of a Bible story that illustrate the importance of seeing the great worth of all people. We have chosen the exact same passage as you read to the children in Lesson 5, where Jesus looked at certain people with anger. We will now focus on how Jesus is likely to be looking at love toward the man with the withered hand and those who did not want him to heal the man.

Say to the children, “Do you remember when I read the Bible story to you about the man with the withered hand?”

“We learned that Jesus could feel anger when people were being deeply unfair.”

“Today when I read the story, think about Jesus’ love, not His anger. We will talk about His love once I read the story again. Are you ready to listen?”

**Mark 3-5:** Again, he [Jesus] entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come here.” And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?” But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

“Do you think that Jesus was loving the man with the withered hand? Why do you say that?”

“Even though Jesus was feeling anger toward the others who did not want him to heal the man, was Jesus loving them (even though He was angry)? How do you know that Jesus was loving them?” *He was showing them the right path---that they should lovingly help others when they can. He even died on the cross for those at whom He felt anger.*

### Evaluation of the Students

- ❖ Did the students listen attentively to the story?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the group discussion?
- ❖ Did the students participate in the activity?
- ❖ Did the students learn that when they forgive, they become able to see the great worth of the person who hurt them and give love?

## **EVALUATION OF LESSON SEVEN**

**Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught:\_\_\_\_\_**

**The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:**

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**I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:**

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**The students responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**The students did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**General Comments:**

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## Lesson Eight:

### **Forgiveness as a Gift of Love**

#### Main Ideas

In the previous lesson, the students learned that when they forgive, they see the great worth of the person who was unfair and offer love. This can take some time, but as a person sees the deep worth of the one who was unfair, the willingness to give gifts of love is more likely to occur. When the students get to this point in the forgiveness process, they will not all have the same deep expression of love.

In our experience, even though a person might not be ready to give the gift of love to one who was unfair initially, it is distinctly possible that the he or she may be ready in time. We must be patient with the students realizing that it is their choice *when* and *how* to give such gifts. Forgiveness has a way of being a gift to the offender as well as to the one who willingly offers the gift.

Although this lesson is an end to the formal forgiveness curriculum, we challenge you to *keep the idea of forgiveness in front of the children*. We congratulate you for giving your students the gift of forgiveness. It is likely to bear fruit in unexpected places.

#### General Objectives

##### *The students will:*

- ❖ Learn that when they forgive, they may become ready to give gifts of love toward the person who was unfair.
- ❖ Learn that forgiveness is a gift for the person who is forgiven. As a person forgives, he or she can begin to feel more loving and happy.

#### Behavioral Objectives

##### *The students will:*

- ❖ Listen to the story, *Papa, Do You Love Me?* by Barbara M. Joosse.
- ❖ Participate in a class discussion.
- ❖ Participate in the activity.

## **Materials**

The book, *Papa, Do You Love Me?* by Barbara M. Joosse

Chalk and a blackboard

Construction paper (one for each child)

Crayons

## **Procedures**

Please feel free to make adjustments to the discussion questions or activities. It is important that any changes you make will maintain the integrity of the curriculum.

1. Review the main ideas of the previous lesson. Forgiveness allows us to see the great worth of the person who hurt us and to feel love toward him or her.
2. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
3. Have the students participate in the activity. See the Activities section.
4. Conclude by summarizing the main points of the lesson.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Tell me about the story, *Papa, Do You Love Me?*
2. Let us look at today's story. Look at all of the gifts Papa gives to his son. Please turn to pages 8-9 (with the image of the tree) and pages 10-11 (where the father is putting a blanket of protection over his son). Ask this question, "You can see in this picture (pages 8-9) that the boy is hot. What gift of love is the father giving to him in this picture?" *He is sheltering this son under the Greenheart tree.*
3. What gift is the father giving here (pages 10-11)? *The father is spreading a blanket of protection over his son, sheltering him from the very hot sun.*
4. Turn to pages 12-13 of the story where the father and the son are at the river. Ask this question, "You can see in this picture that the boy and his father are at the river. What gift of love is the father giving to the boy in this picture?" *He has led his son to water when he is very thirsty. He is giving the gift of love.*
5. Now turn to pages 14-15. Ask this question: "Do you see what the father is doing here? What is he doing?" *He is giving the child a drink of water when he is thirsty. The father*

*is saying that he will teach the child to find hidden streams of water. He is protecting his son and loving him.*

6. In one part of the story, the boy thinks of ways that he could be unfair (please turn to pages 18-19). Do you remember some of those ways he imagined being unfair? *He fell asleep under the tree when he was supposed to be guarding the cattle. A hyena crept into the herd. The hyena killed a cow, his “birthright” cow.*
7. If you were the Papa, would that make you happy or would that make you angry and sad? Why? *Papa said that he would be angry.*
8. Even though Papa was angry at what his son, Tender Heart, might have **done** (fell asleep and the hyena killed the cow), did Papa still **love his son**? *Yes, Papa says, “I would be angry. But still, I would love you.”*
9. Look at this page (page 21). Even though Papa said, “I would be angry,” what is he doing here with his son? *Papa is hugging his son.*
10. Sometimes when people make us angry and sad, we forgive them. What does it mean to forgive someone in your family who has hurt you? *It means that we see through the eyes of love. It means that we remember putting that big paper heart onto our own heart as a reminder to love in a big way. When we love in a big way, we see how precious the other person is. It means that we can see they need to eat and breathe and be protected just as we need these things. We see the people as special because they are special.*
11. Did you know that when you forgive a person, you actually give him or her a gift, a special gift of love?
12. When we give the gift of love in forgiveness, we give something beautiful and good to the person who has acted in a way that was unfair. How can you give the gift of love in forgiveness to someone in your family who might have been unfair to you and made you angry, sad, or disappointed? *You can give the person the gift of time by spending some time with him or her. Give the gift of a smile. Give the gift of a hug to a person who might be feeling lonely or sad.*
13. Can you give good gifts like this to your classmates here in school?
14. **You can love!**

### **Activity**

The teacher may decide whether or not to include an activity in the lesson.

### **You-Are-the-Forgiver Story**

#### **Objective**

The students will learn about giving gifts of love in forgiveness. The students will think of a way to give the gift of love in forgiveness when someone is unfair to them.

### ***Instructions***

The teacher will ask, “Did you like the story, *Papa, Do You Love Me?*”

Then the teacher will say, “I liked it so much that I did not want it to end. Let us continue the story, but now you are the adult talking to a child. Here is what happens: When the little boy is asked to fill up buckets of water, he goes down to the stream and meets two of his friends. He puts the bucket down and plays away the afternoon. They fall asleep and when they awaken, they realize it is late and so each one of them forgets his bucket and runs home. It is now dark and they cannot go back to get the buckets because of the wild animals. The boy comes to you and says, ‘Papa (or Mama) I was playing with friends and I forgot to get water and I forgot the bucket at the stream.’”

Please have a discussion with the students in which you write what the students might say to or do toward the child, who has come home. **First**, they should correct the behavior (we are focusing on **justice here, not forgiveness**). **Second, the key to this activity** is to say something loving or do something loving as Papa did in the story. Have the class generated five or more statements to or actions toward the child that are filled with mercy and love. Then, hand out a sheet of paper and have the children draw a picture of the parent giving the best gift of love that they heard during the discussion.

### **In a Christian Context**

This section is for those teachers seeking ideas about giving the gifts of love within their own Christian tradition. We present some general ideas followed by a specific scripture. Teachers should feel free to use these sections as they wish.

#### **General Ideas**

The Bible teaches us to forgive as Jesus forgives—to love as Jesus loves. As we receive these gifts of love, we are blessed with love, peace, joy, guidance, and salvation.

#### **Scripture**

We have learned in this lesson that forgiveness is a gift of love. We can show that gift of love by being kind to others and patient with them, even if they are unfair to us. Did you know that there is one person who is our greatest gift, who gives Himself to us? Who loves us so much that He is the greatest gift to us? Jesus.

How do we know that Jesus gives Himself to us? He says so right in the Bible. Listen as I read to you.

**Matthew 20:26-28.** [Jesus is speaking]. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your

slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and *to give his life as a ransom for many*. [Jesus gives of Himself out of love to us and for us.]

**John 6:51.** {Jesus is speaking.} I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall *give for the life of the world* is my flesh. [You need not go into detail about the cross at this point. Let the children see that Jesus gives Himself to us.]

### **Evaluation of the Students**

- ❖ Did the students participate in the group discussion?
- ❖ Did the students actively participate in the activity?
- ❖ Did the students learn that as they begin to see the great worth of the person who was unfair and feel love, they may be ready to give gifts of love.

## **EVALUATION OF LESSON EIGHT**

**Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught:\_\_\_\_\_**

**The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:**

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**I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:**

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**The students responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**The students did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:**

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**General Comments:**

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# I Can Love!

## A Building Block of Forgiveness



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**You have successfully learned the lessons of:**  
*Love and  
Forgiveness*

Presented to: \_\_\_\_\_

*May you continue learning to forgive.*

***Congratulations***