



## **The Heart of Love as the Building Block of Forgiveness**

**A Guided Curriculum for Children Ages 5-6  
(Grade Kindergarten in the US, P2 in the UK)  
in a Christian Context**

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## **The Heart of Love as the Building Blocks of Forgiveness** **A Guided Curriculum for Children Aged 4-6**

You are about to embark on a truly exciting adventure: you will help your students to forgive. We 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. We 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-eight years of forgiveness research experience between us, we 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 we mean when we 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:

- We 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 our choice of curricular materials is in order. Our 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. 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, (rd.enright@yahoo.com).

Best Regards,

*Jeanette A. Knutson*

*Robert D. Enright*

**Book and VHS/DVD List**

**I Love You Stinky Face** by Lisa McCourt

**Little Fur Family** Margaret Wise Brown

**It's Not Easy Being a Bunny** by Marilyn Sadler

**Will You Forgive Me** by Sally Grindley and Penny Dann

**The Runaway Bunny** by Margaret Wise Brown

# Lesson One

## **Family Love as the Place Where We Learn Love and are Strengthened to Give Love Outwards to the World**

### 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.

### 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.

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

## Behavioral Objectives

*The students will:*

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

## Procedures

The following procedures are to serve as guidelines for the teacher. As in previous lessons, 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 *forgiveness*. When we forgive, we begin to see that a person who caused us an unfair hurt has *deep worth*. We begin to soften our hearts toward that person so that we are no longer angry with him or her for the unfairness. In the first four lessons, we will talk about the deep worth of all people—especially family members. We will discuss genuine love—especially love toward family members. After that, we will begin to talk about forgiveness itself.
2. Introduce today’s story, *I Love You, Stinky Face*, written by Lisa McCourt. Tell the students that this story is about family love. It is about the love parents have for their children [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 daughter have in today’s story. No matter what, the mother loves the child and the child loves the mother. 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 “The Big Heart Little Heart” 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. 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. How big do I have to make this heart to put all of the love the Mother has toward her child into it (You can start expanding the size of the heart to show that it is getting bigger and bigger as the children describe the Mother's love.) At a particular point when your hands are far apart say, "That's a lot of love, isn't it."
3. Then repeat this line of questioning for the child's love toward the Mother.
4. Do you think the child's heart is filled with love BECAUSE her Mother poured love into her? Why or why not?
5. Do you think the Mother's heart is filled with love BECAUSE her daughter and others poured love into her heart? Why or why not?
6. 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.*
7. Tell me what your heart feels like when it is filled with love?

## Activities

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

### The Big Heart Little Heart of Love

#### *Objective*

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

#### *Instructions*

The students will draw a picture of two hearts on a piece of paper—one very large heart and one small heart. Say to the children, “When does your heart feel like a big heart full of love?”

## In a Christian Context

As with the previous lessons, 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. In Exodus, we learn of the Levite woman who demonstrated her deep love and devotion for Moses, her son. She demonstrated humility in love as she took the role of a servant so that she could care for him and be near him. Family love teaches, protects, encourages, comforts, and cares for individuals by bringing them into family membership. It is warm, comfortable, and safe. There is a joy in simply being together. Family love is not influenced by age, education, gender, or possessions. Family love overlooks faults and appreciates the people who are in our lives.

### **Scripture**

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

*Exodus 2:1-10:* In an attempt to save her son’s life, a Levite woman places her son Moses in a papyrus basket and hides it in the weeds of the Nile River. He is found and raised by Pharaoh’s daughter.

## 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 Lisa McCourt's story entitled, *I Love You Stinky Face*.
- Participate in the class discussion.
- Participate in the "The Gingerbread Boy and Girl" activity.

## 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 *again* to the story, written by Lisa McCourt entitled, *I Love You Stinky Face*. Or, you may decide to simply hold up the book and show pictures during the discussion rather than reading it aloud.
2. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
3. Have the students participate in the activity. See the Activity section for further instructions.
4. 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, *I Love You Stinky Face*, does the Mother love her daughter? (Show the first page of the Mom hugging her daughter.)
2. Does the Mom think the daughter is special? Why or why not?
3. Let's play pretend as the author of the story, *I Love You Stinky Face* did. Let's suppose that the daughter became a scary ape. Would the Mother think that the daughter is any less special now? Why or why not?
4. Let's suppose that the daughter became a smelly skunk. Would the Mother think the daughter is any less special now? Why or why not?
5. Let's suppose that the daughter became a hungry alligator with big sharp teeth. Would the Mother think the daughter is any less special now? Why or why not?

No matter what, the Mother thinks the daughter is special. No matter how the daughter looks or acts. No matter how good she is in soccer, no matter what, the Mother thinks the daughter 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 daughter 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 daughter 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 daughter 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 Gingerbread Boy and Girl 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*

On a single sheet of paper, draw an outline of one gingerbread boy and one gingerbread girl (two gingerbread children on one page). Make copies of your drawing, one for each student.

1. Please ask the children to color in the clothing for each gingerbread child.
2. Ask the students to draw a large pretty hat on the gingerbread girl's head and a small wrinkly hat on the gingerbread boy's head. Ask the student's the question, "Is the gingerbread girl now more special because she has a better hat than the gingerbread boy? Why or why not?"
3. Now, have the children draw a cane in the hand of the gingerbread girl and ask, "Is the gingerbread boy now more special than the gingerbread girl because the gingerbread girl is walking with a big limp and has a very sore knee all of the time? Why or why not?"
4. Now, ask the children to draw a pot of gold at the feet of the gingerbread girl and ask, "Is the gingerbread girl now more special than the gingerbread boy because she has a lot more money than he does? Why or why not?"

5. The gingerbread boy and girl are brother and sister. Might they both be special in the family? Why or why not?

### **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.

#### **Scripture**

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

*Romans 8:16-18:* The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

### **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, *Little Fur Family* by Margaret Wise Brown.
- Participate in the class discussion.
- Participate in the activity.

## 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 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. Do you remember when we read the book, *I Love You Stinky Face*? One thing the story told us was that family members can have a lot of love for each other. In the beginning of today's story, *The Little Fur Family*, there was a lot of family love there, too. Do you remember that the fur family lived in a warm, cozy wooden tree? The parents who helped to keep their home warm were showing love. How else did the family show love in the beginning part of the book? *The Father takes time to say good bye before he goes to work. The Mother dressed her child warmly before he went out to play in the woods.*
2. Just as family members can love one another, is it possible to take that love from the family and to give the love away to others in the world?
3. How did the little fur child give love to those outside of his warm, cozy, and wooden tree house? *He showed concern when his Grandpa sneezed. He helped a fish get back into the river.*

4. Do you remember when the little fur child kissed the tiny, tiny fur animal on his little fur nose and put it gently back in the grass? Was the little fur child showing love to the tiny, tiny fur animal? Why or why not?
5. Do you think all of the love that was poured into the little fur child in his home by his Mother and Father helped fill his heart with such love that he could then pour out that love to his Grandfather, the fish, and the tiny, tiny fur creature? Why or why not?
6. Can you take the love in your heart and pour it out to others in this classroom and in this school? How can you do that?

### **Activities**

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

#### **The Tinfoil Activity**

##### *Objective*

The students will learn the ways we can think, act, and feel in loving ways. The students will each add to a ball of tinfoil (representing love in the hearts).

##### *Instructions*

The teacher will begin the activity by preparing as many sheets of tinfoil as there are children in the classroom. She will also put names of each child on a slip of paper and then place the papers in a hat (for drawing names out of the hat).

1. The teacher will hold up a sheet of tinfoil and then form it into a ball in front of the children.
2. Then the teacher will say to the children, "This tinfoil stands for the love in my heart. I can give that love away to others so that they get love in their heart. When they get love in their heart, their heart grows bigger with love. When they then give the love away to someone else, that other person's heart gets bigger with love. On and on it goes until we have a great big ball of love in the room. I am going to start by saying something kind, gentle, and caring to one of you.
3. I will pick one of your names out of a hat. I will then take the love in my heart which is shown by the tinfoil and hand it to that child.
4. That child will then wrap his or her tinfoil around my piece of tinfoil ball of love to make it even bigger, pull another student's name out of the hat and say something kind, gentle, and caring to that child, who will then wrap their tinfoil of love around our ever growing ball of love.

Let us look at how our love given and given and given makes the love grow and grow and grow out into the world. Let's see how much bigger this tinfoil ball of love gets as we spread love around the classroom."

## 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.

### **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**  
**Seeing Through the Eyes of Love Whether It is a Grandpa a Fish, a Bug or a Furry Animal**

**Main Ideas**

In this lesson we will again be looking at the idea of great worth, apart from forgiveness. A person's great worth is not based on outward appearances, personal possessions, or other external features, nor is it based on those qualities that unite people as members of the human family.

People, in their humanity, all suffer physical, emotional, and psychological pain, all experience physical, emotional, and psychological joys, and all require the same basic physical, emotional, and psychological care. In addition, all people share similarities in their physical make-up (eyes, nose, legs, arms, and so forth), in the ways in which their bodies function (blood circulation, respiration, digestion), in the expression of their emotions (love, anger, sadness), and in their ability to think and reason.

These similarities are important; however, they do not give people great worth. People have worth because they are people, as mentioned in the previous lesson.

**General Objectives**

*The students will:*

- Learn that a person's worth is not based on appearance, career, place of residence, and so forth.
- Learn that all people share some basic similarities in their physical, psychological, and emotional make-up and functioning, but these similarities do not give great worth.
- Learn that all people have great worth because they are people.
- Learn that we are to treat all people as people of great worth.

**Behavioral Objectives**

*The students will:*

- Listen to today's story, *The Fur Family* by Margaret Wise Brown.

- Participate in a class discussion.
- Participate in the activity.

### **Procedures**

The following procedures are to serve as guidelines for the teacher. As in lessons one and two, 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. Read the story, *The Fur Family* by Margaret Wise Brown.
3. Conduct the class discussion. The questions can be found in the Discussion section.
4. Have the students participate in the “The Pirate Telescope 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 *Little Fur Family* story. I want you to try and remember how many different characters were in this story. Let’s keep naming them until we have named them all. Who can remember the characters in the story? *Father, Mother, little fur child, Grandpa, the fish, the bug, and the tiny, tiny fur animal.*
2. The teacher should draw a figure of each character in the story on the board (it can be an outline or stick figure). Let the children see all of the figures at once on the board and then ask: Which of these (point to the figures on the board) if they were really alive in this world would have to eat in order to live? Which of these would have to breathe in order to live? Which of these needs a safe place to call their home? Eating, breathing,

and having a home are three things that they all share. Are they all the same in needing these things?

3. Do all of these need protection in this world in order to live well? Why or why not?
4. Do all of these need love in this world in order to live well? Why or why not?
5. Did the little fur child see how important it is to love each of these? Did he see each as special and worthy of love?
6. Can you see with the eyes of love as you look at people outside of your family? Can you see that all people need to eat and to breathe and to have a warm place to live? Can you see that each needs love?
7. It is important that we try to see each person through the eyes of love so that we do not forget how special each person is. How can we remember this so that we do not forget that all people need love?

### **Activity**

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

#### **The Pirate Telescope Activity**

##### *Objective*

The students will continue to learn to see people through the eyes of love. They will see them as people of great worth and importance. The students will make a *pretend* pirate telescope. They will *pretend* to be pirates using a pirate telescope. The students will use the telescope to see others in new ways.

##### *Instructions*

The new way of seeing, which is through the eyes of love will be illustrated by first having students do just the opposite, seeing others through the eyes of a grumpy pirate.

1. The first thing the children will do is to take a regular sheet of thin white paper and roll it up into a pretend pirate telescope. Say to the children, "You have just made a magic, pretend pirate telescope. At the beginning of this activity, I want you to pretend to be pirates. As we know, pirates can be grumpy and selfish.
2. Look at the board that has the little fur family animals on it. You are now a grumpy and selfish pirate. Look at the Grandpa. Think pirate thoughts about the Grandpa. What are some pirate thoughts when you look through your magical pirate telescope? *He is old and I can steal from him.*
3. Now, look at the fish. With your pirate telescope, what is your mind telling you about the fish? *I will catch that fish and fry it in a pan and eat it. I will not throw it back in the river.*
4. Now, look at the bug through the eyes of a pirate looking through the pirate's telescope. How are you seeing the bug?" *I will squash that bug. I am bigger than it.*

5. Remember that I told you that the pirate's telescope is magical. What I want you to do now is to put the telescope over your other eye (the one you did not use yet). You are no longer a pirate. You are a loving child in this class.
6. I now want you to look at Grandpa again and through the eyes of this telescope of love, tell me how you see Grandpa? *He is old, loving, and good. He may need my help.*
7. Now look at the fish through this telescope of love. How do you see the fish? *The fish eats and breathes and needs a good home just like I do. I will gently put the fish back in the river.*
8. Now, look at the tiny, tiny fur animal through the telescope of love. How do you see that tiny, tiny fur animal? *He is so small that I must protect him and give him love.*

We now have magical telescopes of love to help us see animals and people in wonderfully new ways. When we are as grumpy as pirates, let's try to change the way we see people by looking through the telescopes of love. The way we see them will change so that our thoughts get better and better toward them.

### **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, blessed us all and given 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.

*Galatians 3:26-29:* You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

### **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, *It's Not Easy Being a Bunny* by Marilyn Sadler
- Participate in the class discussion.
- Participate in the activity.

## Procedures

1. Review the main ideas of the previous lesson. All people have great worth simply because they are people.
2. Introduce the book, *It's Not Easy Being a Bunny* by Marilyn Sadler. 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, *It's Not Easy Being a Bunny*.
2. Show the picture (page 2) of PJ sitting in front of the carrot dinner, surrounded by dozens of brothers and sisters. Ask the children this question, "Was PJ funny bunny happy to eat carrots and to be with all of those brothers and sisters? If not, what do you think he was feeling when he had to eat the carrots and play with so many brothers and sisters?"  
*Angry, sad, and disappointed.*
3. 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.*
4. As you continue to hold up the same page (page 2), you might ask, "Was PJ funny bunny looking at his family through the eyes of love when he was looking at the carrots and all of his brothers and sisters? Why or why not?"
5. PJ funny bunny had a choice. He could look at the carrots and his brothers and sisters through the eyes of love or he could look at all of this through the eyes of anger, sadness, and disappointment. Which eyes do you think he was using? The eyes of love or the eyes of anger, sadness, and disappointment? Why do you think this?
6. What do you think would happen to someone if they continued and continued and continued to see everything that happened to them through the eyes of anger, sadness,

and disappointment? What happened to PJ funny bunny when he continued and continued and continued to see the world through anger, sadness, and disappointment? *He left his family and could not find happiness anywhere, whether it was with the bears, the birds, the beavers, or anyone else.*

7. At the end of the story, PJ funny bunny began to feel very happy. How might the way he was seeing everyone else have helped him to become so happy? *PJ funny bunny began to see his family through the eyes of love and not through the eyes of anger, sadness, and disappointment.*
8. Show the final two pages of the book. Say, “Now that PJ funny bunny is seeing through the eyes of love, what is his family like?” *Happy, peaceful, and contented.*

### Activity

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

#### **The Two Sides to PJ Funny Bunny**

##### *Objective*

The students will continue to learn about feelings and their consequences. The students will draw PJ funny bunny as angry, sad, and disappointed. They will also draw PJ funny bunny as happy, contented, and peaceful.

##### *Instructions*

As you did with the gingerbread boy and girl activity, you, the teacher, will draw an outline of PJ funny bunny’s face using the front cover of the book as your guide. You will actually be drawing two exact replicas of PJ’s face. Turn the paper on its side and draw PJ funny bunny’s face first on one-half of the paper and then on the other half of the same sheet of paper (both bunny faces 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 bunny faces. After you have drawn the outlines of the PJ funny bunny faces, fold each sheet of paper in half before giving to the students. Tell the students:

1. On the left side of the paper, please draw PJ funny bunny’s face as you picture him when he is angry, sad, and disappointed. Try to show his feelings on his face.
2. When you are through with your drawing, turn the piece of paper over to the outline of the other PJ funny bunny face. Now, draw PJ funny bunny’s face so that he looks happy, contented, and peaceful in his family.
3. When the children are finished with the two drawings, ask them to open the sheet of paper so that they can look at both drawings. Ask them the following questions, “Is there a big difference in PJ funny bunny’s face when he is angry, sad, and disappointed or when he is happy, contented, and peaceful? Do you think there’s a big difference deep in his heart and in the way his heart feels when he is angry or when he is happy and peaceful? Do you think his family is feeling better when he is angry or when he is happy and peaceful?”

Please tell the students that anger all of the time might make a person look like PJ funny bunny when he 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 written about 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.

#### **Scripture**

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

*Psalm 103: 8- 9:* The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever.

### **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:*

- Listen to the story, *Will You Forgive Me* by Sally Grindley and Penny Dann.
- Participate in the class discussion.
- Participate in the activity.

## **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. Read the story, *Will You Forgive Me?* Tell the children, “Through this story, we learned that when we become ready to 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. Figgy’s brother, Big Smudge, began to throw Jefferson Bear’s knobbly tickling stick into the air. Her brother Floppybugs threw it still higher. Figgy asked them to stop throwing JB’s stick, but her brothers sneered at her and teased her by saying that she would not be able to throw the stick. What did Figgy Twosocks do next that was unkind to JB?

3. How do you think Jefferson Bear would feel if he knew that his knobby tickling stick had been carelessly lost? *Angry. Sad. Disappointed.*
4. Figgy Twosocks felt very sad that the stick was gone. She was afraid to tell JB what she had done. She was afraid he wouldn't be her friend anymore. She looked and looked for the stick. What did Figgy do when she saw JB scratching his back against a tree? *She ran away in fear and embarrassment. What would have been the loving thing to do? Tell JB the truth of what happened.*
5. As Figgy was running away, she bumped into Buncle the badger and saw that he was carrying Jefferson Bear's knobby tickling stick. Then what happened? *She told him that the stick belonged to Jefferson Bear. She asked him for it, but he would not give it to her.*
6. How did Figgy plan to get JB's stick back to him? *She was going to give Buncle honey from Jefferson Bear's tree in exchange for the stick.*
7. What happened when Figgy Twosocks climbed the honey tree? *She climbed higher and higher. Her head began to feel funny. She knocked some of the honeycomb to the ground. A bee stung her. She became stuck. JB came to her rescue. She grabbed some honeycomb and ran off to find Buncle.*
8. What happened when Figgy Twosocks ran back, carrying JB's tickling stick? *She finally told JB the truth about his tickling stick.*
9. Did JB agree to forgive her?
10. How did JB show loving forgiveness toward Figgy? *They had a midnight feast. They spent time together.*
11. How do you think JB's loving forgiveness felt? *Please show the students the picture on the last page of the book where Figgy and JB are together, happy and smiling.*

### 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.

##### *Instructions*

The teacher will ask the students to think back to the story, *Will You Forgive Me?* He or she will ask them to think about the loving forgiveness JB gave to Figgy Twosocks (please show the picture found on the last page of the book where Figgy and JB are together).

1. How did JB show loving forgiveness? *By having a midnight feast with Figgy.*
2. What are some other ways he could have shown loving forgiveness? *He could have helped Figgy with work. He could have played a game. He could have said a kind word. He could have given a gift.*

Each student will now draw a picture of JB showing loving forgiveness toward Figgy Twosocks.

## **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.

## **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:*

- Review the main ideas of the book entitled, *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown.
- Participate in a class discussion.
- Participate in the activity.

**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.

2. Read the book entitled, *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown.
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, *The Runaway Bunny*.
2. Let's pretend now that the runaway bunny was just as angry, sad, and disappointed as PJ funny bunny. Let's pretend that the runaway bunny really did run away. Let us now pretend one more thing: his mother, father, and everyone in his family were kind and good to him, yet he ran away. Would his running away be fair or unfair to his mother, father, brothers, and sisters? Why would it be unfair?
3. Again, let us pretend that the bunny actually ran away (please hold up page 1 for the students to see). Do you think that his mother who was running after him would be angry at what he did? Why or why not?
4. Is it possible to still love someone even though you are very angry with him or her? Why or why not?
5. Do you remember when we played the pirate telescope game and we put the telescope to our eyes in such a way that we began to see others in a good, kind, and loving way? Let's do that again, but this time just cup your hands over your eyes as I show you pictures from *The Runaway Bunny*. This is your magical telescope that will help you to see the little bunny through the eyes of love.
6. The teacher will now turn to the page where the mother is fishing in the stream for her little bunny. Ask this question, "Using your telescope of love, look at the mother who is trying to find her runaway bunny. What is she doing in this stream? *She is allowing herself to be tired and wet as she gently fishes for the bunny she loves.*
7. Now, the teacher will turn to the next 2 pages of full pictures without text where the mother and bunny are climbing the mountain. Ask this question, "Using your telescope of love, look at the mother who is hiking in the mountains for her bunny. What is she doing in the mountains?" *She is walking on the rocks and cliffs and risking injury so that she can lovingly bring her little bunny back to her. She is continuing to see how very important he is.*
8. Now, turn all the way over to the picture where the two are on the ocean in a storm. Ask this question, "Using your telescope of love, look at the mother who is in the stormy sea.

What is she doing in the ocean storm? *She is trying to lovingly bring her little bunny to safety. She is continuing to see her precious bunny through the eyes of love.*

9. Now, turn to the final two full color pages where the mother and bunny are safely in their bunny home under the tree. Ask this question, “For your final time now, use your telescope of love. Look at the mother and the bunny in their family home. What are you seeing?” *Love, love, and more love. The child seems to truly understand the love his mother is pouring out for him. Look how attentively the child is looking at the mother and see how warmly and protectively the mother is looking at her child.*
10. Is it important to look at others in our family 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?

### **In a Christian Context**

This section has been provided for those teachers seeking ideas within their own Christian tradition. Once again, teachers should feel free to use these sections as they wish.

#### **General Ideas**

We have provided examples of Bible stories that illustrate the importance of seeing the great worth of all people.

*John 9:1-41:* Jesus gives sight to a blind man.

### **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:**

### **Giving the Gift of Love Through Forgiveness**

#### **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 both for the forgiver and the forgiven.

#### **Behavioral Objectives**

*The students will:*

- Listen to the story, *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown.
- Participate in a class discussion.
- Participate in the activity.

## 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 again about the story, *The Runaway Bunny*.
2. The bunny wanted to run away. If you were the mother, would that make you happy or would that make you angry and sad? Why?
3. 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 see through our magical telescope in new ways so that 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.*
4. Did you know that when you forgive a person, you actually give them a gift, a special gift of love?
5. Let us look at today's story. Look at all of the gifts the mother bunny gives to her runaway bunny. Please turn to the second and third pages of the story where the mother is reaching for her fishing gear. Ask this question, "You can see in this picture that the bunny has run away into the trout stream. What gift of love is the mother giving to her bunny in this picture?" *She is leaving her comfortable home and starting to go on a search for him. This is taking time and effort for her. She is worried, but she is going out anyway because she loves him. She is giving the gift of love.*
6. Turn to the sixth and seventh pages of the story where the mother has her backpack strapped to her and is heading out the door up to the mountain. Ask this question, "You can see in this picture that the bunny has run away up the tall mountain. What gift of love is the mother giving to the bunny in this picture?" *She is leaving her comfortable home and going up the steep cliffs to rescue her child. She is giving the gift of love.*

7. Turn to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> pages of the story where the mother is sitting on the bank of the lake or ocean and the child is at the edge of the water. Point to the plants and show how they are bending because there is a harsh wind blowing. This will make the ocean a dangerous place for swimming right now. Ask this question, “You can see in this picture that the bunny has run away and is about to go into the stormy ocean. What gift of love is the mother getting ready to give her bunny in this picture?” *She is going to save her child who has made a very poor decision to go into the ocean when it is stormy. She is giving the gift of love.*
8. 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.*

### **Activity**

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

### **Finishing the Runaway Bunny’s 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 the runaway bunny runs away one final time.

#### *Instructions*

The teacher will ask, “Did you like the story, *The Runaway Bunny*?”

Then the teacher will say, “I liked it so much that I did not want it to end. Let us continue the story of the runaway bunny and pretend that he runs away one final time. Here is what happens: When the bunny is full of carrot juice and carrot sticks, he opens the front door to their cozy cottage and runs away into the deep, dark woods. These woods are not like any old woods, there are lots and lots of trees with hooting owls and swooping bats. The mother awakens and out of love for her little bunny, she has to think of something to make him safe in the woods and to bring him safely home. Pretend you are the parent who needs to rescue your child even though you are disappointed, sad, and angry that he has run away again. What will you do as a gift of love to make him safe in the woods and to bring him safely back to the cozy home?”

Please have a discussion with the students first in which you write the solutions on the chalkboard. After the class has generated five or more solutions, hand out a sheet of paper and have the children draw a picture of the mother 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**

*Colossians 3:12-15:* Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

### **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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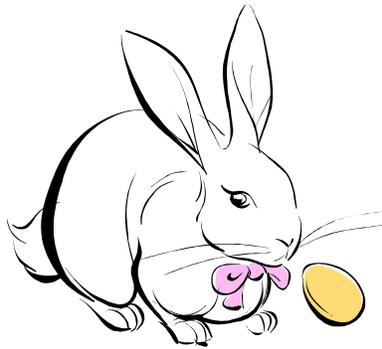
**General Comments:**

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# The Building Blocks of Forgiveness



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

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

*May you continue learning to forgive.*  
***Congratulations!***