

8

A Heart of Stone

Grace
God's grace transforms us as we trust in Him.

POWER TEXT

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You" (Psalm 86:5).

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 18:21-35
- *Christ's Object Lessons*, chap. 19, pp. 243-251
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 128-130; 91-93
- Student lesson on page 92 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 7, The Nature of Humanity
- No. 8, The Great Controversy
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God's forgiveness has no limits.
- **Feel** thankful that God has forgiven them.
- **Respond** by forgiving others as God has forgiven them.

POWERPOINT

God's forgiveness has no limits.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Peter comes to Jesus with a question: "How many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?" In His answer, Jesus tells the story of the unforgiving servant. Jesus wants Peter to see that there is no limit to God's forgiveness. The foundation of God's kingdom is grace that forgives freely. When we experience God's forgiveness, we want to be like Him, and God's forgiveness flows through us to others.

This is a lesson about grace.

In His grace God has forgiven us. It is His grace toward us that empowers us to forgive others. When we recognize how much God loves us and forgives us, it is easier for us to forgive others.

Teacher Enrichment

"The rabbis limited the exercise of forgiveness to three offenses. Peter, carrying out, as he supposed, the teaching of Christ, thought to extend it to seven, the number signifying perfection. But Christ taught that we are never to become weary of forgiving" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 243). "We ourselves owe everything to God's free grace. . . .

". . . Nothing can justify an unforgiving spirit. He who is unmerciful toward others shows that he himself is not a partaker of God's pardoning grace. In God's forgiveness the heart of the erring one is drawn close to the great heart of Infinite Love. The tide of divine compassion flows into the sinner's soul, and from him to the souls of others. The tenderness and mercy that Christ has revealed in His own precious life will be seen in those who become sharers of His grace" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 250, 251).

For what have you been forgiven? How does this knowledge affect your forgiveness toward others?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice. 

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Leader, Forgive Me?* *B. Making Forgiveness Stick*	list of commands game board/dartboard, darts/other objects to throw
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 87. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering plate/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	three copies of *Net Kids* script (p. 150) Bibles, paper, pens/pencils Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Little Person, Big Person*	slips of paper, pens/pencils, labeled brown bags
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Forgiveness Keys*	key pattern (p. 151), construction paper, scissors, markers, string, hole punch
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ list of commands

Leader, Forgive Me?

This game is played like Mother, May I? The object is to be the first person to reach the leader. The students line up side by side at the back of the classroom. The leader calls out a command. Before they carry out the command, the students must call out, "Leader, forgive me," and wait for the leader to say "You are forgiven." Any student who doesn't ask or moves before asking must go back to the beginning point. The student who gets to the front of the room first wins.

Sample commands:

- Take two giant steps forward.
- Hop three steps on one foot. Walk backwards four steps.
- Twirl around and take one step forward.
- Take 10 baby steps, etc.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel about this game? What happened to you?** (Accept responses.) **How did this game remind you of God's forgiveness?** (God gives another chance, we need to ask for forgiveness; sometimes it seems like God is not fair, etc.) Say: **Let's say together our power text, Psalm 86:5:**

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You" (Psalm 86:5).

Our power point for this week reminds us that:

God's forgiveness has no limits.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ game board/dartboard
- ☐ darts/other objects to throw

Making Forgiveness Stick

For this game you will need to make a game board with a bull's-eye (use a large piece of cardboard and draw large concentric circles on it with a marker) or use a dartboard for the target. You will need darts (some with points; some without) OR small balls of clay OR use Velcro attached to a large piece of cardboard as the game board, and knit balls and table tennis balls for throwing. Mark a line on the floor with tape or chalk about five feet away from the game board. Instruct the students to stay behind the line and throw a dart (ball) at the target. When everyone has had a turn or two, debrief.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why would the [object] not stick?** (no point; too slippery; too smooth) **Was the problem with the object or the board?** (the object) Say: **Sometimes people feel like life is a game of darts. What in this game represents you? Our lesson this week is about forgiveness. What if we feel as though forgiveness doesn't stick?** Say: **Let's say together our power text, Psalm 86:5:**

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You" (Psalm 86:5).

Our power point for this week reminds us that:

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Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 45)
"Behold What Manner of Love" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 42)
"It's About Grace" (see music on p. 149 of this guide)
"Forgiven and Free" (*Praise Time*, no. 48)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Say: **Just as God forgives us, we are to forgive others. And just as God gives to us, we are to give to others.**

Prayer

Accept prayer requests and reports on answers.
Say: **In today's prayer circle we will use the word "pray" as our outline. P stands for Praise, R stands for Repent, A stands for Ask, and Y stands for "Yes, I love You, Lord." Have students volunteer for the letter that stands for what they want to pray.**

Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ three scripts (p. 150)

Introducing the Bible Story

***The* Net Kids**

(Note: The *Net Kids* are an imaginative way to introduce the Bible story. If you prefer not to use this activity, read over the script yourself and introduce the lesson concept in your own words.)

Introduce the Net Kids to your class.

Say: **The Net Kids are an international group of children ages 11-14 who communicate regularly through e-mail. Emiko and Darren met in a teen Christian chat room and found out that they were both Seventh-day Adventists. They then created a chat room for Adventist juniors and teens, and the other four joined. They get together as often as they can via the Internet.**

Ulla: 11-year-old girl, Sweden
Ivan: 12-year-old boy, Russia
Tendai: 12-year-old boy, Zimbabwe
Ana: 13-year-old girl, U.S.A.
Darren: 13-year-old boy, Australia
Emiko: 14-year-old girl, Japan

Arrange the students at desks, or at chairs turned around as desks if no desks are available. Have them tap as they read their part, to simulate typing at a computer keyboard.

Make three copies of the *Net Kids* script found on page 150 of this guide. Distribute to the students you have selected as early as possible. Allow practice time before using this activity.

Present the skit.

Debriefing

Ask: **Do you remember the text "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12)? How could that text be used with this story?**

Say: **Remember our power point:**

God's forgiveness has no limits.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Experiencing the Story

Divide the class into five groups. Say: **Today you will read the Bible story in your groups. It is found in Matthew 18:21-35. As you read it think of making this story into a movie. When making a movie, the screenwriters give the subject what is called a *treatment,* which means looking at the story from the different perspectives of the people involved and choosing which perspective to portray. Each group will present the story from a different perspective—with a different treatment. Group one—the king; group two—the unforgiving servant; group three—the man who was thrown into jail by the unforgiving servant; group four—the king's servants who saw and informed the king. Group five—God, who extends grace to all.**

Take some time to decide how to present your screenplay to the class. Be prepared to explain why your main character acts as he does.

Debriefing

Ask: **Did presenting and seeing the story from the different characters' perspectives help you to understand them better? Explain. How does thinking about others' perspective help us when we interact with them?** (It makes us more sympathetic and compassionate.) **How does God view people who need to be forgiven?** (He loves them and is always ready to forgive.)

Say: **Let's repeat together our power point:**

God's forgiveness has no limits.

Accommodation for students with special needs: Guide students with special needs who experience difficulty with this activity to groups that offer them assistance in participation. Let them contribute according to their strengths and skills so that they may feel comfortable engaging and participating.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Say: **I'm going to read you a description of a Bible character, and I want you to guess the identity.** Read the first description. If no one can guess the identity of the person, give the clue in parentheses ( ). If no one can guess after the clue, give the Bible text and have the students look up the answer. The answers are in brackets [ ].

1. He asked for forgiveness, but did the same thing over again. (pyramids) Exodus 10:16-20. [Pharaoh]
2. He was related by adoption to a powerful man. (staff) Exodus 2:10. [Moses]
3. She asked someone to forgive her husband. (200 loaves of bread) 1 Samuel 25:23-25. [Abigail]
4. He tried to kill his son's best friend. (spear) 1 Samuel 19:10. [Saul]
5. He tricked his future son-in-law. (uncle) Genesis 29:25. [Laban]
6. He wanted to kill his brother. (twin) Genesis 27:41. [Esau]
7. He forgot how God had revealed his dream. (image) Daniel 3:24. [Nebuchadnezzar]
8. He wanted a life of pleasure at any cost. (pigs) Luke 15:11-31. [prodigal son]
9. Jesus forgave her many times. (hair) Mark 16:9. [Mary Magdalene]
10. He wanted to be forgiven more than he wanted to be healed. (mat) Matthew 9:1, 2. [paralytic]

Debriefing

Ask: **What do all of these people have in common?** (they received forgiveness) **How did the people feel about being forgiven?** Say: **Let's repeat our power text, Psalm 86:5:**

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You" (Psalm 86:5).

The power point reminds us that:

God's forgiveness has no limits.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ slips of paper
- ☐ pens/pencils
- ☐ brown bags labeled Big Person Little Person

Little Person, Big Person

Say: **Think of one thing little children do that annoys you. For instance: they leave toys in your way; they get into your stuff. Now think of one other super-annoying thing and write it on a slip of paper.** (Small church: each person fills out two or three slips.) **Now on another slip of paper, write one thing that people *your age* might do that they shouldn't do.** (Small church: each person fills out two or three slips.) Ask the students to put their papers in the appropriate bag. At least nine slips are needed in each bag. (Large church: Place the bags on opposite sides of the room so students can move from one to the other.) After everyone has finished, call two volunteers up front to draw slips from the "little person" bag. Instruct them to read the responses on the slips of paper when you signal them, filling in the blanks in the reading below. Encourage everyone else to close their eyes and think of a small child they know and really like while you read the following. (As you read, try to sound more and more frustrated.)

First Scenario

I knew it was going to be a bad day the moment the little guy came padding by the chair where I was trying to do my homework. Right before my eyes he (read Little Person [LP] slip 1). **I couldn't believe it! It reminded me of the time he** (LP slip 2). **Talk about gross! The next minute he was** (LP slip 3)**. And if that was not enough, no sooner had I settled him quietly with a book to look at when he** (LP slip 4)**. This kid has no idea how to behave. First he** (LP slip 5)**. Then he** (LP slip 6)**. And in quick succession he managed to** (LP slip 7)**,** (LP slip 8)**, and** (LP slip 9)**. Now, I'm a normal person. I never cry. But that child had me crying like a baby. It was a total meltdown.**

Debriefing

Say: **We were each thinking about a different child. Did anyone find that it was impossible to feel angry about the child you knew even though he or she was doing all this?** (Chances are that many will agree.) **Why were you not angry?** (It was funny; the child was cute; he or she was only a child, etc.) **Those of us who became angry, why do you think we felt that way?** (The child was annoying; we didn't want to be bothered; we wanted to be left alone, etc.)

Second Scenario

Instruct the volunteers to draw from the "big person" bag.

My mom has to go to work early, so she wakes us all up before 7:00 a.m. I can't believe it! Everything goes downhill from there.

I (read Big Person [BP] slip 1)**. Thinking about how to cover that up, I** (BP slip 2)**. Wow! Now I'm really in trouble! But the next minute I am** (BP slip 3)**. I'm sitting in class thinking about changing my name when** (BP slip 4)**. That does it! Then the principal asks who** (BP slip 5). **It will be the other guy. But nobody would buy that excuse, not after I** (BP slip 6) **and** (BP slip 7) **and** (BP slip 8)**. It was as if I wanted everyone in my life to hate me. I was wondering if I would ever be forgiven when I** (BP slip 9)**. Now it's all over for me. Is there any hope for me?**

Debriefing

Ask: **Have you ever felt like everyone was angry at you? Even God? How does that feel?** (miserable, not good, etc.) **So you know how this person feels when he or she says "Is there any hope for me?" Well, is there?** (Yes.) **What have you learned today that you could tell this person?** (Accept responses.) **In what ways is the Big Person of the second scenario like the Little Person in the first scenario?** (They both do things that they shouldn't; they both need forgiveness.) **How does God respond to Little Person? How does He respond to Big Person?** (He loves them both.) Say: **Let's say together our power text, Psalm 86:5:**

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You" (Psalm 86:5).

Let's repeat the power point, which reminds us that:

God's forgiveness has no limits.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ key pattern (p. 151)
- ☐ construction paper
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ markers
- ☐ string
- ☐ hole punch

Forgiveness Keys

Allow time for students to share with the class if they had the opportunity during the past week to ask someone's forgiveness whom they had hurt. Ask: **What did you do to convince a friend whom you had hurt that you are truly sorry for what you have said or done? How did your friend react? What were your feelings after you have made things right with your friend? Did someone ask for your forgiveness? How did you respond?**

Distribute copies of the key pattern (p. 151), construction paper, markers, hole punch, and string. Instruct the students to make two keys and write the power point on one side and the power text on the other side of each one. After they string the keys, encourage them to hang one in their room and give the others to a neighbor, friend, or family member.

Alternative:

Have students turn to a partner and briefly share their story of a time they hurt someone's feelings but were offered forgiveness and experienced freedom from guilt.

Debriefing

Say: **The key to having a clear conscience and freedom from guilt is to maintain a close relationship with God. We need to seek His forgiveness and to accept His grace. Let's repeat once again the power text:**

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You" (Psalm 86:5).

The power point reminds us that:

God's forgiveness has no limits.

Global Youth Day is March 15, 2025. To learn more about Global Youth Day, you may visit www.gcyouthministries .org. You may also want to download the Global Youth Day app. You can start planning with your Sabbath School class ways to get involved and participate in a community service project or a mission initiative on that day. The possibilities for service are endless. Some examples may include: visiting a nursing home, hospital, orphanage, or prison to comfort, sing, and pray for those who are sick, needy, and destitute, feeding the homeless, inviting people from the community to an open-house event, and so on.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **When you are tempted to hold a grudge, remember:**

God's forgiveness has no limits.

He will give you the power to forgive someone who hurt you. Then you can forgive that person, knowing that God forgives you. Pray for the students to this end. Pray that God will reveal His love to each of them, and that they will share His love with their neighbor-in-need.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Mary anoints Jesus. God's grace and love can flow through us to others.**

Notes

Student lesson

A Heart of Stone

Have you ever wondered what forgiveness means and how much you need to forgive? The disciples wondered about such things too, so Jesus answered their question by telling them a parable.

A rich and powerful king began to collect on the debts that were owed to him by other people. In the process he discovered that one of his servants owed him 10,000 talents of gold. That was more money than the servant could earn in his entire lifetime. There was no way this servant could ever pay back what he owed. The servant was brought before the king and was told that until the debt was paid back, he along with his children and his wife would be thrown in jail. The man fell down and begged the king, saying, "Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all" (Matthew 18:26). Of course, this wasn't even possible for the man to do, so the king decided to do something wonderful! He forgave the servant and let him go free!

If you were the servant, wouldn't you want to live the rest of your life in grateful service to the one who treated you with such undeserved kindness? Well, you would think so, but unfortunately the servant hadn't learned the value of forgiveness. As soon as he left the king's court, he remembered that one of his coworkers owed him a few dollars. Filled with anger, the servant approached his coworker in a fury, demanding that he should pay what he owed. The coworker fell to his knees begging for mercy and asked for time to repay his debt. But the servant would not listen. He had his coworker thrown into jail until the debt could be paid. When the king heard about this, he could hardly believe his ears. How could someone who had been forgiven so much not have mercy on someone who owed him so little? The king took that ungrateful servant and threw him in jail till he could pay all that he owed. The story reminds us that if we desire God's forgiveness, we too need to forgive those who have wronged us (see Matthew 18:35).

Do you know that like the servant in the story, each of us owes a debt that we can never pay back? Everyone has sinned by doing things that hurt people's feelings and ultimately hurt God. Lying, being unkind, or gossiping are only a few of the hurtful things that bring sorrow to others and to Jesus. The Bible says that the penalty (or cost) for sin is death. But Jesus came to pay the debt of your sins and mine. By dying on the cross, he paid our debt in full. Now we can enjoy the free gift of salvation that God offers to us. We can live with Jesus forever.

But how can we forgive someone who has really wronged us? Yes, it's true that we are human, and sometimes things may seem hard for us the do. However, God promises to give us a tender heart we need to really forgive others. When we realize what Jesus has done for us, we will be so thankful for the eternal life He offers us that we will find it much easier to forgive others.

Peter, one of the disciples, asked Jesus how many times we should forgive someone. Peter thought that seven times would be more than enough. But Jesus said to him, "Not seven times but seventy times seven" (see Matthew 18:21, 22). The answer to that math problem is a big number. The point is that we would lose count of forgiving someone that many times. So what should we do? The Bible tells us that no matter how many times we have forgiven someone, we should go to that person and talk to them kindly about the problem. Sometimes we might need to ask them to forgive us too.

True freedom comes from accepting God's forgiveness and sharing that forgiveness with others. Today you may accept the challenge to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

KEY REFERENCES

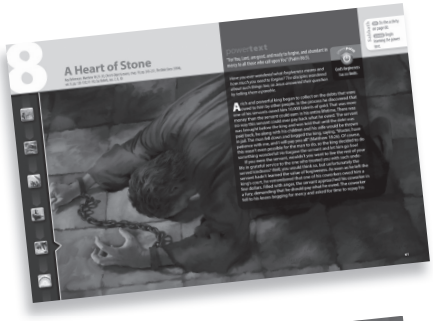
- Matthew 18:21-35
- *Christ's Object Lessons*, chap. 19, pp. 243-251
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 128-130; 91-93
- Our Beliefs, nos. 7, 8, 10

POWER TEXT

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You" (Psalm 86:5).

POWER POINT

God's forgiveness has no limits.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 61.

Sunday

READ Read Matthew 18:21, 22 and this week's story, "A Heart of Stone."

REVIEW Review the power text, Psalm 86:5.

PRAY Thank God that He is always ready to forgive you.

Monday

READ Read Matthew 18:23-27.

CALCULATE Multiply 70 x 7. How often would you have to forgive someone using this formula?

CHART Record in your Bible study journal the times you ask forgiveness (of God, your family, your friends).

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that His forgiveness is without limits.

Tuesday

READ Review Matthew 18:28-30.

THINK Have you ever been forgiven for something you couldn't repay or fix? Have you ever forgiven someone else for something like that?

CREATE Use art supplies to create a symbol or diagram expressing what forgiveness looks like to you.

ASK Ask your parents or grandparents to tell you a forgiveness story from their lives.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you be a forgiving Christian.

Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 18:31-35.

CHART Keep charting how you experience forgiveness.

THINK When have you acted like the unforgiving servant? What could you have done differently?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for His forgiveness. Ask Him for a forgiving spirit toward others.

Thursday

READ Read Psalm 103:9-12.

THINK Which of the characters in this story is most like you? In what ways?

EXPLAIN What does it mean to forgive from your heart? Write your answer in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to enable you to forgive from your heart.

Friday

READ Read Ezekiel 33:16 and Micah 7:19.

THINK Think of someone you need to forgive.

CHART How do your numbers add up? Do you think Jesus meant we are supposed to count how many times we forgive a person? Why or why not?

CONNECT As a family, ask for and offer forgiveness to each other. Think of a way to apply Micah 7:19 together.

REPEAT Say the power text, Psalm 86:5, by memory.

PRAY Thank God that He wipes clean the memory of our sins.