

IDENTITY & SELF ACCEPTANCE | WEEK 19

LEADERS GOAL

Help students understand that betrayal hurts, but choosing forgiveness can lead to healing.

SCRIPTURES

Nehemiah 9:17

ACTIVITIES

The Lying King Card Game
Dissolving paper

PRAY

SUPPLIES

- Standard deck of 52 cards, one per Small Group
- Dissolving Paper, bowl of water
- Black food colouring
- Bowls
- Bible marked and open to Nehemiah 9:17
- IPAD to watch Bible story video

BOTTOM LINE

Forgiveness will help us heal.

AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

As students come in, ask them to share a time when they felt supported and appreciated.

STORY CONNECTION

As we wrap up our small group time for the year, we're going to talk about one more challenging topic: how to forgive when we feel we've been betrayed.

In The Lion King, both Simba and Mufasa experience betrayal by Scar. Scar wasn't just an enemy — he was family. His betrayal broke trust and had devastating consequences. Because of Scar's actions, Simba carries guilt, fear, and pain for years, even though the betrayal wasn't his fault. Betrayal can be especially painful when it comes from someone we trust.

What is betrayal?

Betrayal happens when someone breaks trust or hurts us deeply. This can look like:

- A friend lying to us
- Someone sharing a secret that wasn't theirs to tell
- A family member saying or doing something that causes lasting hurt
- Being blamed for something that isn't our fault

Betrayal often leaves us feeling confused, angry, sad, or unsure of who we can trust again.

Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending the hurt didn't happen, and it doesn't mean saying what happened was okay. Forgiveness is a choice to let go of hurt so the hurt doesn't control us. Sometimes forgiveness takes time, support, and honesty — and that's okay.



Just like Simba needed help to face the truth and heal, we also need time and courage to forgive when trust has been broken. God understands how painful betrayal can be, and He walks with us as we learn how to forgive and move forward.

OUR STORIES

- Can you think of a time when you felt betrayed or let down by someone you trusted? (You don't have to share details if you don't want to.)
- How did that experience make you feel—angry, sad, confused, distant, or something else?
- Have there been times when you hurt someone's feelings or broke trust, and they chose to forgive you? What did that feel like?
- Why do you think forgiveness can feel so hard when someone has really hurt us?
- How does it make you feel to know that God still loves you, even when you make mistakes or hurt others?
- How might remembering God's forgiveness help us take steps toward forgiving others—even if it takes time?

TRUTH & TREASURE

Last week, we talked about Peter denying Jesus. When Jesus needed him most, Peter said he didn't even know Him. That could have felt like a deep betrayal. But Peter wasn't the only close follower who betrayed Jesus.

Another disciple, Judas, also betrayed Jesus—this time by choosing money over loyalty and helping those who wanted to arrest Him.

Judas Betrays Jesus – Matthew 26:14-16; Video: <https://streamable.com/fm7luk>

Betrayal hurts deeply, especially when it comes from someone we trusted. Jesus understood that pain. Yet even after being betrayed, He continued to show love, compassion, and forgiveness. God asks us to forgive others—not because betrayal doesn't matter, but because forgiveness frees our hearts from being controlled by the hurt. We forgive because God has already shown us forgiveness.

The Bible reminds us of God's heart:

"You are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love."
Nehemiah 9:17 (NIV)

Our God is a God of forgiveness.

God knows that people will fail and make mistakes. We are human—capable of hurting others and being hurt ourselves—but we still have great value. Forgiving someone doesn't mean pretending the hurt didn't happen. It means choosing not to let bitterness have the final word.

God invites us to love our friends and family well, even when it's hard. With His help, we can choose forgiveness and take steps toward healing.



DISCOVERY

GAME | The Lying King Card Game (Cheat Card Game)

Supplies: Standard deck of 52 cards, one per Small Group
Shuffle deck and deal the entire deck out to the students.

Students take turns playing cards face down while declaring what rank they are playing, with the goal of getting rid of all their cards. For example, they may lay down two cards and say, “Two 7s.” Play continues clockwise with the next player playing the same rank or one higher or lower than the previous player. They can play any number of cards of that rank.

They may lie about what they are playing, but if another player challenges them by saying “Lying King!” and they are lying, they have to pick up the entire pile of cards. If they are telling the truth, the player who challenged them must pick up the pile.

The first player to get rid of all their cards is the winner.

ACTIVITY | Dissolving Paper

Supplies: dissolving paper, pencils, bowl of water

Forgiveness can be one of the hardest things we ever do — whether it’s forgiving someone who’s hurt us or letting go of guilt for something we’ve done. Just like God forgives us completely, He also invites us to release the things we’ve been holding onto.

Take a moment to write down something that’s been hard to forgive — either something done to you or something you’ve done. When you’re ready, drop your paper into the dissolving solution. As it disappears, let it remind you that God’s forgiveness wipes our mistakes away completely and gives us a fresh start.

PRAYER

Dear God, when we feel hurt, forgotten, or betrayed, help us to forgive and love others, just like you do. Help us to not focus on their mistakes, but to look for the good in them and love them just as you love them. Give us peace and remind us to see the good in each other. Amen.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Choose to forgive someone.

