

Family Formation

Session 22: Forgiveness

Handouts: "Let Your Light Shine", "Father, forgive them"

Background for Parents

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). Forgiving someone who has hurt us deeply is very difficult to do, but if we are going to be like Jesus, we have to follow in His footsteps and forgive. We cannot forgive on our own power, but with our hand in Jesus', we can be strong, lean on Him, and allow Him to love through us.

With the family

Think of somebody that you really admire. You want to be like them so you watch them closely and you may even imitate the way they act, the clothes they wear, and say the things that they say. God the Father would like us to really admire His Son, Jesus. He would like us to watch Jesus closely and imitate Him.

It is difficult being a kid today. You have lots of pressures, the ways of the world are strong, and it can be so hard to stand up against the crowd, or to even know what to do. Whenever you are in a difficult situation, always remember to ask for the guidance and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He will always help you!

For example, when you. . . .

-don't understand something→ ask for wisdom, knowledge, understanding;

-don't know what to do→ ask for counsel;

-are afraid to do what you know you should do→ ask for fortitude;

-are having difficulty even being kind to another person→ask for piety;

-are having difficulty obeying God's laws and following your conscience→ask for fear of the

Lord.

Do worksheet, "Let Your Light Shine." Add the comments below to answers from your family.

1) One of the 2 great commandments Jesus told us is loving one another. You could. . .

-ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit of piety.

-keep your eyes on your goal: heaven.

-go to the new kid, introduce yourself, & arrange to sit together at lunch. Your group of friends might make fun of you if you do this but then you must ask yourself, "Am I in the right group of friends?"

2) It is hard not to be jealous or envious of other people's things.

-Pray and ask God to protect you from envy

-Evaluate how you are spending your money—are you spending it in a responsible way?

-Look around and evaluate the many blessings, tangible and intangible, that the Lord has given to you. Ask for a heart filled with gratitude.

3) I have to remember that God loves me. He wants me to keep my eyes on His Son, Jesus.

-He wants me to become like Jesus.

-Whenever I compare myself to someone else, then I am being fooled. I have taken my eyes off of Jesus and have stopped trying to become like Jesus. I have forgotten that God loves me. I should never compare myself to someone else or I am denying the special, unique way that God made me.

-My eyes need to remain securely placed on Jesus.

4) This is a tough situation, but you know that your parents have said that you should not smoke.

-Pray for the gift of counsel to know what to do, and then pray for the gift of fortitude to have the courage to follow through on what you know you should do.

-Stand up for the morals that you have been taught. The 4th Commandment is to obey your parents. Go to them and tell them of this new situation and ask for their advice.

-Consider if you are in the right group.

- 5) You can suggest that you do a different activity or you can be truthful and say that your family doesn't watch this program and don't watch it.
- 6) The best thing to do at this point would be to cool off and tell God about it.
 - Remove yourself from the temptation. Go to another room, turn on a video or computer game that holds your attention.
 - Distract yourself and stop the negative thought.
 - Call and talk with a friend or an adult you feel comfortable with. Ask for help, if necessary.
 - When your parents are home, discuss your feelings of jealousy with them. Jesus' plan for your family is love, peace, and acting together as one team. Don't be fooled into being against your sister.
- 7) We should not talk about each other, regardless of whether what we are saying is true or not.
 - Don't repeat it & do your best to forget it.
 - Say a prayer for the person whose name and reputation is being hurt.
 - Get on with life!

What happens if I blow it and give in to peer pressure? This is bound to happen from time to time. So if it does, don't get discouraged. Put all your energy into making things better!! Get up, make any apologies, go to Reconciliation if necessary, and START ALL OVER AGAIN!!

If we want to follow Jesus, one of the conditions of being like Jesus is that we need to forgive. We cannot forgive on our own power; we need Jesus' love power, and then we need to cooperate with the grace He gives us.

Read Mt 5: 43-48. When we refuse to forgive, we become the one who is in bondage. Where my heart was soft and loving before, now it is getting hard and angry. Jesus really knew what He was saying when He answered the question, "How often must I forgive my enemies?" He answered, "Seventy times seven" meaning an unlimited number of times (see Mt 18:21, Lk 17:3). If Jesus could pray from the Cross, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34) in reference to those crucifying Him, how much more we need to forgive in all circumstances.

Prayer experience: "Father Forgive Them" meditation. If time allows, journal your experience out.

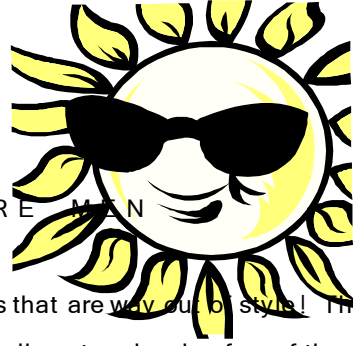
"Family forgiveness" experience: An area of forgiveness we need to really put effort into is forgiving our siblings and parents, because then we can be bound together in love—our family will become a weapon of love! Close this session with family members thinking of anything they have done to any other member that may have caused hurt or pain. One by one, have each family member ask forgiveness of each family member. End with a big hug!!

Recall that person you really admire and want to be like that you thought of in the beginning of this session. Jesus wants to be that one that we admire. He wants to be the one that we watch closely and imitate. He won't be wearing expensive shoes or driving the latest sports car, but He will be with us always!

Throughout the week

Whenever you are involved in a situation in your family where you need to ask a family member for forgiveness, as the parent, make a special effort to ask for forgiveness. Share any stories that happened with you outside of your family unit when you needed to ask another for forgiveness. Do a Bible search on what Jesus said about forgiving. Share a new verse each night at the dinner table.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN



You are by your locker before school starts. In walks the new kid with clothes that are way out of style! This kid looks down when passing by you and your friends. The leader of your group calls out and makes fun of the new kid. Everybody laughs....what do YOU do?

It seems like all the kids at school have the expensive, brand-name shoes! Your family can't afford them...what do you do?

You got a "C" on your Science test. Your friend got a 98%. You are feeling really jealous. It is making you so angry inside. You feel worthless. You are angry with your friend and with yourself...what do you do?

You hang out with a crowd and while you were gone this weekend, they all started smoking. You will all be hanging out again this weekend...what do you do?

All your friends like to watch a TV show that your family does not approve of. So far, nobody knows that you haven't seen it. You just kind of laugh and go along when everyone is talking about it. You are at a friend's house and they are watching this program. You start watching it too, but your conscience starts to bother you....what do you do?

It seems like your little sister gets away with everything. Your parents do everything for her but nothing for you. Your parents are gone for the afternoon and you are babysitting. Finally, you have a chance to get even with her by wrecking her dolls. What do you do?

You just heard some interesting gossip....what do you do?



Father, forgive them....

You are walking along a road. It is the middle of the day and yet the sky seems gray to you. There is a tension in the air. You are not sure where you are. You come upon a crowd of people and you realize you are at the crucifixion of Jesus. He has been beaten. Your

heart is just breaking, full of sorrow for Him. Your heart beats faster – tears are streaming down your face. You cannot believe what you see! Your eyes look up and meet His eyes. Your heart begins to melt with overwhelming love for Him. He starts to speak. Each word takes so much effort. He says, “Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.” You feel like running. You cannot believe that He would be asking His Father to forgive these people who have done this terrible thing to Him.

Jesus looks down at you. You feel like He is asking you for something. Your eyes look up once again and you know that He understands you so deeply. He understands everything! In one little look, He has seen right into your heart and you know that He can even see the dark part. He can see the pain that has gone on in your life that has caused your heart to be hurt. He is so sorry for the things that have happened to you. He is asking you to trust Him and to forgive those who have hurt you.

Jesus speaks to you in the silence of your heart. His eyes are so loving! He says, “As I have done, so must you do.” You continue to look into His eyes – you know He is right. He already knows the whole situation. You decide to give up the grudges that you have held on to. You do not want Jesus to take on any more pain. He has already suffered so much.

You can feel the love of Jesus deep in your heart. As you keep your eyes locked on His, you feel stronger somehow! The places deep inside of you that felt cold, dark, ugly, and heavy, now feel warm and full of love. You feel so light on the inside. Jesus speaks to you in your heart again. He says, “Well done, good and faithful servant! Come now, and share in My heavenly Father’s Kingdom!”