

LESSON 26: Bad Choices

AIM

To initiate the understanding that sinning is turning away from God, and that sin hurts oneself and one's relationship with God and others (2.2.3)

OUTCOME

Learners understand that rules help to look after relationships with God and others, and that sin harms these relationships.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1 The Parable of the Lost Son. [Luke 15: 11 – 32]

Prepare three children before hand to be the two brothers and the father. Tell the following story to all the children while the other three mime the actions.

“There was once a man who had two sons,” said Jesus. “The youngest son was not happy at home. He dreamed of an exciting life far away. One day, he decided to leave his home. So he went to his dad. ‘I know that part of your land is mine,’ he said. ‘I want you to pay me for my share.’ The father gave the son what he wanted. The son took it all and went far away. At first he was happy. He did whatever he wanted to do. He went wherever he wanted to go. He bought whatever he wanted to buy. Before long he had spent all his money. He did not even have money to buy food. So he got a job feeding pigs. He was sad and wanted to go home, but he was also afraid. Maybe his father would not like him anymore. But he began the long trip home. At least he could be a servant instead of a son. His father had missed his son. He had sat on a hill looking out for him. Every time he went home without his son and he felt sad. But this day the father saw him coming. He ran to meet him. He hugged and kissed him. ‘Let’s have a party,’ he said ‘my son was lost, but now he is found!’”

(Adapted from Karyn Henley. 1993. *The Beginner’s Bible*. Cape Town: Struik Christian Books)

2 Ask the children the following **questions** about the parable. What choices did the son have? Which choice did he make? How did he hurt himself? Who else did he hurt?

3 **Define sin:** Sin is to decide on your own (freely) to do something that you know is wrong. Your decision hurts yourself, others and your friendship with God. A mistake or temptation is not a sin. You may feel like stealing a packet of chips, but if you don’t you do not sin.

4 **Which of these would be a sin?** 😊 ☹️

- A girl wishes to steal chocolates
- A boy pulls a dog’s tail
- A girl gives a flower to a friend

Give each of the children a disc made out of paper. One side contains the happy face 😊, the other the sad face ☹️. Let the children first indicate by showing the face of their choice, and then explain how each of the actions would affect themselves, others and God. More examples should be added to these.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Prepared dramatization of the lost son parable before the lesson (1)
- * Happy and sad faces for each learner (4)
- * “Sin Tin” (5)
- * Case studies on cardboard (6)
- * 🎵 *Be Careful Little Eyes or We Come to Ask Forgiveness* (8)

- 5 Take a coffee tin and make a label for it – “**sin tin**”. Put it in front of the class. Each child sits alone and thinks of one sin they may have done. Write it down on a small piece of paper and put it into the tin. Burn the pieces of paper and pray that God will help us to make things right again.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 6 **Case studies** in groups. Write the following information on sheets of cardboard.
 - a. Annie goes into other people’s suitcases. She takes their lunch and puts it in her pocket when no one is looking.
 - b. New people move in the house next door. Their son is blind. None of the children in the neighbourhood want to play with him.
 - c. Your friend is in a bad mood and hits you on the head. The teacher is not looking. The friend started first.

Groups fill in a worksheet:

PROBLEM	Why is it WRONG?	Who gets HURT?
a		
b		
c		

- 7 A **diary** in which the children write down how they make God happy today. (Monday to Friday)
- 8 **Song** -*Be Careful Little Eyes* or *We Come to Ask Forgiveness*
- 9 Explain the **sign of peace** as we do it at Mass. It is a time to restore broken relationships.

TO REMEMBER

Sin is deliberately doing something which I know will harm myself or others.

LESSON 27: Stories of Forgiveness

AIM

To help the children grow in readiness to forgive and to ask for forgiveness through hearing some heroic stories. (2.2.4, **13.8**)

OUTCOME

Learners understand that God forgives and calls us to forgive one another.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1 Display a **flashcard**:

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING

Ask the children who said these words. Jesus, at the end of his passion on the cross, forgave those who were putting him to death. Remind the children of the previous lesson. Jesus asks us to forgive, as God forgives us. Forgiving the hurt we suffer at the hands of others is not easy.

2 **Choose a story** that will inspire your learners. Some suggestions are given below.

AMY BIEHL was murdered in Khayelitsha near Cape Town in 1993. She was a young American woman who had come to work with the people there. Her parents forgave the people who killed their daughter in the belief that Amy would have wanted that. Now they work with the people in Khayelitsha. They donate funds for community development. An extract from the *The Amy Biehl Foundation Guestbook* are given below. (www.amybiehl.org) ⇨

NELSON MANDELA the first president of a free democratic South Africa spent a quarter of a century in prison, because he was prepared to sacrifice his life for the people. When he was released in 1990 he forgave those who had hurt and imprisoned him. He continues, as a peacemaker, to bring people together.

ELIE WEISEL During the Second World War (1939-1945) the Nazi party set up concentration camps as part of their attempt to eliminate the Jewish people in Germany. Six million Jews were killed in gas chambers or cremated in ovens. Elie Weisel survived these camps. He worked with many survivors of those camps. He taught forgiveness of one's enemy, and that one should not let bitterness destroy one's life. He received the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December 1986. By not forgiving those who hurt you, your anger and bitterness turns into bars that keep you locked away from enjoying your life.

3 Ask the children to **share stories** that they know about people who forgave others. The teacher could add stories of her/his own which are relevant to the community they live in.

4 The children write a **prayer for peace** and forgiveness in the world on a dove cut-out to be found on the worksheet. ⇨ They could write about a personal situation, or about something they know is happening in a troubled country. The doves are strung together and hung in the classroom.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Flashcard (1)
- * Story (2) ⇨
- * Copies of the worksheet (4) ⇨
- * An Act of Contrition (5) ⇨
- * *Peace Is Flowing Like a River, Peace Is the Gift of Heaven to Earth, Peace, Perfect Peace* (6)
- * Bible (8)

- 5 Say a prayer of sorrow for sin, called an **Act of Contrition**. You may wish to use or adapt the example given on the worksheet. 📖 ➔
- 6 The lesson could conclude with a **song of peace**. Some suggestions: *Peace Is Flowing Like a River*, *Peace Is the Gift of Heaven to Earth*, *Peace, Perfect Peace*.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 When people are not ready to forgive, they often seek **revenge**. Discuss this idea with the class.
- 8 The **story of Stephen** [Acts 7:54-60] provides a good example of forgiveness of one's enemies.
- 9 See how far your learners can get with answering these **reflective questions** on forgiveness:
 - What is forgiveness?
 - Name an example where you've been forgiven. How did you feel?
 - Name an example where you've forgiven someone. How did you feel?
 - Is it hard to forgive someone? Why? Why not?
 - Why do we need to forgive others?
 - Why do we need to be forgiven by others?

MATERIALS

I remember at the time I truly felt sorrow,
And wondered if South Africa had any tomorrow.
I felt so ashamed to have been born
Into a country so very torn.
But then Amy's parents turned her life
Into one of hope and lessened our strife.
An act so selfless and indeed beyond love,
And now their daughter is a beautiful white dove:
A dove of peace, and life beyond violence,
A life of laughter beyond the dark silence.
'Thank You' is all I can say
In my own silly rhyming way.

(Prabashinee Moodley. 13 March 2001. *The Amy Biehl Foundation Guestbook*)

Father, Forgive



AN ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am sorry for the times I have offended You,
and hurt myself and others.

Help me in future to act in a way that makes the world
a better place for all to live in.

LESSON 28: God Forgives

AIM

To help children understand that God forgives and calls us to forgive in turn. (2.2.4, 7.3)

OUTCOME

Learners understand that God forgives and calls us to forgive one another.



WHAT YOU NEED

- * Background information (1)
- * Bible (2)(4)(7)(8)(9)(10)
- * A picture of a woman (3)
- * 🎵 *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace* (6)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1 TEACHER BACKGROUND

God loves us even though we sin. God delights in forgiving us. Although there may be many times that we sin, we only need to turn to God to be healed. God is extravagantly generous and joyful in forgiving us, because there is no limit to his love. That's why Jesus came to find the lost, heal those who suffer and save sinners. God's forgiveness is in the healing presence of Jesus in our lives. God wants us to continue Jesus' healing ministry until he returns.

- 2 **The Paralysed Man:** Tell or read the story. [Luke 5:17-26] Discuss the two things that Jesus did for the man: he forgave him his sins, and he healed him. Does it mean that we get sick, or that something bad happens to us when we sin? No. We are all born into a world that knows sickness, accident, suffering and death. Though much of this evil is the result of human sinfulness, even the innocent suffer. Think of air pollution as an example. Even though we don't create it ourselves, we nevertheless suffer its effects. Look at what Jesus suffered even though he did not sin.
- 3 Find a picture of a man or woman. Stick it up for the children to see. Invent, with the help of the learners a list of terrible things this person may have done. Ask them what they think the **punishment** should be. Tell the class about the woman that the people wanted to stone to death because she had sinned. [John 8:2-11]. Point out the law that commanded them to do such a thing. But Jesus said to them that whoever hasn't sinned should throw the first stone. Now who can punish the person in our picture? No-one here since we have all sinned!
- 4 One day a friend asked Jesus: "Lord **how many times do I have to forgive?** Seven times?" Jesus said, "No not seven times, but seventy times seven." Jesus says that we must forgive others over and over again. We must never stop forgiving just like God never stops forgiving us. [Matthew 18: 21-22]
- 5 Give the children some time in silence to recall **a recent hurt suffered**. Ask them to name how they feel. Guide them to imagine approaching the one who has hurt them, and offering forgiveness. What happens? How might they feel now? After a while, allow them to share their experience, if they choose to.
- 6 Conclude with the **Lord's Prayer** and a song like *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 **Bible references** you may find useful: Psalm 51, Psalm 130:3,4; Matthew 6:12-15; Acts 2:38; Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 1:9; James 5: 14-16; Revelation 21: 1-5
- 8 **Stories** about forgiveness:
 - A Sinful Woman Anoints Jesus [Luke 7: 36-50]
 - The Beggar at the Beautiful Gate [Acts 3:1-10]
 - The Lost Sheep [Luke 15:1-7]
 - The Lost Coin [Luke 15:8-10]
 - Ten Lepers [Luke 17:11-19]
 - David and Saul [1Samuel 26]
- 9 **Jesus forgave** those who crucified him. He said, “Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.” [Luke 23:34] Stephen did likewise when he was being stoned. [Acts 7:60]
- 10 **Jesus said:** Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be the children of your Father in heaven. [Matthew 5:44-45]