



Lesson 9

No Longer Counting

Intermediate Small Group Lesson

Bible Story

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Genesis 45:1-19

Bible Verse

"For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation."

2 Corinthians 5:19, New Living Translation

Key Teaching Point

Receive God's message of restored friendship.

Materials

- Name tags
- Snacks
- How Are You Feeling? emoji chart
- A colorful bandana
- Two buckets (or empty trash cans)
- A pack of ping pong balls (20 or more)
- Handout 1, one copy per child
- Scraps of dark-colored construction paper



Small Group Session 1

(15 Minutes)

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following icebreaker activities to do together while students eat their snack:

Icebreaker Options (Choose one):

- Ask students to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).
- Let students take turns sharing how they're feeling today using the "How Are You Feeling?" emoji chart (from the CKC Games Bag).
- As the students are eating their snacks, ask, **"Why do you think it hurts the most when a family member hurts us?"**

Pray Together

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

Small Group Game: Undeserved

Materials: A bag of individually wrapped candies, one plastic cup, and one pom-pom

Set the cup on the table. Each child will get a turn to throw the pom-pom into the plastic cup. Explain that if the pom-pom makes it into the cup, they will win a prize, and if they don't make it, they will be "out" and sit down at their seat. However, after you start the game, if they make it, they will receive a piece of candy, and if they miss it, they will also receive a piece of candy. Give each student multiple chances, inviting even those who are "out" to continue to participate in the game.

When we put our trust in Jesus, God no longer counts our sins against us. This is called *mercy*. We can also receive God's goodness in our lives even though we don't deserve it. That is called *grace*. How did you experience mercy and grace in this game?

Take student responses.

We're able to receive mercy and grace from God, and to give away mercy and grace to the people in our lives. Today we'll hear a story about a man who was entrusted to give God's mercy and grace to his brothers.



Small Group Session 2

(35 Minutes)

Life Application Activity

Make a pile of dark-colored paper scraps.

When you get hurt or frustrated with a sibling, classmate, parent, friend or someone you know, do you ever say something like, “He always...” or “She never...”? We tend to keep records of everything people have done that wrong us. If you can think of a wrong that’s been done against you (without saying it out loud), grab one of the slips of paper and set it in front of you.

Give the children a minute to do this.

What happens to our relationships with people when all we can see is everything they’ve ever done wrong?

Take student responses.

We pull away, and we create distance between us and them. We find it hard to be kind and loving toward them. Sometimes we even want to hurt them back.

Based on today’s story, Joseph could have grabbed a lot of slips of paper, too! He was wronged many times! How did he respond to his brothers even after everything they’d done?

Take student responses. (Joseph forgave his brothers, he even helped save them from the famine. He didn’t pull away from them or create distance but invited his brothers and their families to come stay with him in Egypt.)

How do you think Joseph was able to respond in this way?

Take student responses.

Something Joseph says to his brothers might give us a clue on this: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.” (Genesis 50:20, NLT)

Give each child a copy of Handout 1.

This verse reminds me of the cross. People intended to harm Jesus by sending him to the cross to suffer and die, but God intended the cross to be for OUR good: so that all might be forgiven, and the record of all our sins is wiped clean, so we might receive the message of reconciliation: which



means that God wants us to know that he desires a close relationship with us...so we would know that he won't pull away from us!

God keeps no record of wrongs because of what Jesus has done on the cross. The only record God is now keeping is everything that Jesus has done on our behalf! So, what do we do with the records we've been keeping?

God invites us to bring the wrongdoings of others to the cross. We get to extend God's forgiveness to those who have hurt us.

Invite the children to place their paper scraps on the cross.

Based on today's story and how Joseph responded to his brothers, what is godly forgiveness? How can you show that same forgiveness in your own life?

Take student responses.

Receive the Gift!

Prayer: A two-way conversation with God

Invite the children to think of one or two people who have been difficult for them to love or forgive recently. Invite students to find a partner and pray about these people. Ask for God's help to love and to forgive. Ask for help to understand this person in a new way and to see them from God's point-of-view.

Bible Verse Game

Review the Bible verse with a [Bible verse game](#).

"For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation." *2 Corinthians 5:19, New Living Translation*

Reflection

Give each child their reflection journal. Invite them to reflect on the following questions and to record their answers in their journal. They may also draw their responses if they wish:

1. What gift can I receive from God?
2. How can this gift impact my life?

