



Diocese of Athabasca

Sunday School Lesson Plan

Here's a **Sunday School Lesson Plan** for young children (ages 4–8) and some activities for older children using the **Revised Common Lectionary readings – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Year A)**. Bible Verses: Exodus 14:19-31; Psalm 114; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35; Preface of the Lord's Day

Sunday School Lesson Plan

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Based on the Revised Common Lectionary

- Exodus 14:19-31
- Psalm 114
- Romans 14:1-12
- Matthew 18:21-35

Lesson Title: Forgive Again and Again

Theme: God forgives us and helps us forgive others.

Big Idea: Jesus teaches us that forgiveness is not something we do only once. Because God shows us great mercy and love, we can learn to forgive others again and again.

Lesson Focus for Kids:

- ♥ God loves and forgives me.
 - 👐 I can forgive others.
 - ☺ Forgiveness helps us make peace.
 - ✝️ Jesus helps me when forgiving is hard.
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Scripture Readings — Kid-Friendly Language

Exodus 14:19–31 — God Makes a Way

God's people, the Israelites, were leaving Egypt. But soon they came to the sea, and Pharaoh's army was coming behind them.

They were frightened.

God was with them.

God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. God sent a strong wind, and a path opened through the water.

The Israelites walked across on dry ground!

God brought his people safely through the sea and away from Pharaoh's army.

When the people saw what God had done, they trusted God.

Kid Connection: When God's people were afraid and could not see a way forward, **God made a way for them.**

Psalm 114 — All Creation Celebrates God

Psalm 114 remembers the wonderful things God did when the Israelites left Egypt.

It describes the sea moving and the mountains jumping like sheep!

The psalm uses these wonderful pictures to remind us:

God is powerful and God cares for his people.

Kid Connection: We can remember the wonderful things God has done and praise God.

Romans 14:1–12 — Be Kind When We Are Different

Paul reminded Christians that people do not always think the same way.

One person may think something is very important while another person thinks differently.

Paul said that we should not spend our time judging one another.

Each of us belongs to God.

God wants us to welcome and care for one another.

Kid Connection: Friends can be different and still love one another.

Matthew 18:21–35 — How Many Times Should I Forgive?

Peter came to Jesus with a question.

“Jesus, if someone keeps doing something wrong to me, how many times should I forgive?”

Peter wondered whether forgiving someone **seven times** would be enough.

Jesus answered that forgiveness shouldn't be something we count.

Then Jesus told Peter a story about a man who owed a king an enormous amount of money.

The man could never repay it.

He begged the king for mercy.

The king felt compassion for him and forgave the entire debt.

What wonderful news!

But afterward, the man found someone who owed **him** a much smaller amount.

Instead of showing the same mercy he had received, he became angry and demanded his money.

Jesus used the story to teach his friends:

God has shown us wonderful mercy. God wants us to show mercy and forgiveness to others too.

Welcome & Opening Prayer / Circle Time

Gather the children in a circle.

Place a large heart in the centre.

Ask:

- What does it mean to say, “**I'm sorry**”?
- What does it mean to **forgive**?
- Is forgiving always easy?
- Have you ever been happy when someone forgave you?

Explain simply:

“Forgiving means choosing not to keep trying to hurt someone back because they hurt us. Jesus helps us forgive and make peace.”

Opening Prayer

Dear God,
thank you for loving us.
Thank you for forgiving us
when we make mistakes.

Help us to be kind.
Help us to say we are sorry.
Help us to forgive others.
Help us to make peace.

When forgiveness is difficult,
help us remember that Jesus is with us.

Amen.

Memory Verse

“Forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Matthew 18:35

For younger children:

“Forgive from your heart.”

Matthew 18:35

Actions

Forgive — open both hands outward.

Your brother or sister — point gently around the circle.

From your heart — place both hands over your heart.

Repeat it several times, slowly and then in funny ways: quietly, loudly, standing tall, crouching low, etc.

Bible Story Time

Peter's Big Question

One day Peter had a question for Jesus.

Peter asked:

“Jesus, how many times should I forgive someone?”

Peter thought about it.

“Seven times?”

Seven probably sounded like a lot!

But Jesus wanted Peter to understand something important.

Jesus said forgiveness isn't something we should keep counting.

Then Jesus told a story.

There was once a man who owed a king a **HUGE amount of money**.

Stretch your arms as wide as possible.

HUGE!

There was no way the man could pay it all back.

“Please!” he begged. “Give me more time!”

The king looked at the man and felt compassion for him.

The king did something amazing.

He said:

“You don't have to pay it back.”

The whole enormous debt was forgiven!

The man should have been very happy.

But then he met another man who owed **him** a much smaller amount of money.

Did he remember how kind the king had been?

No!

He became angry and demanded his money.

Jesus explained that this wasn't the way God's people should behave.

If we have received mercy, we should learn to show mercy.

If we have received forgiveness, we should learn to forgive.

Jesus doesn't want us walking around counting:

“One forgiveness.”

“Two forgivenesses.”

“Three forgivenesses.”

Instead, Jesus wants our hearts to become **forgiving hearts**.

Put your hands over your heart.

God forgives us.

Jesus helps us forgive others.

Craft / Activity

My Forgiving Heart

Materials

- Large cardstock hearts
- Crayons or washable markers
- Stickers
- Glue
- Pre-cut smaller hearts
- Yarn, optional

Give each child a large heart.

Write across the top:

JESUS HELPS ME FORGIVE

On several smaller hearts write:

LOVE

KINDNESS

SORRY

FORGIVE

PEACE

Children colour the hearts and glue them onto the larger heart.

In the centre write:

“Forgive from your heart.”

Matthew 18:35

Talk about what each word means.

For preschool children, provide all pieces pre-cut.

Game

Don't Keep Count!

Place a basket of soft balls, beanbags, or paper hearts at one end of the room.

Children carry the hearts one at a time to a large basket labelled:

FORGIVEN

Begin counting together:

“One, two, three, four, five...”

After several hearts, announce:

“Wait! Jesus says we don't need to keep counting forgiveness!”

Have everyone carry the remaining hearts together.

When the basket is full, say:

“We can forgive again and again!”

For additional movement, children can hop, tiptoe, march, or walk backwards safely while carrying their hearts.

Song Suggestions

Songs about God's love, mercy, and kindness work especially well:

- **Jesus Loves Me**
- **I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy**
- **Jesus Loves the Little Children**
- **Peace Like a River**
- **Love One Another**
- **He's Got the Whole World in His Hands**
- **My God Is So Big**
- **If You're Happy and You Know It**

For the Exodus story, **My God Is So Big** provides a simple connection to God's power and care.

Snack Suggestions

Forgiving Hearts

Serve heart-shaped or heart-themed snacks such as:

- Heart-shaped sandwiches
- Heart-shaped cheese pieces
- Strawberries
- Watermelon hearts
- Crackers and fruit

Another option is **“Make a Way” crackers**.

Place two lines of crackers on the plate representing the water and leave a pathway between them. A small fruit or animal cracker can “walk” along the dry path while you retell the Exodus story.

Always check for allergies and age-appropriate choking risks.

Wrap Up & Reflections

Gather around the large heart again.

Ask:

Who asked Jesus how many times he should forgive?

Peter.

Did Jesus want Peter to keep counting?

No.

Who forgives us?

God.

What can we say when we hurt someone?

“I’m sorry.”

What can we do when someone apologizes to us?

We can work toward forgiveness and peace.

Who helps us when forgiving is difficult?

Jesus.

Repeat together:

GOD LOVES ME.

GOD FORGIVES ME.

JESUS HELPS ME FORGIVE.

I CAN BE A PEACEMAKER.

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus,

thank you for loving us
again and again.

Thank you for forgiving us
when we do something wrong.

Give us forgiving hearts.

Help us say,
“I’m sorry.”

Help us say,
“I forgive you.”

Help us choose kindness
instead of anger.

Help us make peace
with one another.

Thank you for always being with us.

Amen.

Take-Home Idea

The Forgiveness Heart

Send each child home with a paper heart.

On the front:

♡ JESUS HELPS ME FORGIVE ♡

On the back:

This week I can:

- ☐ Say **“I’m sorry.”**
- ☐ Forgive someone.
- ☐ Use kind words.
- ☐ Help make peace.
- ☐ Pray for someone.

At bedtime, families can ask:

“Did we have an opportunity to forgive or ask for forgiveness today?”

Finish with a short prayer:

“Jesus, give our family loving and forgiving hearts. Amen.”

Teacher Notes

Forgiveness requires particular care when teaching young children.

The goal of Matthew 18 is **not** to teach children that they must tolerate repeated harmful behaviour.

Make an important distinction between ordinary childhood conflicts—arguing over toys, saying something unkind, refusing to share—and situations in which a child feels unsafe.

Children should know:

Forgiving someone does not mean keeping harmful behaviour secret.

If someone hurts them, frightens them, asks them to keep an unsafe secret, or repeatedly treats them badly, they should **tell a trusted adult**.

Avoid requiring children to hug, shake hands with, or immediately verbally forgive another child. Reconciliation sometimes takes time.

The parable also uses debt and punishment imagery that does not need detailed treatment with preschool children. Keep the focus on the contrast:

The king showed enormous mercy → the forgiven man should have shown mercy too.

For Exodus 14, emphasize God's presence with frightened people and their safe journey through the sea rather than dwelling on the destruction of Pharaoh's army.

Anglican Connection

Confession and Forgiveness

Anglican worship regularly gives us an opportunity to recognize that we have done things wrong and ask God for forgiveness.

Explain simply:

“At church, we tell God that we are sorry for the things we have done wrong. We ask God to forgive us and help us live in a better way.”

For young children, practice this simple prayer:

**God, I'm sorry.
Please forgive me.
Help me try again.
Amen.**

Remind children that God's forgiveness helps us begin again.

The Peace

Last week's Gospel focused on making peace when people disagree. This week's lesson continues that theme through forgiveness.

Before sharing the Eucharist, Anglicans exchange the Peace.

The priest says:

“The peace of the Lord be always with you.”

And we answer:

“And also with you.”

Explain:

“Sharing the Peace reminds us that Jesus wants us to be a community of forgiveness, love, and peace.”

Baptism

Connect the Exodus water story gently with baptism.

God led the Israelites **through the water into a new life of freedom.**

At Baptism, water is also an important sign. Through Baptism, we become part of God's family and begin a new life following Jesus.

Keep the connection simple for young children:

Water reminds us that we belong to God.

Forgive Again and Again

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost



Forgive Again and Again

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost



Which Choice Makes Peace?



Circle the picture that shows PEACE.

1.

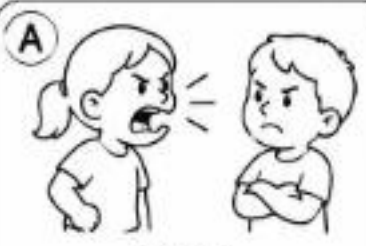


Fighting over a toy



Sharing the toy

2.



Yelling



Talking kindly

3.



Refusing to help



Helping

4.



Staying angry



Making peace



God helps us love, forgive
and make peace.



Forgive Again and Again

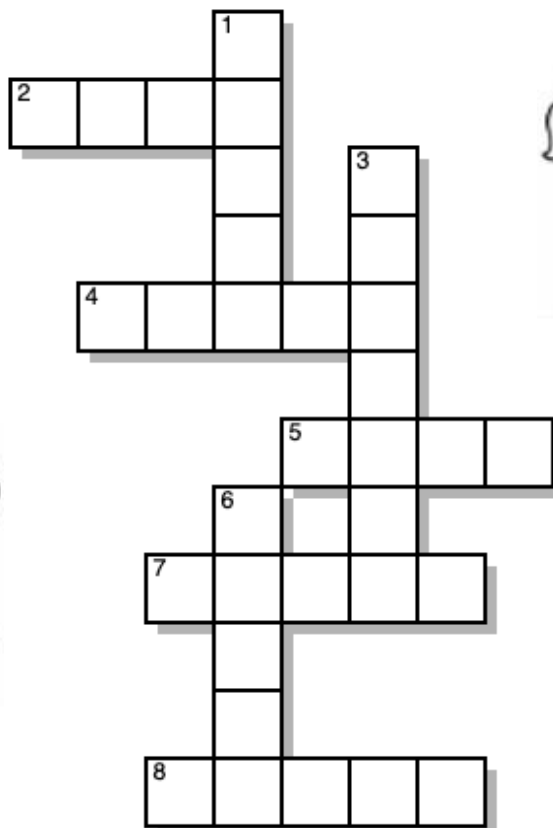
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost



Sharing the toy



Helping



Talking kindly



Making peace

ACROSS

- 2 Jesus wants us to show this to everyone.
- 4 The disciple who asked Jesus, "How many times should I forgive?"
- 5 We can use words and actions that are _____.
- 7 Peter asked Jesus a question about forgiving this many times.
- 8 He teaches us to forgive.

DOWN

- 1 Jesus tells us to forgive from our _____.
- 3 Jesus helps us do this when someone is sorry.
- 6 Jesus wants us to have this with one another.

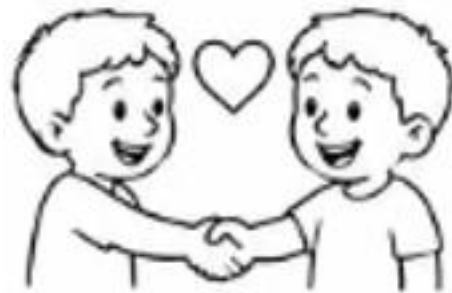
Forgive Again and Again

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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Love
Forgive
Seven
Peace

Kind
Jesus
Peter
Heart

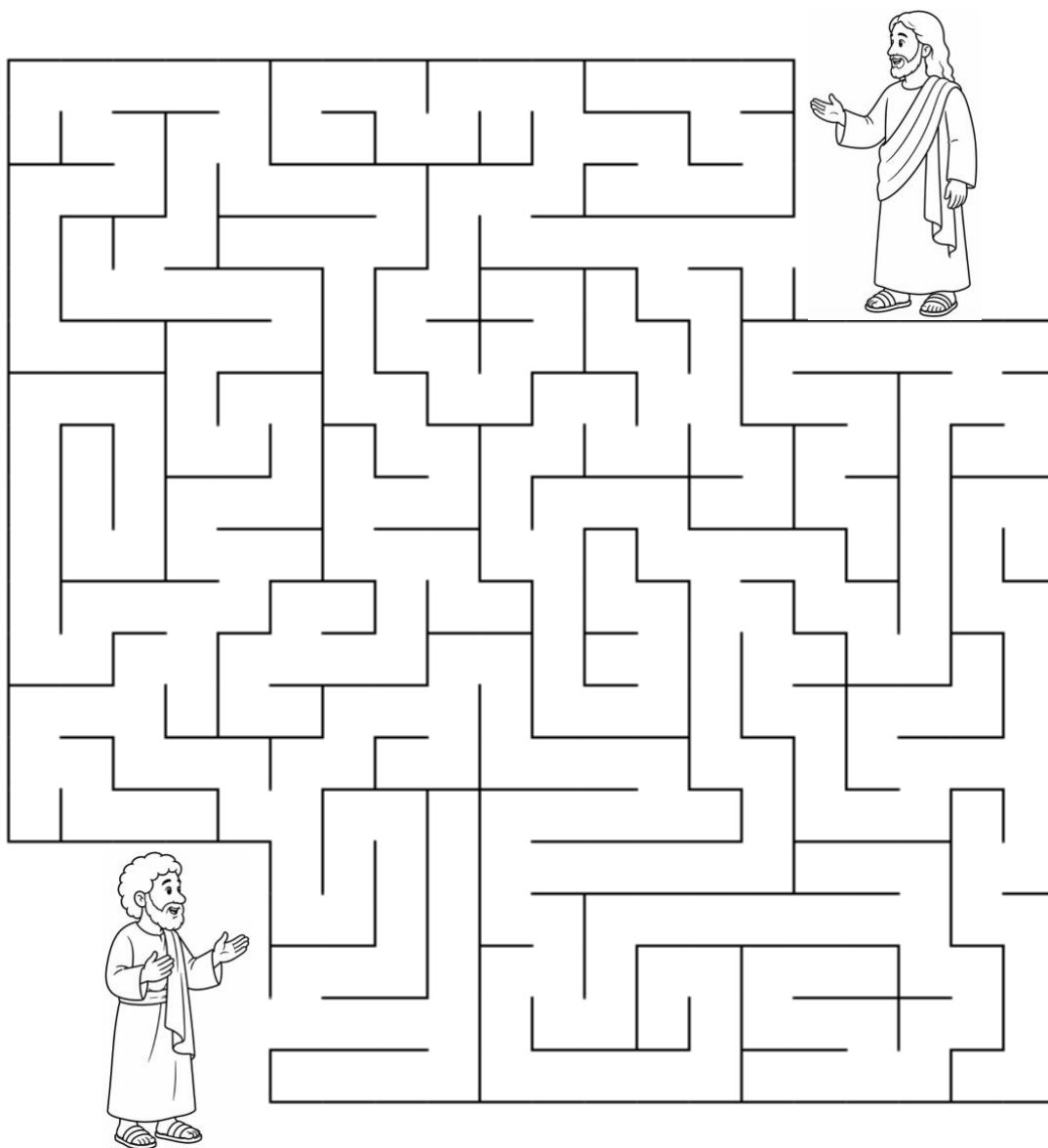


Making peace

Forgive Again and Again

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Help Peter find his way to Jesus.



Forgive Again and Again

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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Forgive Again and Again

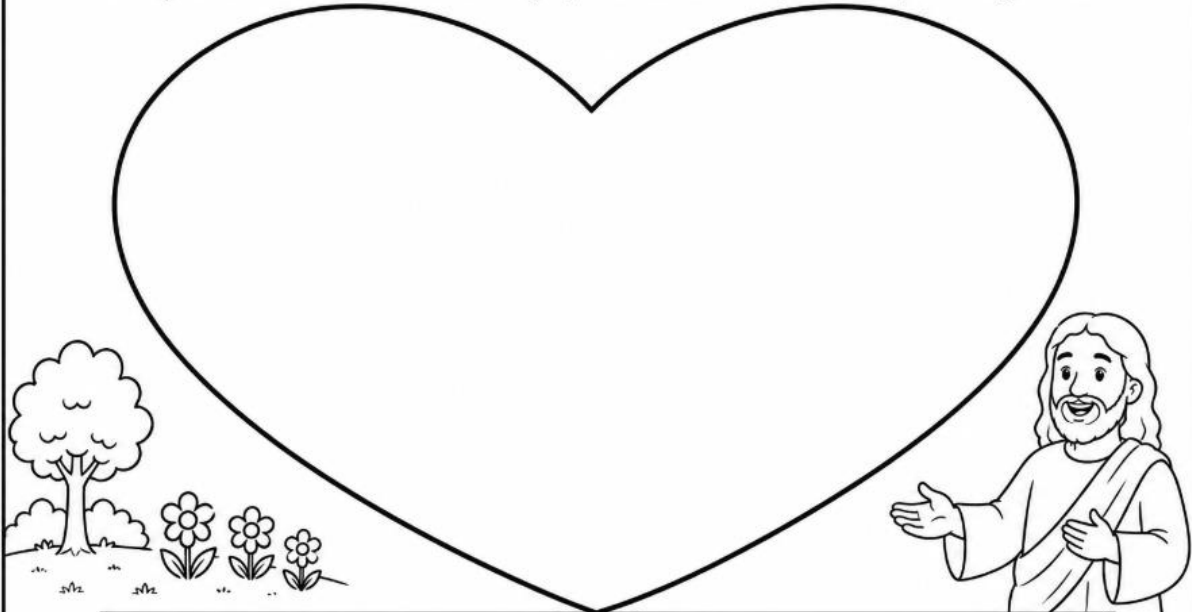
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Draw a Forgiving Heart



Draw pictures inside the heart of ways you can show love, kindness, and forgiveness.



"Forgive from your heart." — Matthew 18:35



Trace the Words



LOVE

FORGIVE

PEACE



JESUS HELPS ME FORGIVE

Crossword - Key

Across

- 2. Love
- 4. Peter
- 5. Kind
- 7. Seven
- 8. Jesus

Down

- 1. Heart
- 3. Forgive
- 6. Peace

Cryptogram – Key:

Romans 14:11b

As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.