
“Can I Fix a Relationship?”

Forgiveness Sunday School Lesson

Matthew 18:15-20



Can I Fix a Relationship? Sunday School Suggestions For the Matthew 18 Method of Conflict Resolution

Friendship is an important thing for kids. Relationships will always be coming and going, at any age, but it's important to establish positive practices for them so that they understand the care and keeping of friends. Children are likely to encounter conflict, and they need to be prepared to handle it, with help if needed. While the Gospel focus for this lesson relates largely to confronting those who have sinned, the principles laid out are great for any relational conflict dynamic.

Lesson focus: This lesson focuses on the importance of maintaining positive relationships with friends, particularly after a problem or disagreement. We are not meant to take out revenge on others, but to pray for them and “build bridges” to mend broken relationships. Children will discuss the importance of doing whatever it might take to restore and keep friendships and get along with others.

Passage: Matthew 18:15-20

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (or whoever you might have around!)

Materials Needed: Construction paper, decorative materials, glue, scissors, markers, socks, safety pins, popsicle sticks, clothespins, rubber bands, Bible (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use—except for the Bible, you need that for sure).



Lesson Introduction Activities

Lesson Opening: This lesson focuses on relationships: we might build bridges to restore broken friendships, or we might need to recognize that conflict resolution does not mean revenge or retaliation. These openers have to do with the concept of keeping harmony.

Here are some activities to get kids thinking...(select the best ones for your audience and age group):

- Build a bridge! Use blocks, boxes, or simple materials to create a small bridge. This could be something for toys to rest or “travel” on, or perhaps a sturdy enough creation for people to test out!
- Consider the consequences of unkind words or fighting: blow up a balloon until it bursts. There are a lot of pieces to pick up! Or, squeeze toothpaste out of the tube, and observe how we cannot replace it in the tube. However, we can get a new tube of paste, or a new balloon. When we resolve problems, it’s like giving new life to a friendship.
- Look at some great Biblical or historical friendships. What made them last? Why is friendship so important?
- How many does it take? Do a teamwork activity like a simple puzzle or creating a structure, making sure multiple people are required. Explain that even in prayer, God wants us to gather together with others.

Explain that today we’ll look at a Gospel passage where Jesus gave us a model for maintaining relationships and solving problems. Sometimes things will go wrong. We will encounter arguments, disagreements, and issues with others. Sometimes we might need help settling things. But God wants us to work hard to keep peace and maintain relationships with one another.

Ask: Have you ever had an argument with a friend? What happened?



Forgiveness Sunday School Lesson from Matthew 18:15-20

Bible Lesson: As always, how you choose to experience the story will vary according to the ages and abilities of your children (and how many are participating). This passage is pretty straight forward, but feel free to share it through a skit or “popcorn reading” if preferred.

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. -Matthew 18:15

In this Bible passage, Jesus sets up a possible blueprint for us to follow when we encounter conflict in relationship, or when someone does something wrong. Note the first step here: if someone sins or has a problem, we first confront the person one on one. It’s important to communicate and address issues that arise.

Ask: Is it hard to talk to someone who has done something wrong? What might help you do so? (Prayer, perhaps writing something down in preparation.)

Recognize that sometimes people won’t listen right away...Jesus knew this could be the case, so He gave counsel for what to do next:

But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’^[d] 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. -Matthew 18:16-17

Sometimes we need “reinforcements”, or outside help. If someone refuses to resolve an issue in a simple fashion, we might need to bring others into it. Sometimes kids might fight with a friend, and need a teacher or parent to help work things out. Remind children that even adults often need extra assistance in working things out. Encourage them to ask for support when needed. Explain that there might be times when we have to let a relationship go. But the goal is to solve and resolve, because God wants us to live in peace and harmony. We want to love others as He loves us, even if we don’t always see eye to eye. And there’s another important element to friendship: with a “team” of friends, or even just one, we can approach God in prayer and have strength in numbers. Jesus promises the truth of this, too...



“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” -Matthew 18:18-20

Ask: Who can you team up with to go to God in prayer? Why do you think it is often good to use a “buddy approach” to talking to God? Remind kids to not only pray for one another, but with one another. It’s a beautiful and important thing, and it can help restore and maintain friendships, too!

Close with a prayer thanking God for being with us daily. Recognize His presence “where two or more are gathered” and ask for support as we keep relationships strong in HIS power.

Crafts & Follow-up Activities

Crafts: “Pin Pal” friend; Sock Puppet buddy; “Bounce off” rubber band ball

Follow up/Additional Activities

- Discuss ways that children can help others who might be experiencing conflict in relationship. Maybe even set up a partnership or “team” to help others in need.
- (With older children) Review historical cases of peace makers, and what sometimes needs to happen to make and keep harmony with groups of people.
- Make a friendship banner, or glue together several “paper people” as a decoration.



“Make Peace and Keep Friends” Craft

Ideas for Conflict Resolution Matthew 18

In this lesson and craft emphasis, children will focus on the importance of making peace with one another, even in times of trouble or conflict. The Gospel of Matthew gives us a model for dealing with sinners or those who have conflict with us. In these crafts, kids consider the importance of making and keeping friends as they “make” some friends in craft form!

Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider...

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” -Matthew 18:19-20

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. -Matthew 18:15

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God. -Matthew 5:9*

Let disagreement bounce off...keep peace!

Friends are everywhere...make them, keep them, enjoy them!

Extra Activities and Ideas for Sunday School:

- Discuss times when children have experienced conflict with others. What helped to get things “fixed”?
- Write a note to someone who you have experienced trouble with in the past. Apologize for arguments, if necessary.
- Where two or more are gathered: create a schedule for prayer, and invite others to join in!

See the demonstration of this [children’s sermon](#) on our [YouTube channel](#). Don’t miss the related [Sunday School Craft](#) demonstration.



Craft one: “Let it Bounce Off Ball”

You will need:

- Rubber bands (varied colors, if possible)
- Pom pom or small ball
- Verse caption or extra decoration (optional)

Procedure:

1. Begin with a rounded base: metal washer, ball, pom-pom, or rubber ball.
2. Wrap a rubber band around the base.
3. Continue wrapping rubber bands around each other, criss-crossing directions, and observing the ball getting larger and larger.
4. Add a verse or caption if desired. Try out the bounciness of the rubber band ball!



Craft Two: “Friendly Sock Puppet”

You will need:

- Glue and/or tape
- Old (or new) clean, blank socks
- Scissors/yarn (optional)
- Caption or verse (Optional)
- Markers or crayons (Fabric or Sharpie recommended)
- Jewels, eyes, stickers, or other decorations (optional)



Procedure:

1. Cut the sock to adjust size, if necessary and desired.
2. Decorate the sock with captions, verses, colors, gems, stickers, or otherwise.
3. Add markers, googly eyes, yarn, or other decoration as desired.
4. Use your puppet as a little “friend” or put on a show with multiple sock puppets!



Craft Three: “Pin Pal”

You will need:

- Clothespin, popsicle stick, or other wooden figure.
- Decorations (gems, google eyes, etc.)
- Scissors
- Fabric or paper (optional)
- Caption or verse
- Tape and/or glue
- Sharpies, markers, or paint
- Safety pins



Procedure:

1. Decide what kind of base you prefer for your “pin pal” friend.
2. Use markers or other coloring to add a face to your pal.
3. Glue on paper or fabric “clothes” if desired.
4. Add eyes, verses, or other decoration as preferred.
5. Glue or tape a safety pin to the back. Carry or pin around your “friend” and enjoy!





These craft ideas were prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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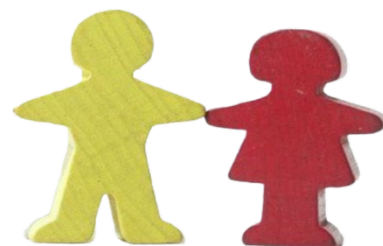
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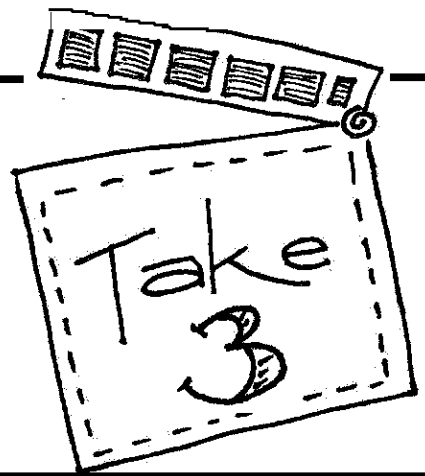
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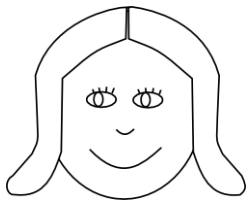


THE HOW...



My Church - The People

My church is made of people. Here are the names of some of the people at my church.









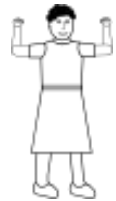
My Church Helps Me Grow Like Jesus Grew

Read Luke 2:52.



Jesus **learned** new things.

I can _____.



Jesus **grew** bigger and stronger.

I can _____.



Jesus pleased **God**.

I can _____.



Jesus was nice to other **people**.

I can _____.



My Church - Fellowship and Ministry

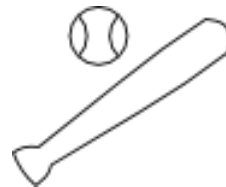


Draw a square around each picture that shows how church people can have fun together.

Draw a circle around each picture that shows how church people can help other people.



giving food to people



playing a game



eating together



raking leaves