

PrayKids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word on...

“Forgiveness”

Jesus listed the most important parts of prayer in what we call “The Lord’s Prayer” (see Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4).

Forgiveness was on His list. He said, “This, then, is how you should pray . . . **Forgive** us . . . as we also have **forgiven.**”

Why is **forgiveness** so important when we pray? We can’t pray for other people the way Jesus wants us to if we don’t love them and have compassion for them—just like He had for us.

When we love others, we have to look beyond the things they’ve done to hurt us. That’s **forgiveness**. Then we can pray with **POWER!** ★

Let It GO-O-O!

Have you ever been so mad at someone that all you could think about was “getting even”? Did you think of all the mean things you wanted to say to that person? Imagine how you’d “set him straight”?

That’s often what happens when we get really angry—we can think of nothing else but revenge. We hold on to

the belief that if we can somehow get back at the person who made us mad, we’ll feel better.

But God says, “Let it go.”

That’s right. Even though you may have every right to feel the way you do, God says to let it go. In Ephesians 4:32, God gives us instructions on how to act, even when our feelings are hurt by someone else. The Apostle Paul wrote that we are to be “kind and compassionate to one another, **forgiving** each other, just as in Christ God **forgave** you.”

In fact, this **forgiveness** thing is so big that God warns us about what will happen if we don’t **forgive**. If we choose to hold a grudge against someone who has hurt us, the Bible says that Satan can use our **unforgiveness** to outsmart us (2 Corinthians 2:10-11). Not **forgiving** is like opening the door to Satan and saying, “Hey, come on in!”

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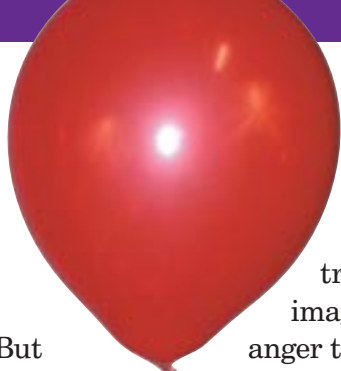
BY CAROL MADISON

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So what does **forgiveness** have to do with prayer? Well, imagine being on your knees in your bedroom, praying to God and asking Him to be with you. But sitting right at the end of your bed is Satan, smirking and looking very pleased. Satan is there because earlier in the day you had a huge fight with your sister, and you are so mad that you aren't speaking to her. So Satan just sits there relaxed, laughing while you try to pray. "Too bad," he says, "you let me in here!"

Wouldn't you want Satan out of there so that you can be alone with God? Offering **forgiveness** to others forces Satan to "take a hike" (for proof, read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:12-15).

Forgiveness is a really big deal to God. That's why He sent Jesus—to **forgive** our sins. And since He **forgave** us—even when we didn't deserve it—God says we need to extend that **forgiveness** to others.



Forgiving isn't always easy. Many times we need God's help to do it. Next time someone hurts you, try this: get with God and imagine tying your hurt or anger to a big helium-filled balloon. Ask God to help you let it go . . . and then watch it float away!

You can take another step toward **forgiveness** by simply praying, "Lord, I choose to **forgive** (name person), and I release him/her to You. Please bless _____."

By letting it go and learning to **forgive**—even when you don't feel like it—you will feel a new closeness with God and know that He is hearing your prayers. ★

Carol Madison is communications director for Prayer Transformation Ministries in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

clearing the AIR

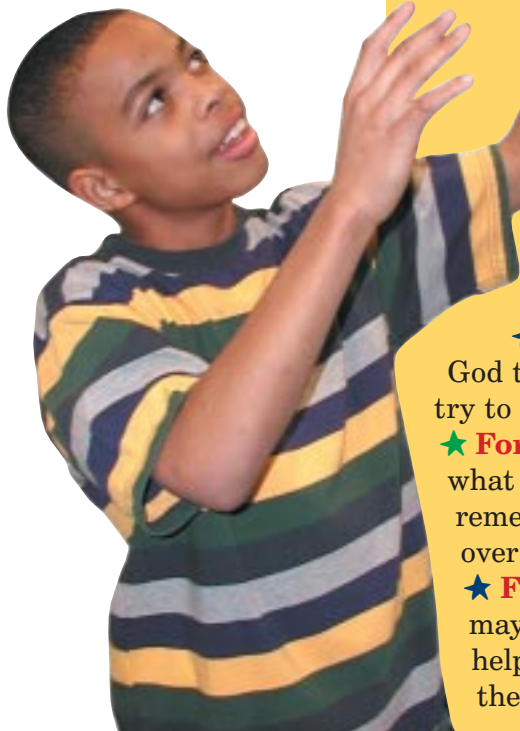
Sometimes people find it hard to **forgive** because they don't understand what it means. Here are some tips to clear up confusion about **forgiveness**:

★ **Forgiveness** is a choice you make. You are not saying, "It's OK to do the wrong thing." You are saying, "Things are cleared up between us."

★ **Forgiveness** means you are trusting God to deal with that person and you won't try to get even.

★ **Forgiveness** doesn't always mean we forget what happened. But it means that if we do remember it, we don't have to get angry all over again.

★ **Forgiveness** brings healing to YOU. You may not feel like **forgiving**, but God will help you release the bad feelings. And that's the best thing for you!



Dear Readers,
Can you name something that costs a lot, but you can't buy it with money? The answer is "**forgiveness**." Think about it: the price tag for the **forgiveness** of our sins was Jesus dying on a cross. I hope you've prayed for and accepted Jesus' **forgiveness**.

This issue is full of ideas to help you understand how important **forgiveness** is to your prayer life.

God wants us to **forgive**. When you do, you'll see good things happen in your prayer life!

Keep praying!
Nancy Sutton
editor of
PrayKids!



PrayKids!

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Mission Statement

The mission of PrayKids! is to teach, encourage, and equip children (ages 8-12) as they develop a deepening relationship with Christ through prayer, so that they might become more effective prayer warriors.

Forgiveness Beats Fighting

I was pretty excited about starting second grade at a regular school after being home-schooled for two years. Mom and Dad prayed with me about making new friends.

The second week of school this kid in my class started picking on me. One day when we were in the restroom, Jovon shoved me up against the wall, grabbed me by my shirt and yelled, "Hey, punk! I'm gonna beat you up at recess!" He scared me to death!

I couldn't figure out why Jovon didn't like me. When I told Mom I was afraid to go to school, she said we needed to pray for Jovon. She said the reason kids are mean is because they don't know Jesus loves them. I was okay about praying for Jovon, but mostly I just wanted God to keep me from getting beat up.

Then one day in the middle of September things got worse. Jovon shoved me and I fell down a whole staircase. When I told Mom and Dad what happened they were pretty mad. Dad said things had gone too far and he'd call my teacher. Mom said we'd have to ask God for wisdom. She said we needed to let Jovon know we would **forgive** him but what he was doing was not okay.

The next day Mom told me she got an idea while she was praying. I couldn't believe what she wanted to do, and neither could my teacher. Mom explained that she couldn't think of a better way to let Jovon know I **forgave** him than to take him out for lunch. Maybe if we could show God's love to Jovon, it would help him not get in trouble all the time.

The next Monday was Jovon's birthday. We took him to McDonald's, and he was really surprised when we gave him a little birthday present. We had so much fun playing in the play area. Jovon was really polite the whole time. He kept saying "Thank you!" all the way back to school.

Jovon still got in trouble a lot and had detention about once a week. But he never picked on me the rest of second grade. Sometimes we played together at recess, and he even came to church with me once.

In third grade, Jovon moved to another school. I hope someone there will show him that Jesus loves him. I still pray for Jovon. I know prayer made a difference. It didn't just change Jovon; it changed me, too. God helped me not be angry or scared and He helped me see that Jovon needed a friend. ★



By Reed Woodyard

Forgiveness by the Book

Jesus said some interesting things about **forgiveness**. "For if you **forgive** men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also **forgive** you. But if you do not **forgive** men their sins, your Father will not **forgive** your sins" (Matthew 6:14-15).

It's sometimes hard to **forgive** others, but the Bible says it is important. **Why?** Because **unforgiveness** is sin, and sin puts a block between us and God.

If you want to have strong and powerful prayers, you need to learn how to **forgive**. Ask Jesus to help you. Here are some scriptures you can use in prayer. They'll help you have the courage to **forgive**, even when you don't feel like it.

"Father God, Your Word says that love doesn't hold on to anger and doesn't keep a list of things people have done wrong. Jesus said that we need to **forgive** 70 times seven, but I find it hard to **forgive** even once. Please help me to **forgive** _____ for what he did to me" (1 Corinthians 13:5, Matthew 18:21-22).

"Lord Jesus, I know I should be kind to my family and friends, and that I should always **forgive** them just like You **forgave** me. Help me to do that" (Ephesians 4:32).

Here are some other "**for-giveness**" scriptures to pray: Mark 11:25, Ephesians 4:26, Colossians 3:13.★

A fiction story
based on Jesus' words
in Matthew 6:12-15.

When Jesus lived on earth, He healed many people. But the Bible details only a few. So use your imagination. Imagine a boy named Josh and his father, a fisherman whose arm was crushed in a shipwreck until Jesus healed him . . .

“Josh, let’s go!” Father called.

I scrambled toward our little fishing boat. It was early morning and still dark.

“Go back and get the oars!”

I started to, but the oars were gone. My big brother, Hannan, was already carrying our oars toward the boat. Suddenly he tripped. Crack!

The sound of wood splintering made me cringe. So did the “paddling” Father gave me when he saw the oar; he assumed I had broken it.

I got mad at Father for punishing me for something I didn’t do . . . and mad at Hannan for letting me take the blame.

I tried to get over it. I know it was easier for Father to believe my “almost perfect” big brother instead of clumsy me, so I **forgave** him. But I couldn’t **forgive** Hannan. One day I yelled, “Hannan, I wish you were dead!” But then I only felt worse. And whenever I prayed, I felt sick inside.

You see, ever since Jesus came to Capernaum, I’ve believed He is Messiah, and I’ve tried to obey Him. If you saw Him make your father’s mangled arm into strong muscles, you’d believe too. But some of Jesus’ teachings are tough.

A few days after I exploded at Hannan, Father and I went to hear Jesus again. Tons of people covered the mountainside where Jesus sat, teaching His disciples. But we nudged into a tiny spot nearby, and I heard every word Jesus said.

He told us some things to talk to God about when we pray. I already knew prayer had a lot of power because I’d prayed for Father’s arm and Jesus healed it. But when I heard Jesus say the words, “**Forgive** us our sins as we **forgive** those who sin against us,” I felt so ashamed. “Heavenly

Father,” I prayed silently, “I’m always asking You to **forgive** me—because I’m always messing up. So that means I need to **forgive** Hannan, too. Holding a grudge isn’t doing anybody any good. Please help me to ask Hannan to **forgive** me.”

I finally got up the courage three nights later. Hannan and I sat alone on the beach by the fire, mending some torn fishing nets. My face felt hot, but I plunged ahead. “Hannan . . .” I cleared my throat. “The other day when I yelled at you . . . well, I shouldn’t have done that and I’m sorry. Please **forgive** me, okay?”

He laughed. “No big deal. We all blow off steam.”

“But it is a big deal to me,” I said. “I want to obey Jesus, and He says we need to **forgive** others the way He **forgives** us.”

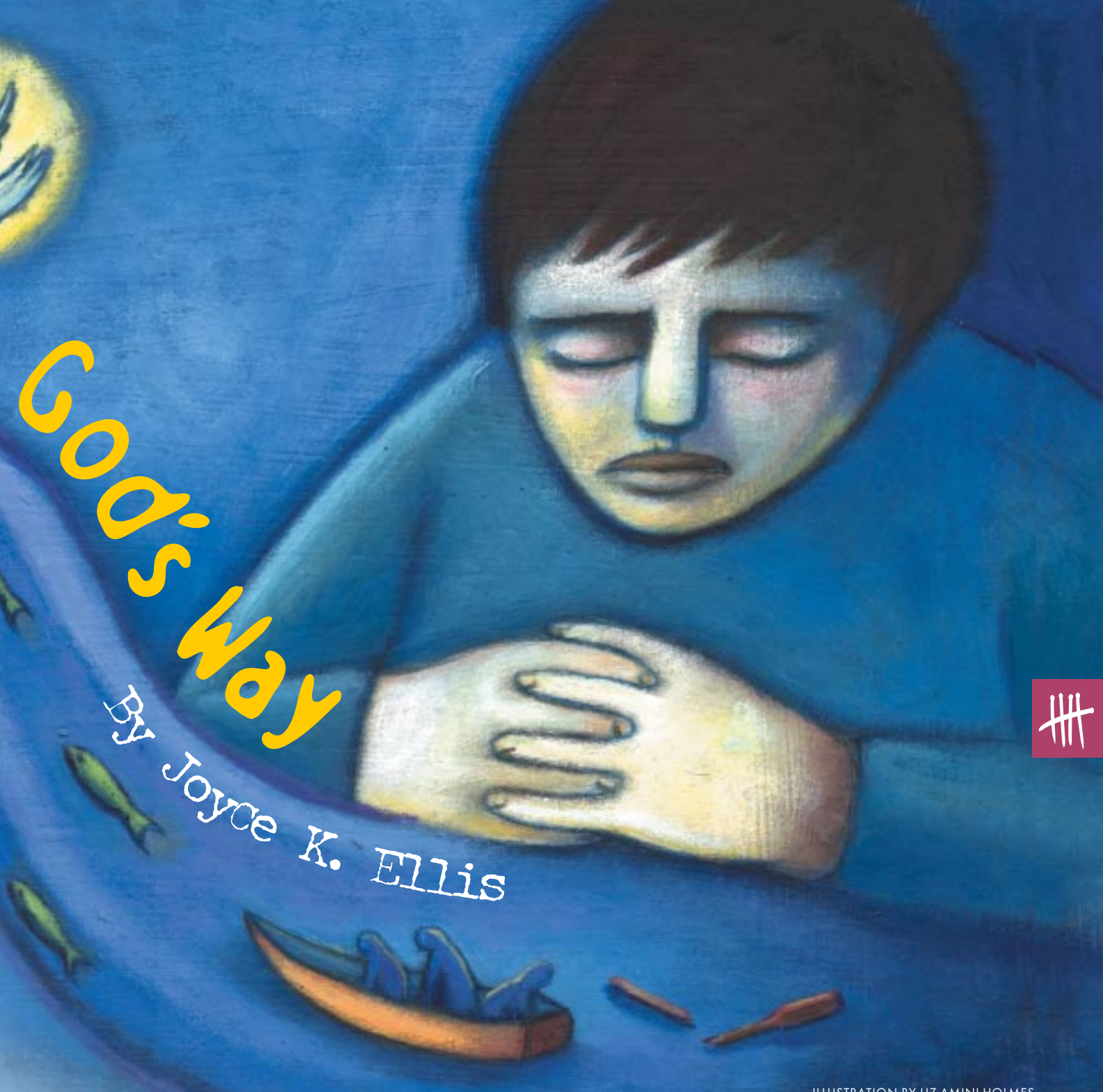
Deep inside I wanted Hannan to ask *my* **forgiveness** too—or at least promise to set the record straight. He didn’t, though. He just went back to his chores. I just decided that it’s probably more between him and God anyway.

Ever since I did what Jesus asked, I don’t get that sick feeling when I pray anymore. Now, whenever Hannan bugs me, I talk to God about it and then let it go.

It’s not easy, but I know it’s right. ★

—Joyce K. Ellis is an author and speaker. She created the book, *One-Minute Bible Devotions for Kids*, which is a great tool to help your relationship with God grow through Scripture each day of the year.

Getting Even



God's Way

By Joyce K. Ellis



ILLUSTRATION BY LIZ AMINI-HOLMES

3 Tips on Forgiveness

God tells us to **forgive** “just as in Christ God **forgave** you” (Ephesians 4:32). When someone sins against you, try this:

1. Be honest with God about how you feel. It’s okay to tell Him you’re angry,

hurt, or upset. He wants to hear how you feel, even though He knows already! Remember, it hurts God every time you sin; but His Son, Jesus, gave up His life to **forgive** you.

2. Don’t take revenge. Let God handle the punish-

ment or consequences. (If there’s criminal behavior involved, talk to your parents, a pastor, or an adult you trust about how to handle it.)

3. Don’t let other peoples’ unkind actions ruin your relationship with them. Do something kind in return.

—Joyce K. Ellis



Let's Pray for Bible Translators

Imagine life without the Bible. How would you know the story of God's love and **forgiveness**? How would you know what God wants you to do? How would you know about prayer?

The Bible is like a light that shows us the path through life. But almost 400 million people don't have the Bible in their own language. Most of these people are children.

Do you know how many languages there are? More than 6,000! About 3,000 of those languages don't have the translation of even one Bible verse. That's because some languages don't have an alphabet. If there is no alphabet, there are no written words. And if there are no written words, there's no Bible.

The good news is that hundreds of people all over the world are working as Bible translators. They take the words and thoughts of the Bible and write them in the words of another language. Some translators are missionaries who go to distant countries to live with the people



there, learn their language, and help with Bible translation. Other translators work in their own city or village, translating God's Word into their own language.

Translating the Bible is not easy, but it's worth doing! One Asian man said, "Before [we had a Bible in our language], we felt forgotten and left out, but now we have God's Word and He speaks our language. Now we know we are always in His mind. So we cry tears of joy."

Did you know that your Bible is a translation? Somebody a long time ago took the time to translate the original Scriptures, which were written in the Greek and Hebrew languages, into English. Remember to pray for Bible translators the next time you see your Bible. ★

—Susan Van Wynen is the director of communications for Wycliffe USA, an organization that translates Bibles into different languages (www.wycliffe.org).

SIX

COVER THE GLOBE

Here are some things to pray:

God wants all people to have His Word in the language they understand best. So He can "declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples" (Psalm 96:3, AMP).

1. Lord, I ask for a spirit of wisdom and knowledge to rest on the Bible translators so that they can do their work well (Isaiah 11:2, Proverbs 2:6).

2. Keep the Bible translators safe, O God; let them find protection in You, for Your Name is a strong tower. Keep them from the danger all around them (Psalm 16:1, Proverbs 18:10, 2 Corinthians 11:26).

3. Lord, give the people where Bible translation is taking place eager ears to hear Your Word, for it is more precious than gold and sweeter than honeycomb (Luke 8:8, Psalm 19:10).

4. Father, send Bible-less people everywhere Your Word so that when they hear it they will put their faith in You! Send people to translate because they can't believe in someone they have not heard about (Romans 10:14,17).

5. **Forgive** me for taking the Bible for granted. I rejoice in Your Word—it's worth more than thousands of dollars (Psalm 119:14,72).

Hang It Up

Here's a fun craft to remind you of the three important parts of **forgiveness**.

How to make the **forgiveness** hanger:

- 1 Take a piece of cord or heavy yarn about 24 inches long. Tie one end onto a suction cup holder.
- 2 Take two small sticks and glue or tie the sticks to form a cross. Attach the cross to the cord just below the suction cup.
- 3 Look for a photo that shows lots of people you know. It might be a picture of your family or other people you need to **forgive** a lot.

Attach the photo to the cord below the cross.

- 4 Find a small mirror and glue it onto the cord below the photo.

- 5 Using the suction cup, stick the **forgiveness** hanger to your window.

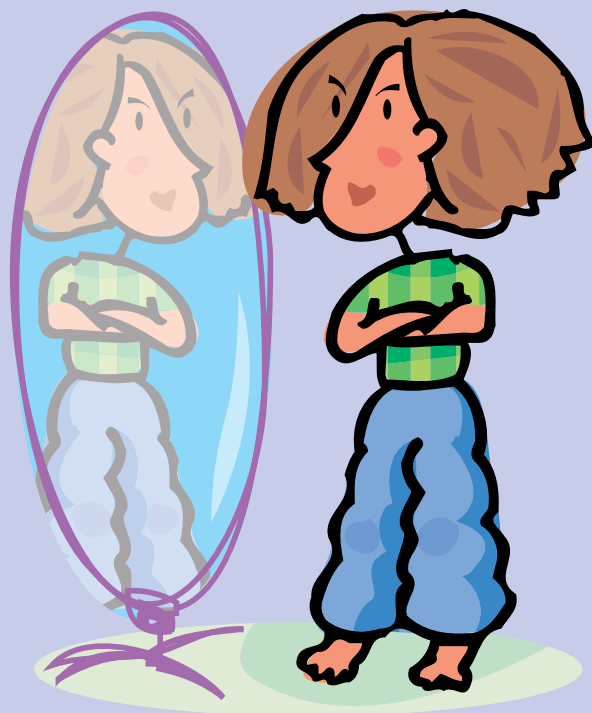
What the reminders mean:

Cross: confess and ask God to **forgive** you.

Photo of others: **forgive** others.

Mirror: receive God's **forgiveness** and **forgive** yourself.

Now you can look at **forgiveness** in a whole new way! ★



Practice Makes Perfect

7

You probably practice many things—playing the piano, saying a memory verse, or kicking a soccer ball, for example. You practice something because it helps you feel more comfortable and confident doing it.

When was the last time you “practiced” **forgiveness**? You actually can practice or rehearse asking someone's **forgiveness** . . . or **forgiving** someone who is asking for your **forgiveness**.

Ask a parent to help you role-play. Let your mom or dad say different things and practice ways to respond. You could even practice including in your response what the Bible says about **forgiveness**. Look in the mirror while you practice, and see if your body language is saying “I **forgive** you” or “I’m still mad.” And don’t forget to ask God to help you as you practice! ★

My Apologies

When my husband Dylan was a little boy, his father gave him 50 cents to mail an important letter. Dylan obeyed his father. The recipient, however, did not respond, so his father assumed Dylan spent the money on candy and reprimanded him harshly.

When his father finally did get a response to the letter, he neglected to apologize for the false accusation or ask his son's **forgiveness**. Dylan was devastated.

Often, parents see apologizing to their children as a sign of weakness or an undermining of their authority. To a child, however, a simple apology, asking for or offering **forgiveness**, makes him feel validated and worthy of respect.

Likewise, seeing one parent **forgive** the other teaches children the mechanics of right and wrong. If a parent never admits wrongdoing, the child's sense of right and wrong is skewed.

A child's confidence and ability to **forgive** others grows as he sees it modeled in his home. An "eye for an eye" is a much easier (and more expected) response than "turning the other cheek." So when a parent is willing to swallow her pride and offer or ask for **forgiveness**, it demonstrates the righteous "narrow path" choice.

Parents who extend grace to one another and to their kids establish their home as a safe place to make mistakes. This allows the children to feel free to be



themselves—and they will, by nature, sin. But only where there is no fear of condemnation can a child truly be free. Being certain of **forgiveness** can also alleviate the performance issues that plague so many children today.

Important lessons in **forgiveness** establish patterns for life, equipping kids with an essential tool for healthy friendships, marriages, and work

relationships.

Prayer is essential for reaching such depths of humility. Knowing that Jesus humbled Himself to take the punishment for sins He did *not* commit, we must be willing to acknowledge the sins we *do* commit. If Jesus **forgave** His perpetrators for murdering Him, we can **forgive** our loved ones for crimes less severe.

When our kids see us modeling **forgiveness**, they are more likely to understand their need for **forgiveness** from God—and His desire to provide it. **Forgiveness** lays the foundation for salvation, because it's where a safe and loving relationship with the Father begins. ★

—Anne Meskey Elhajoui, mother of three, is the art director for *Discipleship Journal*.

Family Forgiveness Activity

FORGIVING OTHERS

This activity is a way to physically symbolize the experience of "letting go" of something in **forgiveness**.

Have each family member write down on a piece of paper who he or she is **forgiving** and for what. Help younger children by writing down what they say. Give a helium-filled balloon to each person and have each tape his or

her paper onto the string. Go into your backyard (or a nearby park) and have a time of prayer. Then release the balloons one at a time. Take pictures as each person releases his balloon. As the balloon drifts upward toward heaven, talk about how freeing it is to "let go" of the situation for good and let God handle it. Keep the photos you take in a special place as a visual reminder of the **forgiveness** that took place.

FREE Leader's Guide for Teachers/Parents

We want you to be able to use *PrayKids!* with a group of kids. On our website you'll find **group discussion questions and activities for each article**. Download and copy the information from www.praykids.com.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE HELP ON TEACHING YOUR KIDS TO PRAY:

www.praykids.com • www.cherifuller.com • www.harvestprayer.com
childrensprayernet.org • www.cgpm.org

Back issues of *PrayKids!* are available in packs of 10 for \$6.99. To order, call (800) 366-7788 or (719) 548-9222. Code #6258



Encourage Your Kids

The next three issues of *PrayKids!* will be on the themes of prayerwalking, fasting, and spending time with God. If your child has a story of an answered prayer (especially about one of these themes), how his/her life was impacted by prayer, or how his/her class prayed and something special happened, please send it to:

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While we cannot publish everything that is sent in, we will put some additional stories up on our website: www.praykids.com.