

THIRD SUNDAY LESSON



Theme for the Month: **THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS**
"If you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in Heaven may forgive you your sins." – **Mark 11:25**

Lesson 3: God's Forgiveness Frees Us

Key Verse: [SEP] “When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them.” – **Mark 11:25**

Story Source: *Flying is for the Birds* (Hartlie comforts Lashley) [SEP] **Supporting**

Bible Story: The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–24) [SEP] **Memory Verse:** [SEP] “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our sins from us.” – **Psalm**

103:12

Opening Prayer

“Dear Lord, thank You for loving me and forgiving me. Please help me forgive others and also forgive myself, so my heart can be happy and free. Amen.”

Lesson Objectives

By the end of today’s lesson, children will:

Understand that **guilt** (the sad, heavy feeling when we do something wrong) makes us unhappy.

See how Hartlie reminded Lashley that God forgives.

Learn that when God forgives us, we are free and full of joy.

Story Exposition

In the story *Flying is for the Birds*, Lashley had carried **guilt** for a long time. (Guilt means the sad and heavy feeling we get when we do something wrong and try to hide it.) He remembered the day he swallowed the little minnow by mistake. He never told the truth, and he never forgave himself.

Because of this, Lashley became sadder every year. His feathers turned gray, and he lost the joy of flying.



One day, Lashley sat alone by the log, crying. His friend Hartlie saw him and gently put his hand on Lashley's shoulder. "Why are you so sad, my friend?" he asked.

Lashley finally told the truth. He shared the whole secret about the minnow and how guilty he had felt for so many years. He said he had asked God to forgive him but still felt too bad inside to forgive himself.

Hartlie listened kindly and reminded him, “The Bible says when we confess our sins, God forgives us (1 John 1:9). If God has already forgiven you, you don’t need to keep punishing yourself.”

Those words gave Lashley hope. The heavy load in his heart began to lift. His feathers even started to shine pink again. He felt free—ready to fly with joy.

This is what God’s **forgiveness** does. (Forgiveness means choosing not to hold a wrong against someone anymore.) When God forgives us, He takes away guilt and gives us peace.

We see this in the Bible too. The **Prodigal Son** wasted his father’s money and made many bad choices. He felt so guilty that he thought his father would never take him back. But when he came home, his father ran to him, hugged him, and forgave him. Just like Lashley, the son was free to live in joy again.

How We Can Receive and Share God’s Forgiveness

Believe God’s Word – Trust that when you confess, God has forgiven you.

Forgive Yourself – Don’t keep feeling guilty after God has forgiven you.

Forgive Others – Show kindness and forgive your friends and family too.

Conclusion

Forgiveness is powerful. It makes heavy hearts light again. Lashley carried guilt until Hartlie reminded him of God’s love. The Prodigal Son thought he was unworthy, but his father forgave him. When we accept God’s forgiveness, we are free to live in peace and joy.

Lessons Derived

God's forgiveness takes away guilt and brings joy.

We should forgive ourselves and others because God forgives us.

Guilt grows heavier when we hide it, but forgiveness makes us free.

Questions

1. Why was Lashley so sad in the story?
2. What did Hartlie remind him about God's forgiveness?
3. How did the Prodigal Son's father show forgiveness?
4. (Reflection) Have you ever found it hard to forgive yourself? What helped you?

Prayer Focus

"Lord, thank You for forgiving me. Please help me forgive others and forgive myself, so I can live with peace and joy."

Weekly Devotional Reading

Monday: Luke 15:11–13 — The son makes wrong choices.

Tuesday: Luke 15:14–16 — He suffers because of his mistakes.

Wednesday: Luke 15:17–19 — He decides to go back home.

Thursday: Luke 15:20 — The father runs to forgive him.

Friday: Luke 15:21–24 — The son is restored with joy.

Saturday: Psalm 103:12 — God removes our sins far away.

Assignment

Hartlie showed love by listening to Lashley and reminding him of God's Word. This week, find a friend or family member who feels sad or guilty. Be kind to them, remind them that God loves and forgives them, and write about it in your devotion journal.

