

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

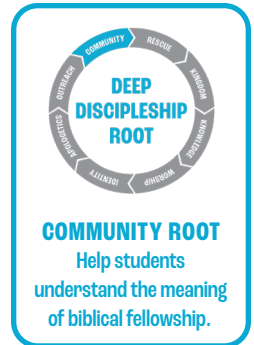
Disciples of Christ offer forgiveness and mercy to others (Ephesians 4:32).

MAIN PASSAGES

LUKE 17:1–4

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF PASSAGE

As his time on earth was coming to an end and Jesus was making his way to Jerusalem, he took advantage of the time he had left with his disciples by preparing them for the day he would no longer walk beside them physically. One of the essential lessons he passed on to his followers was the importance of forgiveness. We are sinners living in a sinful world; the temptation to sin is “sure to come” (v. 1). As long as that is true, we will all need to give and ask for forgiveness.



OPENING OPTIONS

10–15 minutes

Choose from the following options to give students opportunities to connect and have structured and unstructured fun.

I. SEMI-UNSTRUCTURED HANGOUT TIME

Based on your group's size, allow for unstructured hangout or play a game from **Deep Discipleship Games**—we recommend **Reverse Charades (The Movies)**. NOTE: Free Deep Discipleship Games are already included with your Deep Discipleship Account. View the game in advance in case you need supplies or slides.

II. ARRIVAL ACTIVITY

Dodge the Mud!

Create a masking tape pathway across the room. Place brown paper “mud puddles” randomly along the pathway. Challenge students to walk the path without stepping on any mud. Add distractions: Leaders tossing brown paper balls, and students encouraging others to jump in the puddles! If a student gets splatted, they are out. If they want to play again, they must ask a leader for forgiveness (be given a white sticker).

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Masking tape
- Brown paper (some crunched into balls)
- White stickers

Connection to Lesson

You needed to pay attention to where you were stepping, and it was probably difficult to get to the other side untouched by the “mud.” Jesus said we will all be tempted to sin, and that we should pay attention to ourselves. Thankfully, no matter what we have done, we can always ask Jesus and others we've hurt for forgiveness. And Jesus will forgive anyone who is genuinely sorry, as represented by the white sticker in our game.

III. ICEBREAKER

You can use this icebreaker question to transition students from activity to teaching time.

Have you ever gotten really messy by accident? What happened?



LARGE GROUP MESSAGE**15–20 minutes**

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message. Incorporate the suggested discussion questions to keep students engaged with the message.

POINT #1: We will experience temptation to sin**(Luke 17:1–2)**

Jesus spent three years teaching the people closest to him what to expect from the Kingdom of God. Jesus often told stories (called parables) to teach certain lessons, but sometimes they were hard for some people to understand. In Luke 17:1, however, the meaning is clear: “Temptations to sin are sure to come.” Jesus didn’t say we might be tempted to sin; Jesus said we will be tempted to sin. Every person sins. That means that at times, we will hurt others or be hurt by them—no matter how hard we try to avoid it. Jesus gives us a warning against causing others to sin in this passage as well. As Christ-followers, we are never to be the cause of temptation to others, especially those who are newer to following Jesus (v. 2).

ILLUSTRATION

Imagine you are walking down a muddy road. Your goal is to walk down that road and get as little mud (sin) on your clothes as possible. You walk carefully, you go around puddles, but then you slip. Or mud sprays up from your shoes. Or someone runs by and splashes you.

The good news is that when we become Christ-followers, Jesus takes our muddy, sin-stained clothes (heart) and gives us a new, clean robe (Is. 61:10). Nothing we could have done could have changed us; only Jesus has the power to take our sin away and give us his righteousness.

- **Ask:** *Why do you think Jesus takes our mess and makes us new?*
- **Ask:** *How does it feel to know you will be tempted to sin?*

POINT #2: We must forgive others**(Luke 17:3–4)**

As this passage in Luke continues, we are given another important instruction: forgive others. When others sin against us, we are to lovingly tell them what they have done. If they repent (turn away from the behavior) and ask for forgiveness, we are to give it—even if they continue to sin in the same way. This applies to all of us. When we hurt others, we are to ask them for forgiveness too. As followers of Christ, at different points in our lives, we will all need to ask for forgiveness and extend forgiveness to others.

ILLUSTRATION

Have two leaders demonstrate what asking for forgiveness and forgiving looks like. The leader should say they’re sorry for something specific (e.g., “I’m sorry for excluding you. I know that was hurtful. Will you forgive me?”). The other leader responds (e.g., “Thank you for saying that. I forgive you.”)

- **Ask:** *How does it feel when someone does something mean to you?*
- **Ask:** *How does it change how you might respond to others, knowing God says we must forgive?*



REFLECTION**5 minutes**

Give students a chance to creatively process what they've just learned and to prepare for small group discussion.

Ask students to think about these questions:

Is there someone I am having a hard time forgiving?

What would it take for me to forgive them, even if they haven't apologized?

(Space for journaling is provided on page 2 of the Student Guide.)

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Page 2 of Student Guide or blank paper
- Writing utensils

SMALL GROUPS**10–15 minutes**

Divide into small groups. Small Group Leaders can guide students through the following discussion questions.

What does the Word say?

- What did Jesus say about temptation in Luke 17:1?
Temptations to sin are sure to come. Everyone will face them sometimes. Even Jesus faced off against temptation that came from Satan (Luke 4:1–13).
- What should we do if someone sins against us and then apologizes?
Jesus says we are to forgive them, even if they do it repeatedly.

What does the Word mean?

- Why do you think Jesus warns so strongly against causing others to sin?
Leading someone away from God is serious. We are responsible for how our choices affect others.
- What does it mean to repent?
It means to say sorry, really mean it, and try to stop doing the wrong thing by turning completely away from that sinful action.

What should I do now?

- What can you do when you are tempted to do something that goes against God's ways?
Answers will vary, but may include: walking away from a situation, talking to a leader or trusted adult, praying right away, etc.
- Who is someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from?
Answers will vary. Jesus wants us to make things right with others by forgiving them and asking for forgiveness.



APPLICATION

5 minutes

Reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

Have students write a time they needed forgiveness on one strip of paper, and a time they extended forgiveness on another (provide students with blank paper strips or cut out the strips on page 4 of their Student Guide). When they are done, have the group make their strips into one long paper chain. Remind students that forgiveness connects us and helps us to live more like Jesus.

*Example:***I needed forgiveness:****I extended forgiveness:****SUPPLIES NEEDED**

- paper strips (1" X 8.5") OR cut out the strips on page 4 of the Student Guide
- writing utensils
- tape

Application Question

What can you do this week to help you be quicker about asking for and extending forgiveness?

PRAY

Pray for your students to be humble enough to ask for forgiveness when they have done something wrong, and for them to be willing to extend forgiveness freely. Thank God for forgiving us of all our sin when we ask him to.

NOTES

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