

<b>Lesson Title</b>	<b>The Kingdom of God is like ...</b>
<b>Themes of Lesson</b>	<p>In the previous five Walk Through the Bible NT MINI lessons students have heard stories about Jesus' life and his interactions with people. Jesus often used parables (a kind of moral tale) to answer questions when he was asked about what the Kingdom of God was like. His answers often had a deeper meaning and could be interpreted in different ways - they prompted people to think about their questions and work out their own answers based on the way they saw Jesus interacting with people and the stories he told.</p> <p>Jesus tells the parable of the Unforgiving Servant in response to a question about forgiveness. This lesson asks pupils to think about their answers to the questions: What is forgiveness?, Is it easy to forgive? and to make links between religious teachings/values and their own behaviour and attitudes.</p>
<b>Notes</b>	<p>This lesson has been developed to support teachers in Church of England schools who are delivering the Understanding Christianity curriculum. Prior to this lesson a Walk Through the Bible presenter will have delivered five sessions where pupils will have learnt big picture story of the New Testament.</p> <p>This lesson has been designed to provide class teachers with a lesson structure and resources to consolidate and apply what has been learnt; and provide pupils with the opportunity to produce evidence of their learning.</p> <p>See <b>Background Notes for Teachers</b> for context to the Matthew 18:21-35 text.</p>

Lesson Details	Activity	Instructions	Resources Required
<b>Starter</b> Creating the vibe	Read the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant using read/response	See <b>Starter Resource Sheet</b> or use one of your own favourites.	None
<b>Introduction</b> Making Connections	Jesus told the parable of the Unforgiving Servant in response to one of his follows who had asked Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who keeps on hurting him. How might the story look in today's world - lets see ...	Watch <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-DI5dqLz5M">www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-DI5dqLz5M</a>	None
<b>Teaching and Learning Activity</b> Making sense of the Text	Explanation and discussion	See <b>Making Sense of the Text Resource Sheet</b>	None
<b>Teaching and Learning Activity</b> Understanding the Impact	Creative response	See <b>Understanding the Impact Resource Sheet</b>	iPad or similar for videoing task <a href="#">PicCollage</a> or similar
<b>Plenary</b> The Wrap Up		See <b>Plenary Resource Sheet</b>	
<b>Assessment and Extension</b>	Peer feedback Extension activities Prayer and music	See <b>Assessment &amp; Extension Resource Sheet</b>	None

**Background Notes for Teachers**

This Bible text suggests that being part of God's Kingdom brings both blessings and obligations. It reminds us that those who have themselves been forgiven much by God should then follow God's example, willing to forgive others generously and repeatedly.

Reciprocity or mutuality are continuous themes in Jesus' ethical guidance to his followers: 'do to others as you want them to do to you', 'forgive and you will be forgiven', 'the measure you give will be the measure you get'. This principle is balanced by God's generosity, or grace. Humans put in a little of their goodness; divine grace multiplies and expands it. The Kingdom of God is in the small seed that grows to a mighty bush, or in the little bit of yeast that raises a whole loaf of bread. Christians today may still, of course, find the practice of forgiveness very challenging, but Jesus' inspirational teaching lies behind all Christian efforts at reconciliation and peace-making, and Christians acknowledge their reliance upon the Holy Spirit to grow in goodness.

Understanding Christianity, 2016

## Starter Activity | Creating the Vibe

### Interactive Story

Introduce the parable of the Unforgiving Servant from Matthew 18.

Explain that the story is a parable - a story with a special meaning. Jesus told this parable to one of His followers, Peter, when he asked Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who hurts him over and over.

Read Matthew 18:21-35 - the contemporary and colloquial language of The Message may make it a good version to read from.

Explain to the pupils that you are going to read it again as a class. They have two jobs: one is to join in with the story and the other is to listen carefully and think about it.

Teach the responses. Whenever you say the word 'King', the children are to say, 'Great and powerful one', and to shape their hands as if putting a crown on their heads.

Whenever you say the word 'Servant', the children are to say, 'Your humble servant', and make a bowing action as they sit.

Whenever you say the word 'Money', the children are to say, 'Money, money, money', and the action is to count out coins in the hand.

Whenever you say the word 'Debt' (you might need to explain this word), the children are to say 'Oh dear' and wag their finger in time with the words.

Practise a few times and then tell the story.

## **Unforgiving Servant**

Once there was a king

**Great and powerful one**

Who had a servant

**Your humble servant**

And this servant

**Your humble servant**

Owed the king

**Great and powerful one**

A lot of money

**Money, money, money**

A great, great deal of money

**Money, money, money**

Did the servant

**Your humble servant**

Owe the king

**Great and powerful one**

The trouble was that the servant

**Your humble servant**

Couldn't pay his debt

**Oh dear**

So, said the king

**Great and powerful one**

He must go to prison.

The servant

**Your humble servant**

Was brought before the king

**Great and powerful one**

Please have mercy on me, he said

And he fell on his knees and begged

the king

**Great and powerful one**

And the king

**Great and powerful one**

Felt sorry for the servant

**Your humble servant**

And forgave him and let him go

Now the servant

**Your humble servant**

Went straight out and met a fellow  
servant

**Your humble servant**

And this other servant

**Your humble servant**

Was in debt

**Oh dear**

To the first servant

**Your humble servant**

For just a few pounds

Not much money

**Money, money, money**

At all

It was a very small debt

**Oh dear**

Pay back the money

**Money, money, money**

That you owe me

Said the first servant

**Your humble servant**

The one who the king

**Great and powerful one**

Had forgiven

The other servant

**Your humble servant**

Begged to be forgiven his debt

**Oh dear**

But the first servant

**Your humble servant**

Would not forgive him and had him  
thrown in jail

The king

**Great and powerful one**

Got to hear about the other servant

**Your humble servant**

Who owed money

**Money, money, money**

Who was in debt

**Oh dear**

To the first servant

**Your humble servant**

Whose debt

**Oh dear**

The king

**Great and powerful one**

Had forgiven

He was angry

Very angry

Very, very, very angry

And he sent the first servant

**Your humble servant**

Straight to prison because that  
servant

**Your humble servant**

Had had his debt

**Oh dear**

Forgiven

But would not forgive a much  
smaller debt

**Oh dear**

## Teaching and Learning Activity | Making sense of the Text

Remind pupils that Jesus used parables to get people thinking about the kingdom of God. Jesus told lots of parables that started with the words "The Kingdom of God is like.....". These suggest that God's rule has begun, through the life, teaching and example of Jesus, and subsequently through the lives of Christians who live in obedience to God.

Parables are like metaphors; Jesus wants Peter to think deeply about his question and so tells the story of a king and a servant.

The king forgave the servant a huge debt but the servant refused to forgive another servant a very small debt. When the king heard about this he punished the servant.

For discussion in small groups - Thinking back to what we have learnt about Jesus over the past five lessons:

Who do you think the character of the king represents? Who might the servants be?

(Make sure that the pupils know that the king represents God and the servants His people.)

On the surface the story tells us that as we have been forgiven, then we should forgive others. What else could the story mean? Have pupils locate themselves on a continuum across the room 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in answer to each of these statements.

Do you think that the parable might mean:

- That God is loving and forgives all wrongs, if people turn from evil and trust him?
- That because people have been forgiven so generously by God, they should be generous in forgiving others?
- That Christian parents should forgive their children if they are mean, cheating, lying or unkind?
- That Christian should never fight back if they are attacked, but forgive instead?

For each question seek or provide opportunity for pupils to explain their response.

## Teaching and Learning Activity | Making sense of the Text

In small groups pupils work together to create a freeze frame/tableau of the parable in four parts (as per following guide). The scene should capture the emotions and feelings of each part of the story.

The group should take a picture of each scene and create a storyboard (using [PicCollage](#) or similar) that reflects Jesus' answer to Peter. They may wish to add thought or speech bubbles to highlight elements of the story.

**Plenary | The Wrap Up****The Kingdom of God is like ...**

Ask pupils to work in small groups to come up with their own metaphor to finish this sentence. Share and give class reward to the best/most creative response.

## Assessment for Learning

Provide opportunity for peer feedback. A framework that might be useful could be Happy, Helpful and Honest feedback:

- Happy feedback - something that the reviewer liked or found enjoyable
- Helpful feedback - the reviewer asks a question
- Honest feedback - something that the reviewer thinks could be improved

## Prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you for today's Bible story about forgiveness.

Thank you that if we say sorry to you, you give us a fresh start.

Please help us to be forgiving people here in this school.

Amen.

## Extension and Follow up

Write a short 'blurb' for a reprint of the New Testament.

Write a descriptive piece describing God's kingdom using similes and metaphors to add interest and detail.

Design a poster showing who is part of the kingdom of God.

## Song/Music ideas

Hillsong Kids - [Every Move I Make](#)

## Links to Understanding Christianity curriculum - People of God (Unit 2B.3)

**Outcomes | By the end of this Unit, pupils are expected to be able to:**

### **Digging Deeper - Making Sense of the Text**

- Explain connections between biblical texts and the concept of the Kingdom of God - where God rules in human lives.
- Consider possible meanings for biblical texts studied, and compare their ideas with ways in which Christians interpret biblical texts, showing awareness of different interpretations.

### **Digging Deeper - Understanding the Impact**

- Make clear connections between belief in the Kingdom of God and how Christians put their beliefs into practice, for example through receiving and practising forgiveness.

### **Knowledge Building Blocks**

Pupils will know that:

- Jesus told lots of parables that started with the words "The Kingdom of God is like....". These suggest that God's rule has begun, through the life, teaching and example of Jesus, and subsequently through the lives of Christians who live in obedience to God.
- The parables suggest that there will be a future kingdom, where God's reign will be complete.
- Many Christians try to extend the Kingdom of God by challenging unjust social structures in their locality and in the world (for example, by practising forgiveness).