

App Store

LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

God wants us to forgive instead of getting even.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will identify things that can make it hard to forgive sometimes.

KEY PASSAGE:

Leviticus 19:18, Romans 12:19, Matthew 5:38-42

INTRO:

If I say the words “Angry Birds” I don’t think I have to tell any of you what that is. Angry Birds is still one of the biggest, most popular apps for Apple and Android. It’s a simple game created by a group of programmers that test your problem solving skills and indirectly teaches you a little about science and physics. It’s also easy to learn, very addicting, and a lot of fun!

The premise of Angry Birds is simple. Some naughty pigs stole the eggs from a group of birds. The loss of the eggs made these birds angry, so they are seeking revenge on the greedy pigs by smashing up building after building in order to get those pigs.

Angry Birds is about revenge. It’s about getting even. It’s about settling the score with those greedy pigs. “You want to steal my eggs? Okay. I’ll just knock down your house!”

It’s one thing to play along with Angry Birds and give those greedy pigs what’s coming to them, but in real life, revenge isn’t as neat and simple. Revenge doesn’t make things even; it makes things worse. The person who wronged us now feels wronged, and the hate only escalates between the two of you. Things can get really ugly, really fast.

Fortunately, there is a better way, and we can find it in the Bible. You may remember from last week, the Bible is full of wisdom and guidance. Whatever situation we face in life, we can find a verse for that. Here are a few verses about how to handle someone who has hurt you.

READ LEVITICUS 19:18, ROMANS 12:19, MATTHEW 5:38-42

MAIN POINT:

LARGE GROUP LESSON

The Old Testament taught that anyone who does wrong needs to be punished for their wrong doing. When someone does something bad to another person, they need to pay. But in the New Testament, Jesus teaches us something more. He tells us that instead of seeking revenge, we need to love the people who hurt us.

This is not an easy piece of advice to follow. Our culture preaches an eye for an eye and revenge everywhere we look. We read about getting even in books. We see it in movies and on TV. But Jesus wants us to reject the world's way and follow his.

Choosing to forgive shows we are different. It shows we do not belong to this world, but to God's kingdom. God wants us to forgive others just as he forgave us so that they can see God loves them and wants to forgive them too.

DRIVE IT HOME:

Jesus didn't give us the easy, way, did he? When you've been hurt and the pain is fresh in your heart, the easy choice is always to strike back. If someone pushes you, you push back. If they call you a name, you call them one back. We react without thinking, and we fan the flames of hate. Soon one bad action leads to another, and then another, and then it's out of control.

Love can stop hate in its tracks. Forgiveness can bring any bad situation to a screeching halt. When we refuse to push back, when we refuse to call names, when we say to someone, "I forgive you," the arguments stop.

Paul writes that by forgiving our enemies we heap burning coals on their heads. That doesn't mean our forgiveness hurts them, but it does mean we have done something they didn't expect. People expect you to call names, to push back, to answer their bad choices with revenge. When we forgive, we show other people that there's a better way to love.

Forgiving others is a great way to share the love of Christ. Forgiveness shows them that we don't belong to this world. We follow Christ, and we follow his ways, not worldly ways. We show them that God can forgive them just as we have.

When someone does something to hurt us, we want to react like the Angry Birds. We want to get a big sling and let the revenge fly. Next time you are hurt, don't let your first instinct be your only action. Stop. Think. Pray. And forgive the one who hurt you. It isn't the easy way, but it's God's way, and God can use your forgiveness to spread his love.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:

*Dear God,
Help us to forgive people who hurt us.
In Jesus' name, Amen*