



Introduction

The theme of forgiveness is explored in this assembly using a story that Jesus told. This will fit in well with the SEAL topics of: 'Getting on and falling out' and 'Relationships'.

Preparation

You will need a group from a class to help you with the sound effects at the beginning; you will also need a group of eight children who have two lines each to say while they act the part of those unprepared to say sorry and forgive.

Suggested music: 'Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word' - music by Elton John; Lyrics by Bernie Taupin; available on the album *Blue Moves*

Development

1. Ask children from one class in advance to prepare the following sound effects to set the scene for the assembly:

Two groups should be in a heated but indistinct discussion (i.e. noises rather than actual words), with their voices slowly being raised louder and louder as if in an argument. Finally, from one group there should be a scream of exasperated despair followed by the sound of feet stomping 'out of the room', then the sound of a door slamming shut (maybe several books being shut at the same time by one group).

Following this dramatic 'sound' opening, the leader should then ask everyone:

What do you think has happened?

2. I wonder if you've ever felt hurt because of what someone else has said or done?

I wonder if you've ever felt angry with someone and have decided 'never to speak to them again'?

I wonder if you've ever slammed the door shut on someone and felt like never going back?

Most of us have been 'there' at some time - maybe many times in our lives!

You've thought:

I'm never speaking to him/her again.

I'm not coming down until he/she says sorry.

I'll never forgive him/her for what he/she said.



3. Friendships get broken; relationships break down; great divisions open up between people; and the world becomes that bit more broken-up than it was before. Maybe it is the world of your family, your friendship group, your class, your school, your neighbourhood, your village, town or city. So, what next?
4. For this next section, you will need two groups of four children. They should 'stomp' on to the presentation area looking angry, with their arms folded and a snarl on their faces. They should line up with their backs to each other and call out the following lines - one line each.

He's not getting away with it.

He can't treat me like that.

She'll regret what she said.

Two can play at her game.

I'm prepared to put up with it.

She can talk.

I demand an apology.

I'm not making the first move.

The leader then asks: 'How do we solve a problem like this?'

Take some suggestions.

Maybe some of the keys on our computer can give us a clue?

Show a picture of the following three keys:

Cut; Delete; Paste

5. Link back to the two groups of angry children with their backs to each other.

Don't you think somebody needs to say sorry? Don't you think somebody needs to say, 'I forgive you'? Don't you think somebody needs to **cut** the angry pose, **delete** the bad feelings and **paste** in a new attitude?

But that's easier said than done, isn't it?

The leader should turn to the children again and ask each one either 'Will you say sorry?' or 'Will you forgive?' Each of the eight children gives one of the following answers:

No way!

That's too still difficult.

I'm not the one who started it.

Only if she says sorry first.

After him.

Maybe...

I'd like to but...



(repeat some of the above or add in some more made up by the children)

6. But maybe saying sorry and forgiving others is just too important to give up on it like that. Jesus was once asked about how often we should forgive others.

Let's listen to the story that Jesus tells his followers about this.

Use a modern Bible translation version of this story, which can be found in Matthew 18:21-35.

7. The great king in the story was prepared to forgive a great debt; so the lesser servant should have forgiven the smaller debts.

This is where Christians find their strength and inspiration to forgive.

God is like the great King and God is prepared to forgive people. So God wants us in the same way to forgive others.

Without forgiveness the world will become more and more spoiled by brokenness. Offering forgiveness and saying sorry is one way to mend our world.

I wonder what you will do with broken friendships and relationships today?

Will you be a world-mender or a world-spoiler?

'I forgive you' and 'I'm sorry' may be only small words but maybe they can have a powerful effect?

8. Listen to the words that come from the Lord's Prayer:

Jesus said: Forgive us the things we do wrong, just as we forgive those who do wrong against us.

For reflection:

I wonder if we can live differently today in school using the words 'sorry' and 'I forgive'?