

# Keep On Forgiving

## Theme

Forgiving others as God forgives us.

## Object

A soccer ball, a yellow card and a red card.

## Scripture

Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!" Matthew 18:21-22 (NLT)

Do you like sports? What do you think is the most popular sport in the world? Most articles that I have read seem to agree that soccer is the most popular sport in the world. If you are playing or watching soccer, it is very important to know and follow the rules. How many know what this is? (Hold up the yellow card.) Even if you have never seen a soccer game, you could probably figure out that this is called a yellow card. In a soccer game, the referee holds up a yellow card to warn a player for a dangerous or unsportsmanlike play. For example, if a player tries to kick the ball out of the goalie's hands, that is dangerous. The goalie could be hurt, so the referee shows the player a yellow card as a warning not to do it again. If that player makes another dangerous play, the referee shows him the yellow card again, but then he would show him this card. (Hold up the red card.) Do you know what that means? The player is out of the game! That is pretty rough punishment, isn't it? You get one warning and then you are out! In baseball, the batter gets three strikes before he's out. In basketball, a player gets five or six fouls before he is out. The sport of soccer isn't very forgiving, is it?

How many times do you think a person should be forgiven for doing something wrong? Once? Twice? Three times? If you were to ask Jesus how many times you should forgive someone, what do you think he would say? Well, we don't have to guess, because the Bible gives us the answer.

One day, Peter asked Jesus, "How many times should I forgive someone who sins against me? Should I forgive him seven times?" I imagine that Peter thought he was being pretty generous to forgive someone seven times. I don't know about you, but I think I agree with Peter. To forgive someone seven times is be pretty generous. Guess what? Jesus didn't agree.

Jesus answered Peter, "Not seven times, but seventy times seven."

Wow! Seventy times seven! That's four hundred and ninety times. I think that before I got to four hundred and ninety I would lose count. You know, I think that is probably what Jesus was trying to get Peter to understand and he wants us to understand it too. We shouldn't worry about keeping count of how many times we have forgiven someone -- we should just keep on forgiving. Isn't that what God does? He doesn't keep count of how many times he has forgiven us. He just keeps on forgiving.

Some churches have a soccer league for boys and girls in grades K-6 called Upward Soccer. Most of the rules are the same as regular soccer, but there is one rule that is very different. In Upward soccer, there are no yellow cards and no red cards! I like that rule. We all make mistakes and we all do things that we should not do, so let's forgive them -- at least four hundred and ninety times!

Dear Father, we are thankful that you love us and forgive us without keeping count. Help us to love and forgive others as you have forgiven us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Note: The game that we call soccer in the U.S. is known as football in some countries. Please make this change if appropriate.

# Group Activities

Interactive Group Activities  
by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

**Sermon Title:** "Keep On Forgiving"

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 18:21-35

**"FORGIVENESS" SQUIGGLE CHART:** Children can use neon markers to write or trace FORGIVENESS on their construction paper. Then draw or trace (for younger children) "squiggles" circles all around the big word FORGIVENESS. Children can then begin to color the little squiggle circles with various crayons, while trying to count to 7 (for younger children), or 70 for a little old child, or to 490 for the older children! The picture will be colorful and will remind them of their lesson today!

**SOCCER BALL GAME:** Have several soccer balls outside or in an open area. Let the children take turns kicking the soccer ball around the area and counting as high as they possibly can or even counting TOGETHER each time someone kicks the ball. This will lead into the lesson today and how many TIMES we should be FORGIVING

**70 X 7 POPCORN MUNCHING:** Let children each have a bowl and count out 70 pieces of popcorn from a big bowl, while talking about today's lesson and the 70 TIMES 7, to forgive someone! Children could be given 7 M& M's if desired too, etc.

**RED CARD/YELLOW CARD FROLICK:** The teacher or another leader can stand in front of the children who are lined up on the other side of the room against the wall or behind a line. When the leader holds up a YELLOW CARD, they can hop, skip, jump, crawl, toward the leader but as SOON AS the leaders hold up the RED card, the players must STOP and wait for the YELLOW CARD AGAIN. The teacher can tell the children what "action" they can do each time until the RED CARD is held up. Children will need to keep their EYES on the leader and the cards. If they don't see and STOP at the red card, they'll be OUT! Teacher can go faster and faster until many more children are OUT! Talk about forgiveness and then let ALL the children come back in the game and play it again, if time allows!

**FORGIVE ACROSTIC:** On a chalkboard or a long piece of banner paper, write FORGIVE and then let children go to the board and write a word to describe our lesson word FORGIVE today! Let children discuss the new word and how THEY can forgive someone!

**FORGIVE FLOWERS:** Children can be given paper and markers and colorful "buttons" for the middle of the flowers (to glue on). Encourage children draw large flowers and then write F-O-R-G-I-V-E in each of the petals, so each flower should

have 7 petals so one letter will fit on each petal! Give children some chenille wire for the stems, if desired.

**BIBLE VERSE FORGIVE HUNT:** A large poster board can have the stem and leaves drawn for a flower to be formed by the children. They will hunt around the room or designated area for leaves of the big flower and each petal that they find will have a word or words from today's Bible verse on it. Then children will tape or glue the petals onto the large flower onto the poster board and try to read or memorize today's verse! Each child could be given an artificial flower if they can say the Bible verse or can say some words from the verse about forgiving each other 70 x 7!

**Song: "To Be Like Jesus"**

Words and Music (pdf)



MP3 Accompaniment Track

This song is in the public domain.

**Song: "Share His Love"**

Words and Music (pdf)



MP3 Accompaniment Track

**About Carol Williams**

Carol and her husband have served churches in Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, Michigan, and Indiana. Carol loves to work with children so you will find her teaching in Junior Church and children's Sunday School. She also has clowning ministry in which she is known as Bubbles tc (the clown).

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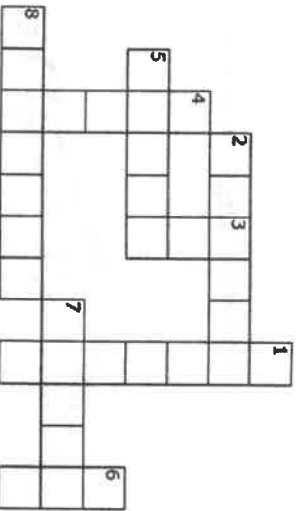
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**"Help me to forgive others as you have forgiven me."**

# Crossword Puzzle



- ACROSS**
- A statement given in reply to a question
  - The number that is equal to six plus one
  - The Son of God
  - To pardon someone for doing something wrong
- DOWN**
- A male with the same parents as someone else
  - To break God's law
  - A fisherman who became one of Jesus' disciples
  - To seek an answer to a question

SEVEN	ASK	PETER	JESUS
BROTHER	FORGIVE	ANSWER	SIN



# Children's Worship Bulletin

*Keep On Forgiving*

Matthew 18:21-35

# Word Search Puzzle

A P T Z U H W J E S N N M H H  
 A W U K G T K E S X G X Q D X  
 H T K G T W U S M A N Y I D B  
 E K A J I B F U B C G E U K G  
 A F S T I M E S U K O O C U W  
 M W K W N B O T G P E T E R A  
 O P E R G R E E L P W W O X H T  
 F A D X B R O T H E R G H X E  
 K O N A F X S D C R Z L Q W Y  
 X E R S V Q J L E I L O Z R Q  
 E Z B G W Q D Q D V O R K P H  
 E N Z Y I E J P Z L M D J I O  
 S W U Q H V R S E V E N A C W  
 W L B Q L L E E I F W C A C  
 H U S I N S K T D C F X M T C

PETER	ANSWERED	MANY	JESUS
SINS	FORGIVE	HOW	LORD
ASKED	TIMES	BROTHER	SEVEN

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Your Church Name  
 Address  
 City

# Coloring Page



"Help me to forgive others as you have forgiven me."

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# Decoder Puzzle

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
W	B	U	M	Y	J	E	L	F	P	S	G	V	K	C	D	Q	T	X	I	N	O	R	A	H	Z

- 11-20-21 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9-22-23-12-20-13-7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 24-11-14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 24-21-11-1-7-23 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10-7-18-7-23 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2-23-22-18-25-7-23 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11-7-13-7-21 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-7-11-3-11 \_\_\_\_\_

FORGIVE	SIN	JESUS	SEVEN
BROTHER	ASK	ANSWER	PETER

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Matthew 18:20-22

*forgiveness*