



# Forgiveness of Sins

## OBJECTIVE

To help groups understand and experience God as a gracious and loving parent, always ready to forgive and restore when we come in true confession.

## FOCUS THIS WEEK

If we are willing to confess our sins, Jesus promises that God will forgive us and wash us clean. Holding grudges, hatred and anger hurts us more than it hurts other people. Challenge your groups with these questions: Will you be a forgiving and forgiven person? Will you forgive your parents? Your brothers and sisters? The people who have wronged you the most? Will you let go of the hatred and anger and replace it with the knowledge of the love that Jesus Christ has for you and for all those who believe?

## FAITH5 SMALL GROUP TIME



**SHARE** highs and lows to set the stage for a more open and meaningful discussion. Pair group members up one-on-one to share the best and worst things that happened this week. After a short while, return to small group and invite each person to share their partner's highs and lows. Encourage youth to write their personal highs and lows, those of their partner, and a short prayer on their FAITH5 Small Group Time Handout.



**READ** and highlight the theme verse, 1 John 1:9, in your Bibles and circle key words. A musical version of this Scripture verse can be found at [www.faithink.com](http://www.faithink.com), FINKlink AC09.



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to today's highs and lows. Supplement your discussion with some of the following.

### A. IMAGES IN WORDS AND ART

Take a look at the theme art and cartoons. What do you see in the art? Ask youth where they are in the art. How might the art and the theme verse apply to your group highs and lows today?

### B. CATECHISM ENCOUNTER

Scan Luther's Small Catechism for the words "forgive" and "forgiveness." Circle them every time they appear. How many times can you find them? What does this tell you? Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers.

## C. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

**1. Talk or write about a time when you experienced forgiveness or offered it to someone recently.** Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers.

**2. What happens when you forgive a person? What happens when you don't forgive?** Sin and guilt can be like a wound. Healing comes through the cleansing of the wound—confession. Confession of sin helps to heal the person and the relationships that have been damaged by sin.

**3. Why is forgiveness important for relationships? For your family? For the world?** Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers. Make sure kids connect this question with the previous question.

**4. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus asks God, "Forgive our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Why is it important to forgive if you want to be forgiven?** Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers. Open up Bibles to Matthew 18:23-35 and read the parable of the Unmerciful Servant.

**D. QUOTATIONS** Ask youth to choose a quotation and share their thoughts and questions about it.

**E. TERMS OF THE WEEK** Review these key terms and write definitions.

**Absolution:** The release from guilt or punishment.

**Confession:** There are two meanings of this word for our purposes. To confess sin is to admit guilt before God and others, asking their forgiveness. To confess faith is to make a statement of what you believe before others.

**Forgiveness:** Being cleansed of sin and released from its guilt. We may still face the consequences of our sin, but our sins are no longer held against us.

**Law:** A system of rules enforced by fear of penalties.

**Sin:** Literally, to miss the mark. There are two meanings of this word for our purposes. Sin is both a condition and an act. We are born in the condition of sin as fallen people. We commit sinful acts against God's will and God's word.

## F. GROUP BUSINESS

**1. Servant Event Idea:** Make bookmarks with the theme verse, I John 1:8-9 to use as a reminder to people about the importance of confession. Laminate them and hand them out on Sunday morning at worship.

**2. FAITH5 Home Huddle:** Encourage youth to take a few minutes for FAITH5 with their families each night at home, using the FAITH5 Journals or the Home Huddle Handout.

**G. WRAP UP** Summarize the event with your group, assigning someone to share what you learned at closing.

- One new thing we learned today
- One thing we already knew that is worth repeating
- One thing we would like to know more about
- The highest highs and lowest lows which our group will bring to the closing prayer



**PRAY** for one another. Praise and thank God for your highs. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you in your lows. Include your friend's highs and lows in your prayers. Toss a newspaper into the center of the group or invite youth to think of something going on in the world that calls for prayer. **Tip:** Gather in a circle. Hold hands, lock arms or go shoulder-to-shoulder to bond your group!



**BLESS** one another by name. Trace a cross on each hand or forehead. Look them in the eyes and give them a smile. As for their blessing as well!

