

## **ACTIVITY FOR STATEMENT #4 To Freely Forgive**

This activity is designed to introduce practical skills and perspectives for nurturing peace at home. It recognizes the fourth statement of the Family Pledge for Nonviolence as an effective tool for children, youth and adults to establish common patterns for peaceful living.

Preface this activity with the lead-in or gathering activity that is designed to introduce each statement of the Family Pledge for Nonviolence. If you are sharing this time with young children, you may wish to plan separate occasions to address each one of them.

### **Supplies:**

- Bible
- Copies of the [Coloring Sheet for "Forgive"](#)
- Copies of [Activity Sheet A: Story Starter #1](#)
- Copies of [Activity Sheet B: Story Starter # 2](#)
- Narrow strips of paper
- Pens or pencils
- Crayons or markers

**Approximate time:** 30 minutes

### **Leader's Notes:**

- Distribute copies of the coloring sheet and invite participants to color it while they are waiting for everyone to gather.
- Utilize the Lead-in or Gathering Activity to set the stage for this activity. Refer to Statement #4 to complete the phrase "Today, we seek to..." Then, display a copy of the coloring sheet for "Forgive" and ask your participants to comment on the role forgiveness might play in peacemaking.
- Suggest that most people know that it is a good thing to forgive, but they just don't always know what to say or how to go about it. Sometimes we even get a little confused about whether or not someone actually deserves our forgiveness. It is important to realize that forgiveness is not a reward, but a gift we give ourselves and one another. Just as forgiveness is freely given to us through God's Son, Jesus, we need to be willing to share it with one another without reservation. In the Bible, Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times." Matthew 18: 21-22 NRSV
- Ask your participants what it means to forgive. Ask them to describe how they go through the process of forgiving someone. What do they do or say?
- Scan through the Story Starters and, depending on the ages of the children involved, choose one or both of them to introduce. Note that one is intended to be used with younger participants.
- Record a few ideas of things that might be done to more freely forgive. Display them as you introduce the closing exercise.

**Activity: Finish The Story**

Distribute copies of Exercise Sheet A or B. Read through the scenario together and invite everyone to draw or write possible solutions or endings to the story. Encourage them to share their art and insights with each other. Use the discussion questions at the bottom of the page to delve deeper into the subject of forgiveness.

**Closing Exercise: I'd Like to Change My Ways.**

Distribute slips of paper and writing utensils. Invite everyone to make note of one thing they would like to work on as they learn to be more forgiving, e.g. to let go of a grudge, to apologize, to express a willingness to work through a conflict with someone. Encourage them to keep it in their pocket, purse, or on the bathroom mirror, etc.

Close this activity with the Lord's Prayer. Point out the reference to forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer before taking a moment to pray the entire prayer together.