

I will be happy if... i am able to forgive!

"Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy"
(Mt 5,7)



Objective

- To grow in the certainty that God loves me as I am and He is always ready to **forgive me** and to **welcome me**.
- To **learn to forgive** others having as a yardstick the Love of God for us.



How did it go?

Allot **space for dialogue** and **sharing** of what each one has lived. The experiences lived and difficulties encountered. Recall the objectives that we had proposed during the last meeting: "how did it go?"



Introductory Activity

SHARING FOCUSED ON THE WORD "FORGIVENESS".

Put many coloured sheets of paper on the floor at the centre of the room with words like: "Mercy" – "Forgiveness" – "I forgive myself" – "Forgiveness in the family" – "Forgiveness at school" – "I forgive my friends" – "I cannot forgive" – "Jesus' forgiveness for me".

With some gentle music in the background, let's walk among the coloured sheets for a while for some personal reflection.

We gather in a circle (or in small groups depending on the number) to share impressions, experiences, reflections.

A SONG

Forgiveness - Gen Verde

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHb2Ap3fuQU>

SKETCHES – MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER.

MATERIAL: The Gospels

FLOW: We can divide into groups and read one of the following gospel passages so as to present it to the others in a sketch.

- *The Adulteress (Jn 8,1-11)*
- *The merciful father (Lk 15,11-32)*
- *A conversation with Zacchaeus (Lk 19, 1-10)*

After the presentations, whoever wants to can tell which character they most identify with and why.



This is how we live

One day at school everything seemed to be going wrong. The lessons that day were particularly boring and I was very tired.

At breaktime one of my friends – who is usually not very pleasant – came up to me and started to talk. When I made her understand that I did not want to talk, she took offence and told me I was in a really bad mood. I got really annoyed with her and spoke badly to her. She

went away really hurt and from that day **she did not speak to me anymore.**



One day during the lunch break I realised that my friend was still avoiding me.

So, I plucked up the courage and decided to approach her and ask

her forgiveness, **even if it was something difficult for me to do.** I told her I was sorry about how I behaved and I explained to her how I was feeling that day.

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She looked at me in surprise, then she smiled and gave me a hug. With that gesture I felt she had forgiven me.

My bad mood disappeared leaving in its wake joy and peace.

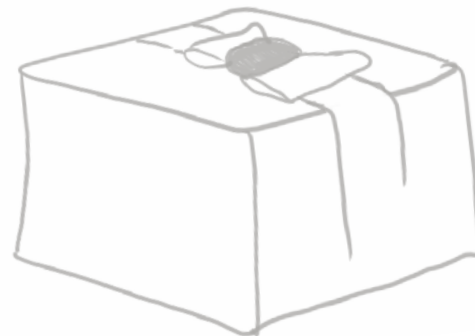
M. New Zealand

Yesterday I prepared a gift for my mother. It was not yet ready and my little brother of 4 years took it and showed it to our mother. I was mad with him! Now I thought that present was worthless. After a while I managed to forgive my brother. **I understood that he is**

still little, and he didn't do it on purpose. He felt within

me a new lightness, joy and lots of love towards everyone.

D. Slovakia





My parents separated when I was 14 and my father went to live with another woman. I thought I would never be able to forgive him, because he was someone I admired a lot but by going away I was really disappointed in him. Notwithstanding I felt a strong need to forgive him, because I knew that Jesus was also in him; it was a

not easy, it took a lot for me to do it, but **I try to start again every day** and now even though he does not live with us when he calls or comes to visit us **I always have a chance to love him.**

GA few days ago, he called and invited me to supper. You can imagine how happy I was. When I got home (from school) I thought he would come around to collect me but he never came. After

waiting a long time, he called to tell me that if I wanted to, we could go and have breakfast together the next day. To tell you the truth I was very angry and sad and so I put down the phone without even greeting him.

The next day was Sunday and I got up early to go to Mass with my mother and even though I was still angry with my father a voice within was saying to me "Forgive him". When I received Jesus in the Eucharist, feeling Him so close to me, I had the strength to forgive my father once more and I put everything into His hands.

I.H. Mexico



This happened
to me...



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Going into depth

OPEN YOUR HEART



Chiara Lubich

Rocca di papa, June 20, 1975,
Gen 3 Congress, The Beatitudes


In our society there are a lot of **underprivileged people**, people who are excluded from society, and yet there is so much talk about equality among all people. But who really loves and is a sincere friend of the poor, of penitent sinners, and of unfortunate people? Who loves them as if they were beautiful, innocent and fortunate, equal to everyone else? And who forgets the blows he's received and forgives offences?

The saints, - they did act in this way - but it was because **they had understood Jesus' lesson** and they went against the current, they went among the lepers until they caught that disease themselves (like Father Damian), they went among the emigrants to share their terrible hardships (like Francis Cabrini), they went among prisoners (like Giuseppe Cafasso) and even

offered themselves in the place of slaves, like the Mercedaries did, to set them free when they didn't have enough money to pay the price for their ransom.

To sum it up, the merciful, whom Jesus calls happy, are those who open their hearts to all needy people and to sinners, with the works of mercy and with forgiveness, like He did, He who healed the sick, raised up the widow's child from the dead and always forgave, even when he was on the cross.

And in regards to this forgiveness, Jesus is very demanding. He **even has us say, in**

the "Our Father," "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," and many times he repeats: "If you forgive other men, your heavenly Father will forgive you too." 



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FORGIVING AND WARNING



Chiara Lubich,
Palaghiaccio di Marino (Rome)
May 25th 2002.
Supercongress for Youth for Unity.
Ai Gen 3 1996-2002 pag. 131-132



I often have to turn the other cheek, to forgive one of my friends. But I would like to make him understand that his way of acting is wrong. Can you give me any ideas, Chiara?

Naturally, we must forgive... we must always forgive! But the same Gospel that speaks of forgiving also says that we must warn our brother or sister when they are doing something wrong. Jesus says: if your brother is doing something wrong, try to speak

with him – just between the two of you – tell him that he’s making a mistake. If he doesn’t want to listen to you, take two other people with you – the Gospel says – so that all together you can convince him that he is doing something wrong. If he still doesn’t understand, tell the rest of the community about it. Jesus then goes on to say that if he still doesn’t want to change, he will be expelled from the community, otherwise, he could hurt others. Of course, Jesus was speaking of people who do really bad things.

So, this is what you should do: forgive, forgive, forgive and warn someone if he or she is doing something wrong. Say: “Look, this is not good...” If you don’t do this, if we don’t do this, we become responsible for the evil that the others do. So, we must be careful: The Gospel wants both of these things – forgiving and warning. 💡



A PSYCHOLOGICAL TIP

Raffaele Cavaliere,
Perdonare
(To Forgive, our translation)
Ed. Città Nuova
Pag 90-92

Many people feel guilty or bad because of what they have done to others. To have caused suffering or unpleasantness becomes an unbearable thought which often keeps coming back and therefore provokes unsuitable psychosomatic reactions.

(...)

Feelings of guilt and blaming yourself also feature when you cannot forgive yourself even for something: an unsuitable way of behaving, a weakness, for having repeated a mistake, for having missed a chance, for having played around with your health, for having uselessly strained your body and your mind. Even being too superficial in a serious situation can wreck a part of your self-esteem.

(...)

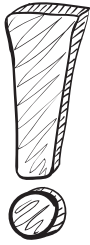
To overcome a sense of guilt, we have to forgive ourselves. Self-forgiveness is highly 'psycho therapeutic'. In order to do this, it may be helpful to think that it was not possible to act otherwise in that situation, that the psychological situation did not offer any other response because it was not possible to embrace other requests for what was lived in an inadequate way at that specific time. A more realistic assessment of one's possibilities,

a reduction in exaggerated expectations which sometimes we have of ourselves, this could lead to becoming more humble and to reducing that sense of 'narcissistic' all-powerfulness which increases a lot the sense of guilt for things which we could never manage to do.

People who can forgive themselves are free of negative feelings, guilt and obsessive thoughts. They have a greater inner peace and their self-esteem improves. They can accept their past, they are ready to make a new start and to achieve a change in their own way of being. To be thinking over what has happened prevents you from being able to reorganise your life; a negative vision of life permanently disturbs the serenity of life. Often, to move on we have to accept the past, the actions taken and now unrepeatable.

In order to forgive ourselves we cannot ignore what has happened but we can address it. If we consider the past we avoid remorse, which is a defence mechanism which damages seriously inner peace. Trying to pretend that nothing happened makes people become rigid and deprives them of the freedom to be themselves. If we try to ignore thoughts, negative sentiments about our experiences, we lose contact with reality and learn nothing from what has happened.





I will try!

God loves me, forgives me and welcomes me as I am. I will try *and draw close to the one* who has hurt me. He/ she is probably carrying around an even greater hurt. My *forgiveness will be important* for me and for him/her.

1. To grow in the awareness of how much my words and my attitudes can hurt.
2. Together let us take the commitment to live the Word of life or let us choose a motto to help us during the week to have a merciful love, capable of asking for forgiveness and of forgiving.



Where have we got to?

Each evening, before going to sleep, let us get into the habit of stopping for a few moments in silence to examine our conscience. Let us think back over the day, thank God for what we managed to live and ask Him to forgive all our shortcomings.

Do we remember someone we need to say sorry to or to whom we have not yet offered our forgiveness?

Let's do it as soon as possible.

"Argue if you have to, even throw plates at one another. But always make peace before the day ends".

*Assisi, October 4, 2013,
Pope Francis to married people.*

For the Group Leader



Evaluation after the meeting

- **What was the atmosphere like?** Did we experience the joy of meeting up, a great willingness to listen to one another? Did everyone listen respectfully and share openly? Can we say we experienced the presence of Jesus among us?
- Did the **suggested activities** encourage an interest in these revolutionary words of Jesus? Were there any difficulties? What might be suggested so as to improve the presentation the next time?
- Did the great mercy and forgiveness that God has for us emerge? Is there a particular environment where it is very difficult to forgive? Have we exhausted the topic or is it necessary **to deepen** something more in the next meeting?