

# “Virtues to Live by”

## FORGIVENESS

### Before You Begin – An overview for teachers

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Colossians 3:13)

*I make amends for my mistakes  
I accept Divine forgiveness  
I have the humility to forgive others  
I allow forgiveness to dissolve my anger  
I am generous with forgiveness  
I bless my woundedness*

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#### Definition

To give someone another chance after they have done something wrong so they can make a new start. When we forgive we let go of our feelings of resentment, anger and revenge. When we forgive we show our love for the person rather than focusing on the wrong. When we forgive someone we show that our relationship with them is more important than the wrong they have done. We also need to forgive ourselves so that we do not give up when we have done wrong or made a mistake, but have the courage to act differently and have faith that, with God’s help, we can change.

#### Virtue to Live By

I accept God’s forgiveness

I show my love for God by forgiving myself and others

I let go of my hurt feelings and give myself a new start

I let go of my hurt feelings and give others a new start

#### Biblical sources

“You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.” (Psalm 86:5)

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)

“If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:21-22)

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 7:11:25)

The Parable of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

The Parables of the Lost Sheep, Coin and Son (Luke 15:1-32)

### **Catholic sources**

"There is no offence, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. There is no one, however wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided his repentance is honest. Christ who died for all men desires that in his Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, para. 982)

"We should pray that God forgives us when we are bad. God wants to give us a new beginning. And we should do exactly the same: forgive people who did us evil. And make a new start ..." (*YouCat for Kids*, p. 213)

"There are those who say: 'I have committed too many sins, the Good Lord cannot forgive me.' This is a gross blasphemy. It is the same as putting a limit on God's mercy, which has none: it is infinite. Nothing offends the Good Lord as much as doubting his mercy." (St. John Vianney)

"God has been very gracious to me, for I never dwell upon anything wrong which a person has done, so as to remember it afterwards. If I do remember it, I always see some other virtue in that person." (St. Teresa of Ávila)

### **Other sources**

"You must forgive those who transgress against you before you can look to forgiveness from above." (Talmud, Judaism)

"Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you? Allah is forgiving and merciful." (Qur'an 24:22)

"If you want to see the brave, look at those who can forgive." (Bhagavad Gita 14:24, Hinduism)

"Where there is forgiveness, there is God himself." (Adi Granth, Sikhism)

"Life appears to me to be too short to be spent in nursing animosity or in registering wrongs." (Charlotte Brontë)

### **Why Practise Forgiveness?**

Jesus teaches us that God has forgiven us much so we ought to forgive others in return. Forgiveness is very important in life, because we make choices that hurt ourselves and others. If we are sorry for something that we have done or failed to do, then we can forgive ourselves. If we can forgive ourselves we

can move forward and learn from mistakes and moral failures. If we forgive others for something they have done wrong, we show that our relationship with them is stronger than the wrong they committed.

### **How do we Practise Forgiveness?**

By admitting our failures and wrong doing and letting go of our feelings of sadness, shame or anger so that we make a new start, asking God to give us the courage to change. We can forgive people who have done wrong to us or others by letting go of our strong feelings of resentment that can manifest themselves in keeping a record of wrongs or holding a grudge or revenge and instead treat people with gentleness and mercy.

### **Key Words:**

Forgiveness, forgive, mercy, mistakes, sin, guilt

### **Signs of living the virtue of Forgiveness:**

I accept God's forgiveness

I can forgive

I accept forgiveness from others

I have the courage to give myself and others a new start

I know that with God's love I can change

I understand that saying sorry is one way of making amends

### **Reflection Questions:**

Why is it important to forgive yourself?

When have you felt anger dissolve in the gentleness of forgiveness?

Am I willing to keep on forgiving?