

LEADER PREP

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to let go of grudges and trust in the Lord to bring justice.

MAIN POINT

The more you hold onto a grudge, the more the grudge has a hold on you.

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 4:31-32; Romans 12:17-21

THINK ABOUT THIS

Today's Scripture brings up the topic of God's wrath. While we want to focus our lesson today on encouraging students to forgive others, they may ask questions about God's wrath. If so, remind your students that God is BOTH loving and wrathful. How can both of these be true? In short, the cross. God's wrath isn't a temper tantrum, it's His justice against evil and sin. God has the right to be wrathful against us and we deserve His punishment. But God also loves us, so He sent Jesus to take the punishment of our sins. That is the heart of the gospel: God making a loving and just way to deal with our sin.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

GET THEM TALKING

- How was everyone's week? Share Highs & Lows.
- Someone recap the main point of the message in your own words.
- What are some reasons why we might hold a grudge against someone else?

INTO THE WORD

READ EPHESIANS 4:31-32 and ROMANS 12:17-21 and answer the following questions:

- 1. Go back through the verses and underline everything they encourage you to do. What stands out to you about these things?
- 2. Why can it be so hard to let go of grudges?
- 3. How can forgiving others set us free?
- 4. In your own words, what does it mean to overcome evil with good? What are some examples of this?
- 5. In your own words, what does it mean to try to "as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone?"

NEXT STEP

Take some time to reflect in your mind:

- 1) What grudges are you holding onto?
- 2) Who do you need to forgive?

Get alone this week and write down the names of the people you need to forgive (somewhere private – you don't need to post this list on your kitchen fridge). After writing the names down, say a prayer to God, naming each person, and asking God to help you forgive that person.

PRAYER GUIDE

We are going to close in prayer. Anyone have any prayer requests?

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Scripture is provided for convenience, but we prefer you and your students open your Bibles to read the Scripture. This helps your students learn how to find Scripture in their Bibles and where these verses are in the larger context of God's Word.

EPHESIANS 4:31-32 (NIV)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

ROMANS 12:17-21 (NIV)

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

LEADER CORNER + NOTES