

Grade 6 - Lesson 2

St. Michael the Archangel Parish

Proclamation:

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.



Catechetical Points

- How we should strive to be our best selves through forgiveness, agape, goodness, courage, justice, common sense, and balanced living.
- Understanding what forgiveness is and is not
- How forgiveness benefits individuals and communities.

Materials

- Challenge to Be Your Best Self Quiz

Catechist prayer before the lesson:

God, the Father of life, help me to set a good example for my students. Help me to keep my actions and my words consistent with one another and with the teachings of the Church. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Before class starts:

- Students who arrive early can play Train Wreck with students from the other grades.

[5 min] **Opening Prayer**

- Ask the students if there is anything they would like to pray for. Pray an **Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be** together. (Student text page 147)

[5 min] **Icebreaker Discussion**

- What was the funniest thing that happened to you today?
- What was something nice that someone did for you today?
- What challenged you today?
- If one of your classmates at school could be the teacher for the day who would you want it to be?

[60 min] **Forgiveness**

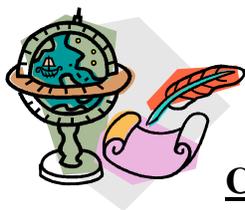
- See the following pages to follow the steps for the lesson on forgiveness. There will likely be more content than you have time to cover, so you can decide to skip some parts.

[5 min] **Closing Prayer**

- Invite the students to think about one or more people who they would like to forgive for hurting them. Give a minute for them to reflect silently.
- Ask God to give us the grace to forgive the people we have in mind and pray the **Our Father**.

Lesson One:

Be Your Best Self



Charting a Course

In this curriculum, the students will learn about how to be their best selves through forgiveness, *agape* (including seeing the deep worth of all people), goodness, courage, justice, common sense, and balanced living. They will learn what forgiveness is and is not, the pathway to forgiving, and the benefits of forgiveness to individuals and communities.

In today's lesson, the students will be learning what it means to be one's best self and the ways to achieve this. What do we mean when we say that your students will learn to be their best selves? It means that they will learn to think thoughts that are positive, grateful, and truthful, speak words that edify in truth both the self and others, and behave in ways that are kind, generous, respectful, loving, courageous, just, and forgiving. They will learn the important role balanced work, play, rest, exercise, nutritional eating, and proper grooming plays in helping them be their best selves. They will learn the importance of acknowledging and confronting anger, sadness, and other negative emotions and cultivating positive emotions such as love, joy, hope, and so forth in being one's best self. They will learn that thinking positive thoughts (without pretending), seeking truth, practicing self-discipline, persevering under all circumstances, being confident, acknowledging the deep worth of all people (including themselves), practicing common sense (including the pursuit of knowledge), and living balanced lives can help them to be their best selves.³

In order to become our best selves, we must practice, practice, and practice. We must persist in thinking positive thoughts about the self, others, and our circumstances, speaking words in truth that are helpful to the self and others, and behaving with kindness, respect, generosity, and love. We must pursue knowledge and grow in our understanding of what it means to be our best selves. We must strive to become our best selves because of an appreciation of excellence and of doing what is right rather than for the purpose of outward rewards (though there is nothing wrong with rewards). Regardless of how hard we try to be our best selves, we will, at times, behave unfairly and make mistakes. It is important that when we do fail to be our best selves, we respond to ourselves and others in love, change what needs to be changed, and continue trying to be our best selves.

Please feel free to email the authors with questions about the lesson: jaknutson03@yahoo.com; rd.enright@yahoo.com.

³ The idea of becoming one's best self as it relates to forgiveness is taken from Pdraig Twomey, director of the forgiveness education project in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

General and Behavioral Objectives

In this lesson the students will:

- Learn what it means to *be your best self*.
- Learn how to *be your best self*.
- Learn the benefits of being your best self.
- Learn to love the self and others even when we fail, change what needs to be changed, and continue trying to be our best selves.
- Read, watch, or listen to the story. See The Story and Discussion Questions section.
- Discuss the questions. See The Story and Discussion Questions section.
- Complete the “Thoughtful Reflections” activity. See the Exercise Those Forgiveness Muscles section for further instructions.



The Story and Discussion Questions

To complete this section, we recommend you:

1. Select your story (see suggestions following the *Selecting a Story* heading). We provide some suggestions under the *Story Recommendations* heading below.
2. Make copies of the discussion questions found at the very end of this lesson and distribute to the students (1 for each student or for each small group). **Read the questions aloud to the students before proceeding to the story.** This will serve as an advanced organizer. The students will complete the questions written in **bold** while they are reading, listening to, or watching the story. The rest of the questions will be discussed as a class following the story.
3. **Discuss question 1** with the students prior to the story. See the discussion questions in this section below for ideas on answers.
4. Ask the students to read, listen to, or watch the story. This will depend on whether you've selected a chapter book, picture book, or DVD/VHS. See headings entitled, *Chapter Books*, *DVD/VHS*, or *Picture Books* for details.
5. Conduct the large group discussion. See the discussion questions in this section for ideas on answers for some questions.

The Story

Selecting a Story

We recommend that if you choose your own story, you select one that reflects individuals who are bringing forth their best selves. This may include the following: positive thoughts, words, and behaviors [seeing the deep worth of all people (including the self), love, and goodness]; proper care of one's overall health; fostering positive feelings and working to diminish negative feelings; practicing self-discipline, perseverance, confidence, courage, justice, common sense, balanced living, and forgiveness. It is possible to teach the students about these concepts by selecting stories where the people do not display these characteristics, as well. We call this teaching from opposites. We encourage you to select stories that reflect truth, beauty, and goodness.

***Note: At the end of this lesson plan are 2 story summaries you can choose from; *Horton Hears a Who* and *Cars*.**

Begin the discussion by telling the students, “Today we are beginning the ‘Be Your Best Self’ forgiveness curriculum. Over the next several months, we will be learning to choose a path of life that may help us to bring forth our best selves in every circumstance and result in greater well-being. We will learn about such topics as inherent worth, *agape*, goodness, courage, justice, common sense, balanced living, and forgiveness. We will read and listen to stories, discuss a variety of concepts dealing with forgiveness, participate in activities that help us further understand these concepts, and lay a foundation of knowledge, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that will prepare us to be forgivers.”

1. What does it mean to be your best self?
 - a. We think thoughts that are positive, grateful, and truthful.
 - b. We speak words that edify in truth both the self and others.
 - c. We behave in ways that are kind, generous, respectful, loving, courageous, just, and forgiving.
 - d. We work, play, rest, exercise, eat nutritionally, and care for our physical bodies.
 - e. We attend to our feelings by acknowledging and confronting anger, sadness, and other negative emotions and cultivating positive emotions such as love, joy, hope.
 - f. We practice self-discipline, persevere in all circumstances, are confident, acknowledge the deep worth of all people (including ourselves), exercise common sense (pursuing knowledge), and live balanced lives.
2. How might our thoughts help or hinder us from becoming our best selves? *Our thoughts often guide our feelings, speech, and behaviors. Negative thoughts might result in hurtful words and actions.*
3. Describe some of the ways the character(s) in today’s story were thinking. Were there any thoughts that reflected a person being his or her best self? What were they?
4. Which thoughts, if any, could be described as positive? Which thoughts, if any, could be described as being filled with gratitude and truth?
5. Which thoughts, if any, seemed to be negative (angry, disrespectful, and so forth)? How did these thoughts help or hinder the person from being his or her best self?
6. What effects did these thoughts (positive and negative) have on the person thinking them? What effects did these same thoughts have on others?
7. How might our words help or hinder us from becoming our best selves? *We can respect and disrespect ourselves and others through words.*
8. Describe the characters’ words in today’s story. Which words reflected the person’s best self?
9. What effect did these words have on the person speaking them? What effect did these words have on others? Did the words used build people up or did they tear them down? Why?
10. How might our behaviors help or hinder us from becoming our best selves? *Our actions can help or harm ourselves and others.*
11. Describe some of the behaviors of the characters in today’s story. Were there any behaviors that seemed to reflect the person’s best self? For example, were there any signs of the following:
 - Kindness
 - Generosity
 - Respect
 - Love
 - Courage

- Justice
 - Forgiveness
 - Balanced work, play, rest, exercise, nutritional eating, and care for the physical body?
12. What effect did these behaviors have on all involved?
13. Describe any way that people in the story practiced the following:
- Self-discipline
 - Perseverance in all circumstances
 - Confidence
 - Acknowledgement of the deep worth of all people (including themselves)
 - Common sense (including the pursuit of knowledge)
 - Balanced lives
14. How did these behaviors affect the person who practiced them? How did they affect those around him or her?
15. How might our physical health help or hinder us from being our best selves? *If we don't care for ourselves, we won't have the energy, strength, or health to be our best selves.*
16. Did any people in the story bring forth their best selves by taking care of their physical health? In what ways? *Through balanced work and play, rest and exercise, nutritional eating, and proper hygiene.*
17. How might our feelings help or hinder us from becoming our best selves? *Acknowledging and confronting anger, sadness, and other negative emotions and cultivating positive emotions such as love, joy, and hope can help us to be our best selves. Our feelings play a role in the decisions we make. Negative feelings like anger can motivate us toward destructive behaviors. Sadness and anger can drain us of energy.*
18. Were there any people in the story who seemed to bring forth their best selves by fostering positive feelings and working to avoid holding on to negative ones? Who? How did they do this?
19. Is it easy to be one's best self? Why or why not?
20. In order to become one's best self, we must practice, practice, and practice. How can we practice being our best selves?
- *By persisting in thinking positive thoughts about the self, others, and our circumstances (we must be truthful, however).*
 - *Continuing to speak words in truth that are helpful to the self and others*
 - *Maintaining behavior that is kind, respectful, generous, and loving.*
 - *By pursuing knowledge and growing in our understanding of how to become our best selves.*
 - *By striving to appreciate excellence and the importance of doing what is right because it is excellent and right rather than because of external rewards (though there is nothing wrong with rewards).*
21. What should we do when we fail to bring forth our best selves? *Love the self and others. Change what needs to be changed. Persevere in being our best selves.*
22. How might our schools, families, and communities be different if we all worked to be our best selves?



Exercise Those Forgiveness Muscles

Please feel free to decide whether or not to include the following activities.

Take the Challenge to Be Your Best Self

The students will continue to learn about being their best selves. The teacher, together with the students, will create a list of how one can be his or her best self.

Give to each student the questionnaire found at the end of this lesson entitled, “Take the Challenge to Be Your Best Self.” Please emphasize to the students that this questionnaire is intended **ONLY** to give them some personal feedback regarding the endeavor to become one’s best self. Discuss the questionnaire with the students and ask them to answer the questions as honestly as possible. **Each student’s answers, as well as his or her total scores, are private and will not be shared with anyone.**

In an effort to encourage, guide, and instruct the students on how to become their best selves, the teacher will give to students “Thank You for Being Your Best Self” certificates any time they are working to bring forth their best selves. These certificates can be displayed, kept by the students, or redeemed to the teacher. Some examples of what the certificate might be redeemed for are homework passes, time on the computer, free time, and so forth. The teacher may also decide to have a special class activity when a certain percentage of students have received certificates. We leave it up to the teacher to decide how to manage the “Thank You for Being Your Best Self” certificates.

Please stress to the students the importance of working to become our best selves because we value excellence and right living for the reason that it is excellent and right rather than to get rewards from others.

Thoughtful Reflections

We ask that each student begin a personal journal where he or she will write about various topics relating to forgiveness. The personal journals can be a paper-and-pencil journal (pieces of paper stapled together, a notebook, or a purchased journal) or a computerized journal (stored on a CD, floppy disc, or hard drive). It is very important that the students understand the importance of respecting the privacy of others as they journal.

Please encourage the students to find a peaceful and beautiful setting where their minds, hearts, and bodies can be at rest while they write in their journals. If the students journal in class, you may want to play soft music as they reflect and write.

Following are some questions for reflection.

1. How have you strived to be your best self today or recently?
2. What is preventing you from bringing forth your best self?
3. List one way you will strive to be your best self today.



In a Christian Context

The following section has been provided for those of you who would like to help the students learn to be their best selves through Christian teachings. We have included scriptures that can be used for discussion.

Ephesians 5:1-21 and Philippians 2:1-18 teach us how to be our best selves by imitating the life of Christ. We must persevere and endure in becoming like Christ (Galatians 6:9 and Romans 5:3-5). When we fail to be our best selves, we can repent of the sin and receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

Ephesians 5:1-21: Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God...Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is....Be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Philippians 2:1-18: If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others....

1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Galatians 6:9: Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Romans 5:3-5: Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Discussion Questions

Each student or small group should receive a copy of these questions prior to the story.

Instructions to the students: please complete all of the **questions in bold** while you are reading, listening to, or watching the story. The rest of the questions will be discussed as a class following the story. If you are reading a chapter book in small groups, be prepared to summarize each of your assigned chapters for the rest of the class.

1. **What does it mean to be your best self?**
2. How might our thoughts help or hinder us from becoming our best selves?
3. **Describe some of the ways the character(s) in today's story were thinking. Were there any thoughts that reflected a person being his or her best self? What were they?**
4. **Which thoughts, if any, could be described as positive? Which thoughts, if any, could be described as being filled with gratitude and truth?**
5. **Which thoughts, if any, seemed to be negative (angry, disrespectful, and so forth)? How did these thoughts help or hinder the person being his or her best self?**
6. **What effects did these thoughts (positive and negative) have on the person thinking them? What effects did these same thoughts have on others?**
7. How might our words help or hinder us from becoming our best selves?
8. **Describe the characters' words in today's story. Which words reflected the person's best self?**
9. **What effect did these words have on the person speaking them? What effect did these words have on others? Did the words used build people up or did they tear them down? Why?**
10. How might our behaviors help or hinder us from becoming our best selves?
11. **Describe some of the behaviors of the characters in today's story. Were there any behaviors that seemed to reflect the person's best self? For example, were there any signs of the following:**
 - **Kindness**
 - **Generosity**
 - **Respect**
 - **Love**
 - **Courage**
 - **Justice**
 - **Forgiveness**
 - **Balanced work, play, rest, exercise, nutritional eating, and care for the physical body**
12. **What effect did these behaviors have on all involved?**

13. Describe any way that people in the story practiced the following:
 - Self-discipline
 - Perseverance in all circumstances
 - Confidence
 - Acknowledgement of the deep worth of all people (including themselves)
 - Common sense (including the pursuit of knowledge)
 - Balanced lives
14. How did these behaviors affect the person who practiced them? How did they affect those around him or her?
15. How might our physical health help or hinder us from being our best selves?
16. Did any people in the story bring forth their best selves by taking care of their physical health? In what ways?
17. How might our feelings help or hinder us from becoming our best selves?
18. Were there any people in the story who seemed to bring forth their best selves by fostering positive feelings and working to avoid holding on to negative ones? Who? How did they do this?
19. Is it easy to be one's best self? Why or why not?
20. In order to become one's best self, we must practice, practice, and practice. How can we practice being our best selves?
21. What should we do when we fail to bring forth our best selves?
22. How might our schools, families, and communities be different if we all worked to be our best selves?

Exercise Those Forgiveness Muscles

Take the Challenge to Be Your Best Self

Quiz:

On a 1 (not at all) to 5 (very frequently) scale, please rate as honestly as you can the following about yourself:

1) Have you had thoughts today that reflect you at your very best?

1 (not at all) 2 3 (to some degree) 4 5 (very frequently)

2) Have you tried to speak in such a way as to lift up the dignity of others?

1 (not at all) 2 3 (to some degree) 4 5 (very frequently)

3) Have you behaved in such a way as to bring out the best in yourself and others?

1 (not at all) 2 3 (to some degree) 4 5 (very frequently)

4) Have you tried to care for your physical needs in such a way that you are honoring your body?

1 (not at all) 2 3 (to some degree) 4 5 (very frequently)

5) Have you tried to work with angry feelings so that you become more forgiving?

1 (not at all) 2 3 (to some degree) 4 5 (very frequently)

6) Have you tried to bring your best self (reflected in your thoughts, behaviors, and feelings) deeply into your heart, to the very core of who you are?

1 (not at all) 2 3 (to some degree) 4 5 (very frequently)

Scores: please add up each of your scores to each item

If you scored between:

6-12, it is time to hit the gym to build your forgiveness muscles.

13-18, you are on your way to being forgivingly fit.

19-24, you are forgivingly fit.

The No-Reward Reward

As you may know, people often reward you when you say nice things, behave well, and in general live out your best self. Such reinforcements from others are great and we do not discourage this at all. Yet, the point of this quiz and of lesson 1 is to go into the interior, into the heart of your best self. We encourage you to do that now as a major challenge in your life. Can you lead the life of your best self even when others are not rewarding you? Do you have the discipline of going into the best-self gymnasium to begin the process of becoming best-self fit, or becoming forgivingly fit?

The reward is in a life well lived.

Lesson Two

Be Your Best Self: Forgiveness



Charting a Course

Today, you will be discussing what forgiveness **is** and what it **is not**. A clear understanding of what forgiveness is and is not can equip us to forgive. It can also help us make healthy decisions about whether to forgive and how to protect ourselves from further hurt as we forgive.

The definition of forgiveness is as follows: “when unjustly hurt by another, we forgive when we overcome the resentment toward the offender, not by denying our right to the resentment, but instead by trying to offer the wrongdoer compassion, benevolence, and love; as we give these, we as forgivers realize that the offender does not necessarily have a right to such gifts.”⁴ In other words, the person who forgives looks truthfully at their offender’s worth, lets go of deep anger and a desire for revenge, and offers love.

In teaching people about forgiveness, we sometimes encounter those who have deep concerns about the safety and wisdom of forgiveness. Clarifying what forgiveness is **not** can ease people’s fears that forgiveness may result in further injury. Forgiveness is **not** excusing or condoning the unfair hurt. It is **not** putting up with the hurt, denying we were hurt, or pretending that the person didn’t mean to cause us hurt. Forgiveness is **not** forgetting the hurt. It is remembering the hurt in a different way, through the eyes of forgiveness. Forgiveness is **not** reconciliation. Forgiveness is an internal change within the heart of a person whereas reconciliation is the coming together again of two or more people in mutual trust.

Forgiveness can result in improved relationships with the one who caused the unfair hurt and others, reduced anger and sadness, and increased hopefulness.⁵

As you proceed through these lessons, please remember that **forgiveness is a choice. It is important that all people are allowed to choose to forgive when and if they are ready.**

Please feel free to email the authors with questions about the lesson: jaknutson03@yahoo.com; rd.enright@yahoo.com.

⁴ Enright, R.D. (2001), *Forgiveness Is a Choice: A Step-By-Step Process for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope*. American Psychological Association, p. 25.

⁵ Enright, R.D. (2001), *Forgiveness Is a Choice*.

General and Behavioral Objectives

In this lesson, the students will:

- Learn what forgiveness is and is not.
- Learn the benefits of forgiveness.
- Learn that forgiveness is a choice.
- Read, watch, or listen to today's story.
- Discuss the questions in The Story and Discussion Questions section.
- Assign the "Thoughtful Reflections" activity. See the Exercise Those Forgiveness Muscles section for further instructions.



The Story and Discussion Questions

To complete this section, we recommend you:

1. Select your story (see suggestions following the *Selecting a Story* heading). We provide some suggestions under the *Story Recommendations* heading below.
2. Make copies of the discussion questions found at the very end of this lesson and distribute to the students (1 for each student or for each small group). **Read the questions aloud to the students before proceeding to the story.** This will serve as an advanced organizer. The students will complete the questions written in **bold** while they are reading, listening to, or watching the story. The rest of the questions will be discussed together as a class following the story.
3. **Discuss questions 1, 2, and 10** with the students prior to the story. See the discussion questions in this section below for ideas on answers.
4. Ask the students to read, listen, or watch the story. This will depend on whether you've selected a chapter book, picture book, or DVD/VHS. See headings entitled *Chapter Books*, *DVD/VHS*, or *Picture Books* for details.
5. Conduct the large group discussion. See the discussion questions in this section for ideas on answers to some of the questions.

The Story

Selecting a Story

We recommend that if you choose your own book, you select one that has one or more of the following: 1) example(s) of injustice; 2) conflict between characters; 3) anger, sadness, or other emotions that typically follow injustice; and 4) an attempt to offer benevolence and love to the person who was unfair. You may also use any story of injustice and conflict (with resulting anger, sadness, or other emotions) where the character fails to see the deep worth of the person who was unfair and fails to offer benevolence and love (we call this teaching through opposites). We encourage you to select a book that reflects truth, beauty, and goodness. *

***Note: At the end of this lesson plan are 2 story summaries you can choose from; Horton Hears a Who and Cars.**

Before beginning the discussion, review the main idea of the previous lesson. In the previous lesson, we learned what it means to be our best selves. To be our best selves means that we think thoughts that are positive, grateful, and truthful (also honest), speak words that edify in truth both the self and others, and behave in ways that are kind, generous, respectful, loving, courageous, just, and forgiving. We work, play, rest, exercise, eat nutritionally, and care for our physical bodies. We attend to our feelings by acknowledging and confronting anger, sadness, and other negative emotions and cultivating positive emotions such as love, joy, hope. We practice self-discipline, persevere in all circumstances, are confident, acknowledge the deep worth of all people (including ourselves), exercise common sense including the pursuit of knowledge, and live balanced lives.

Today we will be discussing what forgiveness is and what forgiveness is not.

1. Why is an understanding of what forgiveness *is* and *is not* important? *A clear understanding of what forgiveness is will help us make a knowledgeable decision regarding forgiveness. It may calm any fears we have of forgiveness.*
2. What is forgiveness? *We see the worth of the person who was unfair, let go of anger and a desire for revenge, and offer love.*
3. We know that forgiveness begins with unfair hurt. Were there any people who were treated unfairly in our story? Who was unfairly hurt? What were these unfair acts?
4. What were the responses of those who were unfairly hurt? What did they say? What did they do? How did they seem to feel?
5. Did these people who were unfairly hurt have a right to their feelings? Why or why not?
6. Let us now focus our attention on one person in the story who was treated unfairly. When we forgive, we begin to see that the person who treated us unfairly has deep worth. We begin to see the person in a larger context than his or her unfairness. Did this one person who was treated unfairly see that the person who was unfair has worth? Why do you think this?
7. When we forgive, we begin to let go of our anger toward the person who was unfair. Did the person who was treated unfairly begin to let go of anger toward the one who was unfair? How do you know?
8. When we forgive, we begin to feel compassion, sympathy, or empathy for the person who was unfair. Did the person in the story who was treated unfairly show any signs of compassion, sympathy, or empathy toward the one who was unfair? How do you know?
***Note: please make sure the students understand the meanings of the words compassion, sympathy, and empathy.**
9. When we forgive, we often become willing to give the person who was unfair a gift of goodness. Did the person who was unfair offer any gift(s) of goodness to the one who was unfair? What gift(s) did he or she give?
10. Forgiveness is **not** excusing, pretending, or denying the unfairness. What does this mean?
11. Did the person in our story who was treated unfairly excuse, pretend, or deny the unfairness? Why do you think this?
12. Forgiveness is **not** forgetting the unfairness. What does this mean? *We do not forget the unfairness occurred when we forgive. We remember it with a softened heart.*
13. How can we remember the unfairness and yet have a softened heart toward the person? *We can admit that the person was unfair and that the act will always be unfair. We can see that the person has deep worth and is more than what he or she did.*
14. What might happen to us if we remember the unfairness without softening our heart toward the person? *Unhealthy anger may begin to live inside of us and it may deepen, thus causing greater pain, broken relationships, and perhaps even sickness.*

15. Forgiveness is **not** the same as reconciliation. Reconciliation involves two people coming together in friendship. Forgiveness is an internal change of heart. Did the person who was treated unfairly reconcile with the one who was unfair? Why or why not?
16. Was any person in the story forced to forgive? If so, who?
17. Should a person be forced to forgive? Why or why not?



Exercise Those Forgiveness Muscles

Please feel free to decide whether or not to include the following activities.

The Forgiveness Gymnasium

Each student will go out into the world (the forgiveness gymnasium) and talk with at least one person about the topic of forgiveness. Encourage the students to discuss forgiveness with friends, neighbors, and family members. The students should ask the following questions:

1. What is forgiveness?
2. Is forgiveness a sign of weakness? Why or why not?
3. Is forgiveness important for people to consider? Why or why not?

The students will share the answers to the questions with the class. Discuss the questions together as a class. Please feel free to add to the list of questions.

Thoughtful Reflections

Please feel free to write about these questions and other forgiveness topics in your journals.

1. What are your fears or concerns about forgiving? Are these fears or concerns based on truth or false information?
2. Is forgiveness something you might consider? Why or why not?



In a Christian Context

The following section will help you teach about forgiveness through Christian teachings. We have included scriptures that can be used for discussion.

In Luke 6:27-36, Jesus teaches that we should love our enemies. When we forgive, we choose to love those who have treated us unfairly.

Luke 6:27-36: Jesus said, “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Discussion Questions

Each student or small group should receive a copy of these questions prior to the story.

Instructions to the students: please complete all of the **questions in bold** while you are reading, listening to, or watching the story. The rest of the questions will be discussed as a class following the story. If you are reading a chapter book in small groups, be prepared to summarize each of your assigned chapters for the rest of the class.

1. Why is an understanding of what forgiveness *is* and *is not* important?
2. What is forgiveness?
3. **We know that forgiveness begins with unfair hurt. Were there any people who were treated unfairly in our story? Who was unfairly hurt? What were these unfair acts?**
4. **What were the responses of those who were unfairly hurt? What did they say? What did they do? How did they seem to feel?**
5. **Did these people who were unfairly hurt have a right to their feelings? Why or why not?**
6. **Let us now focus our attention on one person in the story who was treated unfairly. When we forgive, we begin to see that the person who treated us unfairly has deep worth. We begin to see the person in a larger context than his or her unfairness. Did this one person who was treated unfairly see that the person who was unfair has worth? Why do you think this?**
7. **When we forgive, we begin to let go of our anger toward the person who was unfair. Did the person who was treated unfairly begin to let go of anger toward the one who was unfair? How do you know?**
8. **When we forgive, we begin to feel compassion, sympathy, or empathy for the person who was unfair. Did the person in the story who was treated unfairly show any signs of compassion, sympathy, or empathy toward the one who was unfair? How do you know?**
9. **When we forgive, we often become willing to give the person who was unfair a gift of goodness. Did the person who was unfair offer any gift(s) of goodness to the one who was unfair? What gift(s) did he or she give?**
10. Forgiveness is **not** excusing, pretending, or denying the unfairness. What does this mean?
11. **Did the person in our story who was treated unfairly excuse, pretend, or deny the unfairness? Why do you think this?**
12. Forgiveness is **not** forgetting the unfairness. What does this mean?
13. How can we remember the unfairness and yet have a softened heart toward the person?
14. What might happen to us if we remember the unfairness without softening our heart toward the person?
15. **Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. Reconciliation involves two people coming together in friendship. Forgiveness is an internal change of heart. Did the person who was treated unfairly reconcile with the one who was unfair? Why or why not?**
16. **Was any person in the story forced to forgive? If so, who?**
17. Should a person be forced to forgive? Why or why not?

6th Grade Curriculum Guide DVD Summary

DVD Title: *Cars*

Disney Pixar DVD

Main characters: Lightning McQueen, Sally, Mater, Doc Hudson

Executive summary: A selfish racecar named Lightning learns that he needs the help and friendship of others to win and be happy.

Detailed summary: It was the last big race of the season to determine the winner of the Piston Cup. Three cars battled for the lead: Lightning McQueen, The King, and Chick Hicks. Lightning was in the lead, but The King and Chick caught up to him at the finish line. It was a three-way tie. Another race was scheduled for one week later in California to determine the Piston Cup winner.

Lightning was very egotistical and thought he didn't need anyone's help. He fired his pit crew and was rude to other cars that tried to help him. The King, an older and wiser racecar, told Lightning he needed to change his attitude. He might be talented, but he would need a team to win.

Lightning's sponsor was Rusteze, but Lightning dreamed of having a prestigious sponsor like Dinaco. He loaded up in a semi-truck named Mack

to drive to California for the big race. Mack wanted to stop for a rest, but Lightning told him to keep going. A gang of cars saw that Mack was falling asleep while driving down the Interstate and opened the back of the truck. Lightning rolled out of the truck. Mack kept on driving toward California. Lightning tried to catch up to Mack.



Continued on Back



A police car tried to stop Lightning for speeding. He chased him to a rundown town called Radiator Springs on the old Route 66. There Lightning was locked in a fenced-in area with a boot on his wheel, so he couldn't go anywhere. He was sentenced to community service and ordered to repair the road



that ran through Radiator Springs. Sally, a shiny blue Porsche, was the lawyer who convinced the Judge to require Lightning to fix the road.

A friendly tow truck named Mater took the boot off, so Lightning could get to work on the road. Lightning rushed through the job, so he could

leave. The road looked worse than ever. They demanded that he scrape the sloppy blacktop off the road and start over.

A car named Doc challenged Lightning to a race. If Lightning won, he could leave. Lightning was sure that he could win a race against the old car, but he took a turn too fast and ran off the road. Doc won the race and Lightning returned to fix the road. This time he actually did a great job on the road, but he had a long way to go.

Doc tried to teach lightning how to take turns better, but Lightning didn't want to listen to the old car. Guido and Luigi offered to give Lightning new tires, but Lightning didn't want anyone's help.



That night Mater invited Lightning to go out and have some fun tractor tipping. Lightning thought it was boring and stupid at first, but he ended up having a great time. He told Mater about his dream of winning the Piston Cup and having a fancy sponsor like Dinaco. Mater told Lightning that he was his best friend. Lightning was touched by that. He never had a best friend before. He promised to give Mater a helicopter ride if he won the Piston Cup.

In the morning Lightning went in Doc's garage. He discovered that Doc was really The Hudson Hornet, a famous race car from many years ago.

Lightning and Sally went for a drive along Route 66. Sally told him that she used to be a big city lawyer in California, but she wasn't happy there. She found her happiness in Radiator Springs. She said that she fell in love with the town and the beautiful country that surrounded it. Radiator Springs used to be a popular place to visit, before the Interstate was built. Then the town got bypassed and nobody visited anymore.

Cars, Page 3

Doc told Lightning that he didn't want anything to do with racing anymore. After the big crash of '54, the racing industry had given up on him, even after he was put back together again. They never gave him another chance to race. After that Doc vowed never go back to racing.

After Lightning finished the road, he went to all the shops. He got tires from Luigi, fuel from the organic fuel van, and a new paint and stickers from another shop. He even fixed all the neon signs in town, so it could light up just like in the good old days. Lightning discovered that he loved the town. This was his town, too.

Then the media discovered that Lightning was in Radiator Springs. Mack was happy to find Lightning and drove him to the race in California. Sally found out it was Doc who alerted the media. Sally was not happy with Doc. Mater also missed his friend.

For the big race in California, Lightning let Mack be his pit crew. The race began, but Lightning's heart just wasn't in the race. Then he heard a familiar voice. It was Doc with the rest of his friends from Radiator Springs. They inspired Lightning to get back in the race and try to win.



Then it is discovered that The Hudson Hornet was Lightning's Crew Chief. The crowd went wild.

Lightning blew a tire with only ten laps to go. Luigi and Guido changed the tire in record time. Lightning remembered the lessons that Doc taught him and got out in front of the race. Chick knocked The King out of the race. Instead of finishing and

winning the race, Lightning went back to help The King cross the finish line. He may not have won the race, but he won the respect of everyone in the stadium. Lightning learned that being kind and decent to others was more important than winning.

Dinaco was impressed with the integrity of Lightning and offered to be his sponsor, but Lightning turned them down. He did the right thing and stayed with Rusteze, the guys who gave him his first break. Lightning did get Dinaco to give Mater a helicopter ride.

After the race, Lightning sent other cars to Radiator Springs. He decided to live there, too, which brought a lot of visitors to town. And that made life better for everyone. ❤️



6th Grade Curriculum Guide Book Summary

Book title: *Horton Hears a Who*

Author: Dr. Seuss

Main characters: Horton the elephant, the Whos, Kangaroo and her baby, The Wickersham Brothers and the other jungle creatures.

Executive summary: When Horton hears tiny voices on a speck of dust, he fights to protect them because “a person is a person no matter how small.” A person has inherent worth, not because of their appearance or where they live, but because they are a human being.

Detailed summary: As an elephant named Horton baths in a cool pool of water in the jungle, he hears a voice. He doesn't see anyone else around. The only thing he sees is a small speck of dust. Perhaps it



is because of his big ears that he can hear the small voice on that small speck of dust. Because Horton cares about all people no matter how small, he worries that the dust might fall into the pool, and the small people on the dust might be hurt. So he carefully places the speck of dust on top of a clover flower. When a kangaroo with its

baby in its pouch hops by Horton, they make fun of him for worrying about a speck of dust. They call him a fool. Then they intentionally make big splashes in the pool. Horton grabs the flower with the speck on it and runs through the jungle looking for a safe place to put it. News quickly spreads throughout the jungle that Horton is talking to a speck of dust. Others immediately label him as crazy. But Horton is determined to protect these tiny people. Even though others can't see or hear them, these people deserve to be treated humanely. Horton repeats that “a person is a person, no matter how small.”

Continued on Back



Horton Hears a Who, Page 2

A tiny voice, whom Horton discovers is the Mayor, tells Horton of his community, called Whoville, with houses and churches and stores. Then two monkeys named “the Wickersham Brothers” snatch the clover with the speck on it and give it to an eagle. That eagle flies away with the flower in its beak. Horton follows the bird through day and night, desperate to protect the tiny Whos in Whoville. Then the eagle drops the clover in a field full of clover, each flower identical to the one holding the tiny Whos.

Anxious to find his friends, Horton picks the flowers, one by one. Finally after picking millions of flowers, he finds the one that holds the speck of dust with the Whos. The Whoville mayor tells Horton of the troubles they’ve endured. He begs Horton to continue to protect them. Then Kangaroo and her little kangaroo, along with others from the jungle again accuse Horton of being crazy, talking to people who aren’t there. Again they snatch the clover and threaten to boil it in oil. Horton begs them not to hurt the Whos, and he encourages the Whoville Mayor to get all the Whos to make noise, so the others can hear them too. But the other jungle animals still cannot hear the Whos.



They tie Horton up and beat him. Horton doesn’t think of himself, he thinks of the Whos, and pleads with the Whoville Mayor to make sure everyone is making as much noise as possible. The Whos play instruments and bang on cans and kettles. Horton can hear them, but the kangaroos and the Wickersham Brothers cannot. So the Mayor runs through the town to make sure every one of

the Whos is making some kind of noise. He finally finds one small Who not making a sound. The Mayor grabs the small Who and climbs up to the top of a tower. He holds him in the air, and the small Who yells, “Yopp!”

This time the kangaroo hears it. The little kangaroo hears it too. Everyone hears it! They realize that Horton was telling the truth. There were small beings living on the dust speck on that flower. And the kangaroos and the other jungle creatures all vow that they too will protect the Whos. Because the Whos are people too, no matter how small. ❤️