

## Grade 8 - 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 by practicing goodness, courage, justice, common sense, balance, and forgiveness in our everyday lives,
- To understand that all people have deep worth, to give and receive love, and to give and receive forgiveness.

### 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 175)

[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**.

## SECTION 1: FORGIVENESS ~ WHAT, WHY, and HOW

The first six lessons will define what forgiveness is and is not, the benefits and challenges of forgiveness, the benefits of forgiving, the consequences of not forgiving, the widespread effects on communities, how to forgive, and the virtues associated with forgiveness.

### LESSON 1: WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

This first lesson will focus on defining what forgiveness is and is not. It is important to present the meaning of forgiveness fully and accurately to help the students choose wisely with regard to forgiveness. *\*Please refer back to the introduction of this curriculum for the complete description of forgiveness to present to your students.*

Please help your students understand what forgiveness is and isn't; that it is a choice and a gift. The students must be allowed to freely choose or not choose forgiveness for themselves. The specific benefits of forgiveness will be more fully described in Lesson Five: The Gift of Forgiveness and throughout several of the lessons in this curriculum.

Here is the definition of forgiveness given by Robert Enright:

*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.<sup>4</sup>*

Before forgiveness can occur, we must first recognize and acknowledge that an unjust act has been committed. It is important to note that forgiveness is not condoning, excusing, forgetting, living with, denying, or diminishing the injustice or the hurt that it caused. Rather we recognize that while the hurtful act itself is wrong, the action is separate from the wrongdoer himself. Therefore, the action does not devalue the wrongdoer's humanity; he or she is still a person worthy of the gifts of forgiveness. We choose to view this person through new eyes of love and compassion to see him as a human being. We offer goodness and love as selfless, virtuous gifts, even though the wrongdoer has not earned nor deserves such gifts; we offer them out of agape or selfless love. Offering forgiveness involves the use of the virtues of humility, courage, agape love, justice, temperance, and patience. A virtue is goodness that starts within a person (his inner thoughts and feelings), and then flows out to others for the good of others. When we offer forgiveness, it does *not* mean that we should subject or leave ourselves vulnerable to further hurt or injustice by the same person. We can offer goodness and love without having direct contact with the wrongdoer. Although reconciliation is a desired outcome of forgiveness, it is not a prerequisite for it; for the protection of the victim, it should be approached with common sense, justice, and a *balanced* sense of self-esteem.

#### **Lesson 1 Learning and Behavioral Objectives**

In this lesson, the students will:

- To prepare for Lesson Two, read the first section of the story, *The Year the Swallows Came Early* by

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<sup>4</sup> Enright, R.D. (2001) Forgiveness Is a Choice: A Step-By-Step Process for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope *American Psychological Association (APA)*, 133.

Kathryn Fitzmaurice (pp. 1-108, From “Coconut Flakes” to the end of “Saltines and Liquid Tylenol”)

- Discuss what forgiveness is, is not, and what it means to forgive, while expressing their fears and apprehensions towards forgiveness.
- Understand the definition of forgiveness, including what it is and is not.
- Differentiate between forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Understand that reconciliation is not prerequisite to forgiving.
- Know that forgiveness is a choice and a selfless, (virtuous) gift.
- Complete the Lesson 1 activity. See the “Activity: Defining Forgiveness” section for further instructions.

### Lesson 1 Materials

For this Lesson, you will need:

- 1 Notebook per student to use as their Private Journals (The journals will be used throughout the curriculum)
- Two different colored pens
- The book, *The Year the Swallows Came Early* by Kathryn Fitzmaurice

### Lesson 1 Procedures

To complete this lesson, please:

1. \*If you have not already done so, copy and distribute the Discussion Questions page at the end of Lesson 2, p. 21, as an advance organizer for the first section of reading. Assign the first part of the story, *The Year the Swallows Came Early* by Kathryn Fitzmaurice, pp. 1-108, From “Coconut Flakes” to the end of “Saltines and Liquid Tylenol” to be completed *before beginning* Lesson Two: Virtues of Forgiveness.
2. Introduce today's lesson. (Today, we will be discussing the meaning of forgiveness. We will first start with an activity.) Please wait to define forgiveness – this will be done during the activity in the next step.
3. Conduct the Activity “Defining Forgiveness” (See details below).

*\*Note: You may also choose to assign the reading a week or two prior to beginning the curriculum to give students more time to read this first section of the book. Or instead of having students read it on their own, you could choose to read the first section of the book aloud in class prior to beginning Lesson 2.*

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### Lesson 1 Activity: Defining Forgiveness

*\*Note: please conduct the following activity BEFORE introducing the definition of forgiveness.*

*\*Students will need two different colored pens (or pencils, or highlighters) for this activity.*

Start by introducing the idea of using *private* journals. Explain that these will be their own private reflections and thoughts and will not be shared with anyone – classmates, parents, teachers, etc. The journals are an opportunity for them to release their thoughts, ideas, emotions, etc. in a way that is meaningful and useful to themselves. They will not have to worry about proper grammar, punctuation, complete sentences, or spelling, but can simply write freely. They should not worry about how their writing sounds as long as it is written in a way that makes sense to them when they go back to read it later. Discuss the many benefits of journal writing. You (or the class) may want to come up with a “100 Benefits of Journaling” list, such as the one found at this link: [http://www.appleseeds.org/100\\_Journaling.htm](http://www.appleseeds.org/100_Journaling.htm). These private journals will be used throughout the forgiveness curriculum.

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Next, write the word “forgiveness” across a large sheet of paper or on the chalk board. Ask students to also write “forgiveness” at the top of the first page of their journals. Have them write a definition of forgiveness below it, including what forgiveness is, is not, and the virtues\* it entails.

*\*Note: You may explain what a virtue is by giving the definition from the introduction of this lesson. Or instead of virtues, you could say, “list examples of goodness needed to forgive, such as patience.” We will further discuss the meaning of the virtues specific to forgiveness in Lesson Two.*

Now discuss together the actual definition of forgiveness *from the introduction of this curriculum and Lesson One*, listing what it is, is not, and the virtues in entails underneath the word “forgiveness” written on the large sheet of paper. (Forgiveness can include other virtues besides the ones we have identified as the seven main virtues. If the students list other virtues, please show/discuss how each is related to one or more of the seven main virtues.) The students should copy this list into their journals using a different colored pen than the color of their original definition. Lastly, have students go back to revise their previous definition based on the definition generated from the class discussion.

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## **Lesson 1 In a Christian Context**

This section is to serve as a guide for those seeking to teach forgiveness within a Christian context. Please feel free to use, alter, add to, combine with, or take from the general ideas provided here in whatever manner you wish. Following are some relevant Scripture verse(s) and a brief meditation. Some suggestions would be to incorporate this into the general forgiveness lesson above, use it as a discussion starter, journal reflection, or some other activity.

### Matthew 26:27-29 (New International Version)

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

For us Christians, forgiveness takes on a deeper meaning than for others. It is the new covenant with Our Lord to redeem us from our sins and from the stain of original sin. What does this new covenant mean to us as sinners? Why is this new covenant so important? How does this help us to see the full meaning of forgiveness?

The forgiveness of God is unconditional. He loves us always, and always wants us to come back to Him when we have sinned and turned away from Him. He forgives us right away, but it is up to us to reconcile with Him by turning away from our sins and being obedient to Him. Our Father knows that when we sin, we have caused wounds to others, to ourselves, and have damaged our relationship with Him and others. That is why He wants to heal us, our wounds, and our damaged relationships. Like the prodigal son we have been disobedient and have taken ourselves far away from Our Father. He is always waiting with open, loving arms for us to return home. Reconciliation and turning away from our sinful ways are steps towards this healing and returning home.

## LESSON 2: THE VIRTUES OF FORGIVENESS

### Hot Cranberry Apple Jelly Toast With Pineapple

Virtue can be defined as goodness that starts from within a person, then flows outward to others for the good of others. The seven main virtues involved with forgiveness are agape or selfless love, justice, courage, wisdom, temperance, patience, and humility. Agape/selfless love is the primary or most important of all of these. Although, these are the main virtues of forgiveness on which all the other virtues are based, there are many other virtues which are exercised in the practice of forgiveness, such as generosity and understanding. Other virtues and forms of goodness exercised in forgiving are all linked to the seven main virtues of forgiveness.

These virtues should always be practiced in balance with each other, so one is not overshadowed by another. For example, an overdeveloped sense of humility, without a sense of justice or courage, can lead one to become a doormat for or to be used by others. An overzealous sense of courage, without wisdom, may prompt us to act foolishly and without restraint, causing further injury or jeopardy in the face of danger. Cold, hard justice without love and wisdom seeks mere vengeance, which perpetuates even greater injustice, pain, and suffering rather than healing or prevention of further injustice. Without the lens of love and wisdom, justice fails to see a remedy to the injustice and thereby becomes the source of its own demise.

**Humility:** Pride often gets in the way of forgiving. One needs to be humble in forgiving to let go of his own wants and needs to revenge, bitterness, and anger, and to focus on others rather than on oneself. This selfless focus on others' needs helps us to give agape love without expecting anything for ourselves. It helps us to be more understanding and to develop a sense of empathy.

**Courage:** Courage is needed to let go of the fear of changing, the fear of letting go of that which is familiar to us. Courage helps us to tackle the obstacles and challenges of forgiving. It allows us to see past our fear, the challenges, and the obstacles to look forward to the good that can come from forgiveness. It helps us to make a commitment to forgiving.

**Agape Love:** Part of forgiving is giving a selfless gift of love for the good of the one who hurt us, even though they have done nothing to earn or deserve this act of love. It means we show generosity in giving compassion, benevolence, mercy, and kindness. In giving this kind of love, we do not expect anything in return. We give for the good of the other.

**Justice:** Forgiveness is needed when an injustice has occurred. Forgiveness, in part, seeks to turn the injustice back towards justice. When forgiving, justice must be sought in order to keep from becoming a “doormat” for others to trample and so others do not take advantage of our kindness. That is why you can forgive without entering back into a relationship with or having further contact with the offender if it puts your well-being at risk. A fair resolution, and ways to build mutual trust and respect, come from seeking justice.

**Temperance:** Self-discipline and self-control are needed to stay focused on the goals of forgiveness, especially when it becomes difficult, one needs to practice, practice, practice to exercise forgiveness and virtues. Temperance keeps us strong in our commitment to forgive.

**Wisdom:** Wisdom is needed in forgiving so that one can use common sense and rational

thinking to determine what is just and what is unjust and to determine whether or not it is safe to reconcile a relationship or if it is better to forgive “from a distance.”

Patience: When we forgive, we often need to exercise patience and understanding towards our offender. We also need to have a lot of patience with ourselves as we struggle to let go of anger and fear to give agape love to our offender. We need to be patient enough to allow the process of forgiveness and the changing of our hearts, minds, and attitudes to take place in it's *own* time; it cannot be forced by our own will or intentions.

## **Lesson 2 Learning and Behavioral Objectives**

The students will:

- Understand the meaning of virtue.
- Know and understand the main virtues involved with forgiveness – agape or selfless love, courage, justice, wisdom, temperance, patience, and humility.
- Understand how forgiveness is a great selfless and virtuous gift of oneself in agape/charitable love.
- Understand how agape love is the highest form of love and what it all entails.
- Discuss the concepts and ideas from the “Discussion Questions” section.

## **Lesson 2 Materials**

For this Lesson you will need:

- Flip chart or large sheet of paper to hang up.
- Several different colored markers.
- Students will each need two different colored pens/pencils and paper or their journals.

## **Lesson 2 Procedures**

To complete this lesson, please:

1. Introduce the lesson. (We will talk a bit more about what forgiveness means by discussing the virtues involved with forgiving.)
2. Define virtue and list the seven virtues involved in forgiveness.
3. Conduct the “**H**ot **C**ranberry **A**pple **J**elly **T**oast **W**ith **P**ineapple” Activity. (See instructions below)

After they have read the first section of *The Year the Swallows Came Early*, please:

4. *Optional:* Give students time (in small groups or individually) to discuss the “Discussion Questions for Lesson Two” at the end of this lesson, referencing the section of the book, *The Year The Swallows Came Early*, which was assigned during or before Lesson One.
5. Conduct a class discussion on these same Discussion Questions.
6. Assign Section 2, pp. 109-168 of the book, *The Year the Swallows Came Early*, at any time between the end of this Lesson and *prior to* starting “Lesson Five: The Gift of Forgiveness” along with the Discussion Questions as an advance organizer on p.38. (You may want to assign the next section of the story closer to the time when you will be completing Lesson Five so that it is fresh in the students' minds.)

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## **Lesson 2 Activity: Hot Cranberry Apple Jelly Toast With Pineapple**

1. On a flip chart or large sheet of paper, using different colored markers, write all seven of the virtues of forgiveness in many different, random, and scattered directions and positions.
2. Allow the students to copy the words and write what they think each virtue means in their journals

- or on a sheet of paper.
3. For each virtue, have students share what they wrote before you read the description from the introduction. As you describe each virtue, take time to discuss it and have students add the actual definitions to the same page with a different colored pen/pencil.
  4. After discussing and defining each virtue, circle the first letter of each word on the virtues list – Letters “A” for Agape Love, “J” for Justice, “C” for Courage, “W” for Wisdom, “T” for Temperance, “P” for Patience, and “H” for Humility.
  5. Lead the students in a brainstorming activity to come up with a mnemonic device which will help them remember the seven virtues. For example, use the first letter of each word to come up with a silly word or phrase such as, **H**ot **C**ranberry **A**pple **J**elly **T**oast **W**ith **P**ineapple (This goes with the theme of the book). You may choose to use this acronym or devise another with your students.
  6. Post or keep the acronym in a prominent and visible location to refer back to throughout the curriculum. *Suggestions for enrichment: Write or draw a representation of the acronym in their journals or on a sheet of paper to make a class or individual poster(s).*
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### **Lesson 2 Discussion Questions:**

Story referenced: *The Year The Swallows Came Early* by Kathryn Fitzmaurice, Section 1, pp. 1-108

The following questions will pertain to concepts taught in Lessons One and Two.

1. What are some common apprehensions, misconceptions, and misunderstandings about forgiveness, including your own?  
*(Forgiving is a sign of weakness because you are not standing up for your rights. If I forgive, I condone, deny, excuse, diminish, pardon, or put up with the hurtful actions of the offender and the pain it has caused. I have to forget the offense and pretend like it never happened. I must continue to be friends with or spend time with the person who hurt/offended me.)*
2. What is forgiveness?  
*(The process and challenge of letting go of our anger, resentment, and pain. We offer the one who hurt us a selfless, virtuous gift of love and compassion while recognizing his or her inherent worth as a person.)*
3. What must we first realize or acknowledge before we can decide to forgive?  
*(We must recognize and accept that the person treated us unfairly or unjustly and that we do not deserve to be treated this way. Their unjust actions were wrong and hurtful, but they are still a human being who is worthy of love, compassion, and mercy.)*
4. In the story, can you identify any injustices which have occurred so far? What were these injustices and which characters were treated unfairly or unjustly?  
*(Groovy and her mother were treated unfairly by her father who gambled and lost Groovy's inheritance money that she was going to use for cooking school. Frankie was treated unfairly by his mother who left him and has not returned for two years without any explanation.)*
5. In the first section of the book, when Frankie accidentally sprayed water on Marisol's drawing, was that an injustice that needed to be forgiven? Why or why not?  
*(No, it was just an accident, something that could simply be excused or pardoned.)*
6. What do you think will happen later in the story? Do you think any of these characters who were wronged might choose forgiveness? Which ones and why do you think so?
7. If any of the characters in the story choose to excuse, condone, put up with, deny, diminish, or

forget the hurtful act, will this be the same as forgiving? How would any of those actions prevent them from forgiving?

*(No, it would not be the same as forgiving; When we forgive, we do not excuse, condone, put up with, deny, diminish, or forget the hurtful act. They will not be able to forgive until they can recognize and admit that a real injustice has occurred. One will not see any need to forgive until he or she can see the hurtful act for what it really is.)*

8. What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?

*(Forgiveness is when you choose to let go of feelings of revenge and bitterness, which were caused by an injustice and to which you have a right and a natural tendency to feel. As you let go of these negative feelings you are healed and become ready to offer unearned gifts of mercy and compassion to your offender. You may or may not enter back into a relationship with that person after you forgive. Forgiveness is necessary for reconciliation, but reconciliation is NOT necessary for forgiveness. Reconciling a relationship takes two people coming together in an effort to rebuild mutual trust, respect, and friendship.)*

9. When and why would it *not* be a good idea to reconcile with the person whom you forgive? Give some examples.

*(You must use wisdom or common sense to determine if it is safe to enter back into a relationship with someone who has hurt you – can this person be trusted or do the risks outweigh the benefits? For example, if someone continues to say hurtful things or constantly puts you down, you may forgive this person, as well as end the relationship altogether.)*

10. Do you think any of the characters in the story may be able to or even should reconcile with those who hurt them? What would need to happen in this story for the characters to re-build safe and trusting relationships?

*(Reconciling relationships is always a good and desired outcome of forgiveness. Even though it is not always possible, it could be possible in this story if Groovy's father is repentant and will take steps to try to stop gambling, it would be safe for Groovy and her mother to trust him again and work on rebuilding the relationship. If Frankie's mom can explain her absence and shows that she still loves and cares for him and will not abandon him again, it would be safe for Frankie to begin trusting her again.)*

11. What are the main virtues needed in forgiveness? And why are they important in forgiving? *Humility, Courage, Agape Love, Justice, Temperance, Wisdom, and Patience – see descriptions above in the introduction.*

12. What is agape love? How is agape love the highest form of love?

*(It is a selfless love in which you give without expecting anything in return, solely for the good of the other. It is the highest and purest form of love in that it is unconditional, meaning it does not depend on or change with outside circumstances. Even when life situations change, we can still give agape love. Even when it goes against our feelings and emotions, we are still free to give agape love; we do not need to like someone in order to give them agape love. It can even be given to one who is unreceptive or does not want our love.)*

13. Do you think any of the characters in the story possess or have shown the virtues necessary in forgiving? How so?

*(Groovy showed a lot of patience and understanding with her mom while waiting to find out why her daddy was put in jail. Frankie showed a sense of justice when he encouraged Groovy to try to get her mom to tell her what was happening and offered to go with her to talk to her mom.)*

## **Lesson 2 In a Christian Context**

This section is to serve as a guide for those seeking to teach forgiveness within a Christian context. Please feel free to use, alter, add to, combine with, or take from the general ideas provided here in whatever manner you wish. Following are Scripture verses and related activities. Some suggestions would be to incorporate this into the general forgiveness lesson above, use it as a discussion starter, journal reflection, or some other activity.

### **Humility**

*Jas 4:10* Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (JKJV)

*1Pet 5:6* Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. (NKJV)

*Gen 32:10* I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant. (NKJV)

*Matt 21:5* Tell the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. (NKJV)

*Matt 11:29* Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (NKJV)

*Luke 1:48* For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant.

Luke 17: 7-11 (New International Version) "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' "

### **Agape Love**

*Matt 5:44* But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. (NKJV)

*Luke 6:35* But love your enemies, do good and lend hoping for nothing in return. (NKJV)

*Luke 6:27* Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. (NKJV)

*Jer 31:3* Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. (NKJV)

*1Jn 4:18* but perfect love casts our fear, because fear involves torment. (NKJV)

*Prov 10:12* Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins. (NKJV)

*1Jn 2:5* But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. (NKJV)

*1Cor 13:4* Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy. (NKJV)

*Col 3:14* But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.  
(NKJV)

**Activity:** In small groups, pairs, or as a class, see how many times you can find the phrase or commandment, “love one another” in the Bible. You can split up sections of the Bible between the different groups to narrow down the search. Some possible answers below:

*John 13:34* (NKJV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

*John 15:17* (NKJV) These things I command you, that you love one another.

*Rom 13:8* (NKJV) Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

*1Th 4:9* (NKJV) But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.

*1Pet 1:22* (NKJV) Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.

*1Jn 3:11* (NKJV) For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

*1Jn 3:23* (NKJV) that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

*1Jn 4:7* (NKJV) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

*1Jn 4:12* (NKJV) If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

**Activity:** In small groups, pairs, or as a class, see how many times you can find the phrase, “love your neighbor as yourself” in the Bible. You may want to narrow the search by giving certain sections of the Bible to each group. Some possible answers below:

*Lev 19:18* (NKJV) You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

*Matt 19:19* (NKJV) ‘...Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your

neighbor as yourself.'

*Matt 22:39 (NKJV)* And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.

*Mark 12:31 (NKJV)* You shall love your neighbor as yourself: There is no other commandment greater than these.

*Rom 13:9 (NKJV)* For the commandments, “*You shall not commit adultery,*” “*You shall not murder,*” “*You shall not steal,*” “*You shall not bear false witness,*” “*You shall not covet,*” and if there is any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”

*Gal 5:14 (NKJV)* For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Love your neighbor as yourself.

*Jas 2:8 (NKJV)* If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”

### **Justice**

*Eccl 5:8 (NKJV)* If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter.

*Ezek 45:9 (NKJV)* Remove violence and plundering, execute justice and righteousness, and stop dispossessing My people.

*Ps 140:12 (NKJV)* I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor.

*2Sam 8:15 (NKJV)* and David administered judgment and justice to all his people.

*1Chr 18:14 (NKJV)* So David reigned over all Israel, and administered judgment and justice to all his people.

*Ps 82:3 (NKJV)* Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy.

*Ps 101:1 (NKJV)* I will sing of mercy and justice; to You, O Lord, I will sing praises.

*Hos12:6 (NKJV)* observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually.

### **Temperance**

*1Cor 13:4-8 (NKJV)* Love *suffers long* and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; *bears all things*, believes all things, hopes all things, *endures all things*.

*Romans 2:3-4* (English Standard Version)

Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

*Romans 3:25* (New International Version)

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—

James 1:4 (New International Version)

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

**Wisdom**

*Prov 1:5* (NKJV) A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.

*Prov 10:8* (NKJV) The wise in heart will receive commands, but an orating fool will fall.

*Prov 16:21* (NKJV) The wise in heart will be called prudent, and sweetness of the lips increases learning.

*Prov 3:7* (NKJV) Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil.

*Prov 9:9* (NKJV) Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser.

*Prov 14:16* (NKJV) A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool razes and is self-confident.

*Prov 17:10* (NKJV) Reproof is more effective for a wise man than a hundred blows on a fool.

*Prov 24:5* (NKJV) A wise man is strong, yes, a man of knowledge increases strength.

*Matt 7:24* (NKJV) Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

**Patience**

*2Th 3:5* (NKJV) Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

*Rom 12:12* (NKJV) rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in

prayer

*Proverbs 19:11* (New International Version)

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

*Ecclesiastes 7:8* New International Version (NIV)

The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.

*Luke 8:14-16* (New King James Version)

Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.

*Luke 21:19* (New King James Version) By your patience possess your souls.

*Romans 2:6-8* (English Standard Version)

He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

*Romans 8:25* (Amplified Bible)

But if we hope for what is still unseen by us, we wait for it with patience and composure.

*Romans 15:4-5* (New King James Version)

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another

*2 Corinthians 6:5-6* (New International Version)

in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love;

*Galatians 5:22-23* (New International Version)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

## **Courage**

*Num 13:20* (NKJV) Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land.

*2Sam 10:12 and 1Chr 19:13* (NKJV) Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God.

*Ezra 10:4* (NKJV) We also will be with you. Be of good courage and do it.

*Ps 27:14* (NKJV) Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.

*Ps 41:24* (NKJV) Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord.

*Is 41:6* (NKJV) Everyone helped his neighbor, and said to his brother, "Be of good courage."

## Discussion Questions for Lesson Two:

Story referenced: *The Year The Swallows Came Early* by Kathryn Fitzmaurice, Section 1, pp. 1-108

1. What are some common apprehensions, misconceptions, and misunderstandings about forgiveness, including your own?
2. What is forgiveness?
3. What must we first realize or acknowledge before we can decide to forgive?
4. In the story, can you identify any injustices which have occurred so far? What were these injustices and which characters were treated unfairly or unjustly?
5. In the first section of the book, when Frankie accidentally sprayed water on Marisol's drawing, was that an injustice that needed to be forgiven? Why or why not?
6. What do you think will happen later in the story? Do you think any of these characters who were wronged might choose forgiveness? Which ones and why do you think so?
7. If any of the characters in the story choose to excuse, condone, put up with, deny, diminish, or forget the hurtful act, will this be the same as forgiving? How would any of those actions prevent them from forgiving?
8. What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?
9. When and why would it *not* be a good idea to reconcile with the person who you forgive? Give some examples.
10. Do you think any of the characters in the story may be able to or even should reconcile with those who hurt them? What would need to happen in this story for the characters to re-build safe and trusting relationships?
11. What are the main virtues needed in forgiveness? And why are they important in forgiving?
12. What is agape love? How is agape love the highest form of love?
13. Do you think any of the characters in the story possess or have shown the virtues necessary in forgiving? How so?

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Curriculum Guide Book Summary

**Book Title:** *The Year the Swallows Came Early*

**Author:** Kathryn Fitzmaurice

**Main characters:** Eleanor “Groovy” Robinson, Frankie, Luis

**Executive Summary:** Groovy learns the importance of love and forgiveness when her father lost her college savings gambling at the racetrack. She learns to love people for who they are even when they make mistakes.

**Detailed summary:** Eleven-year-old Eleanor “Groovy” Robinson’s life changed the day Officer Miguel took her father away in a police car. She didn’t know why her father was arrested. There was a lot of whispering. Officer Miguel told her to go tell her mother, who worked at a hair salon, that they arrested her father. Eleanor’s best friend Frankie offered to go with, but she went alone.

When Groovy told her mom what happened to her dad, she found out it was her mom that asked the police to take him away. She couldn’t understand why her mom would do such a thing, and her mom wouldn’t tell her. Groovy went to the Swallow Shop & Ferry to talk to Frankie. She helped Frankie’s



stepbrother Luis make the Swallow’s famous chicken tacos. Luis took care of Frankie since his mother left.

Groovy didn’t mind helping Luis cook at the Swallow, because she loved to cook. She wanted to be a chef and write cook-books when she grew up. She told Frankie that her mother was the one who asked the police to take her dad away.

A little later, Luis told Frankie there was a letter for him on the counter, but when Frankie saw it, he just tore it up and ran outside. It was from his mother, who had left on a vacation with his step father two years ago and never came back. Frankie never discussed the sadness and anger he felt over his mother leaving him. He kept it inside, which gave him stomach aches.

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## ***The Year the Swallows Came Early*, Page 2**

Groovy found Frankie sitting on the rocks next to the ocean. Mr. Tom, an old homeless man, was playing his guitar next to Frankie. Groovy encouraged Frankie to read the letters from his mom. Mr. Tom said, "You gotta forgive, boy. Otherwise you keep that with you."

Frankie started up the dinghy to go to the far end of the jetty. Groovy went with her friend even though she wanted to go home and talk to her mother. The fog was thick and it was getting dark and difficult to see. Groovy was worried about her friend. Frankie said he had to get something. It was a metal box filled with postcards his mother had sent him. On their way back, Frankie stopped the boat and dropped the box over the side of the boat.

When Groovy got back to her house, her mother had gone back to the salon for an appointment. Groovy cleaned the house and made dinner for her mother. When her mom got home, she said she was tired and wanted to go out to eat somewhere, even though Groovy had already made dinner.

At the restaurant, Groovy's mother told her about the first Eleanor Robinson, Groovy's great-grandmother, whom she was named after. She told her how the first Eleanor Robinson was a writer and loved books. When she died she left Groovy her favorite possessions and \$25,000 that her mother was saving for Groovy to go to cooking school someday. Groovy's mother told Groovy that her father had taken the money and lost it all betting on horses at the racetrack.

Hearing what her father had done made Groovy feel sick to her stomach. He had taken away her future. But inside Groovy felt more sad than angry.

After her mother left for work the next morning, Groovy went to the Swallow to help with a big order of Chicken Tacos. She told Frankie and Luis the whole story. Luis told Groovy she could work at the Swallow, and he would pay her. He also said he would sell her chocolate-covered strawberries, so she could make money for cooking school. As they talked, Frankie's mother Zoila walked into the shop. She wanted to go somewhere private and have a conversation with Frankie, who was not happy to see her.

Groovy watched through the glass door of the Swallow as Frankie and his mother talked outside. His mother tried giving him a white envelope, but he refused to take it. It looked like she was really sorry. Frankie walked away and she leaned against the taxi, tears running down her face.



When the order of strawberries came in, Luis delivered it to Groovy's house. She spent all afternoon making chocolate-covered strawberries and brought them to the Swallow to sell. Marisol, who drew pictures with chalk on the sidewalk outside the Swallow, bought the first one. Groovy's chocolate-covered strawberry business really took off. She spent a lot of her free time making the strawberries and carrying them down to the Swallow.

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## ***The Year the Swallows Came Early*, Page 3**

Groovy talked Frankie into helping her get the box of things from the original Eleanor Robinson down from the closet shelf. Her mother told her it was hers and that her great-grandmother had said that Groovy would know what to do with it. In the box was a letter to Groovy: *“I leave to you all of my belongings, everything that meant something to me. I regret not having known you, but I’m certain I would have loved you.”*

Frankie and Groovy looked through the box. There was a news clipping about her grandmother being an author and three unpublished stories in the box. Her great-grandmother had told her mom that she would know what to do with them. As they looked through the box, Groovy told Frankie that she wanted to talk to her dad, to hear his side of what happened.

In the box they also found a key to a safe-deposit box. They took the key to the bank to see what was



inside box 173. She hoped she would find the money; that her dad did not take it after all. But when she opened the box, it was empty, except for a couple lottery tickets and a bank book with the total amount marked \$0. Feelings of sadness were replaced by feelings of anger, and Groovy didn’t like feeling so angry at her father. After that Groovy didn’t want to be called Groovy anymore. She told everyone to call her Eleanor instead. She

avoided talking to anyone and she stopped cooking and making chocolate-covered strawberries.

After days of moping around the house, Groovy went to the Swallow for a churro. She saw Frankie at the end of the dock. Then she saw Mr. Tom. He was in a boat about to sail off to Santa Catalina. Before he left he said to Groovy, “You don’t want what Frankie has. All that anger will turn you to stone.” Mr. Tom wanted Groovy to forgive her father. Groovy knew that forgiveness was the right thing to do, she just wasn’t ready to do it yet.

Groovy’s mom tried to get her to make more chocolate-covered strawberries to sell at the Swallow, but she wasn’t interested. She walked down to the Swallow to see Frankie. He told her the first swallow scout was on the island and the others would be there by the end of the week. They were early this year. Frankie also told her about a letter that Luis gave him from his mother. He opened it this time and found out his mother had been away for so long, because she had been waiting for her green card, so she could live legally in the United States. The card had come and she would be coming back soon.

Groovy spent all her time at home. One day Marisol’s little brother Felix came to the door. He said Marisol sent him to get Groovy to come to the Swallow. It was important. Groovy went, and Marisol showed her a chocolate-covered strawberry with a small bird drawn on it with white chocolate. It was beautiful. Marisol told Groovy she could use her design on the berries if she wanted to start making them again. The bird gave Groovy a feeling of hope. She would make the berries again and use Marisol’s design.

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## ***The Year the Swallows Came Early***, Page 4

A few days later, as Groovy walked over to the Swallow, Frankie came running out and told her the swallows would be there any minute. They saw a blur in the distance. The swallows were back. They flew 7,500 miles to come back to the same place every year.

It was the busiest day ever at the Swallow. Groovy helped bag purchases for Luis as he checked them out. Then she saw Mr. Tom come through the line. He had some fishing supplies, a cream soda and



some batteries. Luis took the bag from Groovy and put the supplies into the bag without ringing them up on the register. He handed the bag to Mr. Tom. Groovy asked Luis why he didn't charge Mr. Tom. Luis said Tom didn't have any money. As he was leaving, Mr. Tom looked at Groovy and told her to thank her Dad, tell him that he was all settled in now. She didn't understand what he meant by that.

When she got home, she got a phone call from her dad. He said he was sorry. He said he had been writing her letters. Groovy's mother had not given her the letters. She asked her father what Mr. Tom, the homeless man, meant when he told her to tell him he was settled in now. Her father said Mr. Tom won the old trailer from him in a card game, but he actually let him win, so he would have a place to live. Her father told her that he should have done things differently.

When her mom got home, she didn't tell her about the call, but she somehow felt better. She wished Frankie's mom would come back soon and she wished her father would come home soon, too.

Spring break was over and Groovy had to go back to school. One afternoon while she had lunch with her mom at Marisol's father's restaurant, there was an earthquake. Everyone was fine, but they were very scared. After that she told her mom that she missed her dad and wanted him to come home. Groovy found out that her mother had actually called Officer Miguel to check on her father. Officer Miguel said he would be out of jail in one week.

Groovy helped clean up the mess the earthquake caused at the Swallow. She told Frankie that she had forgiven her father and that she missed him and wanted him to come home. Frankie told Groovy she had the biggest heart of anyone he knew. Frankie wanted to forgive his mom, but it was hard for him. Groovy repeated what Luis had said about Mr. Tom, "People are just who they are."

Frankie did forgive his mother and started to read the letters she sent. He was looking forward to when she would return to live with him. Groovy sold a lot of strawberries and started to cook again. Her mom even let her invite her dad over for dinner. Because so much had happened to them that year, Frankie and Groovy called it "the year the swallows came early." 💙