

middle school



Lesson 7 / April 28, 2024

Refreshing Forgiveness

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 7

Focus:

God's forgiveness refreshes us.

Lesson 7

Bible Basis:

Hosea 14:1-7

Lesson 7

Memory Verse:

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
—Psalm 51:10

Your students will discuss what happens when we have a guilty conscience.

Materials:

Internet access

Has anyone ever felt guilty? Well, that's a silly question! ALL of us have felt guilty when we knew we did something wrong.

The feeling of guilt after doing something wrong is designed to help us take action by apologizing and making the situation right.

➤ **Without sharing names, what is an example of you or someone you know not apologizing for wrongdoing? (Accept all reasonable answers.)**

There are many examples of famous or well-known people failing to apologize for wrongdoing. One example of this is rapper Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, making antisemitic comments in 2022. (You may want to clarify for students that antisemitic comments are prejudice comments about Jewish people.) He eventually apologized in 2023—but only after he lost over \$1.5 billion dollars in brand deals because of his comments. Even after the public apology, he continued making antisemitic comments, making the apology feel insincere.

➤ **What is an example of someone well-known or famous who hasn't apologized for something they've done wrong? What examples do we see in the news and the media of this? Please share respectfully. (Accept all reasonable answers.)**

➤ **How does it make you feel when people don't apologize or try to make things right when they've done something wrong? Why? (Accept all reasonable answers.)**

➤ **What is a good definition for a person's "conscience"? (One dictionary defines our "conscience" as the part of a person that judges whether what they've done is right or wrong.)**

➤ **Why does God give us a conscience?** (Our conscience is like a moral thermometer. It measures our actions against what we know is right. It keeps us from doing things that violate laws, disobeys authority, or treat others poorly.)

➤ **What should we do when we realize we've done something wrong? What solution does God give us when we sin?** (God asks us to humble ourselves and ask forgiveness when we sin. He is always ready to hear us when we confess.)

The Bible isn't just full of perfect people living perfect lives. It's a record of just how guilty we all can be when we disobey God. Let's see what happened when a man named Hosea warned Israel about their sin.

Source:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tylerroush/2023/03/25/kanye-west-who-lost-fortune-after-antisemitic-tirade-says-he-likes-jewish-people-again/?sh=4d52227231c8>

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Lesson 7 / April 28, 2024

Refreshing Forgiveness

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 7

Focus:

God's forgiveness refreshes us.

Lesson 7

Bible Basis:

Hosea summons Israel to return to God from sin.
Hosea 14:1-7

Lesson 7

Memory Verse:

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."
—Psalm 51:10

Materials:

- Pencils with erasers (1 per student)
- White paper (2 per student)
- Timer or smartphone with timer app

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home).

We know that everyone sins, but not everyone asks for forgiveness. Let's pretend that this piece of paper represents our actions. Let's start by writing down the word SIN in pencil on your paper. To show how serious it is, write the word with a dark, heavy pencil mark. Have your students write the word SIN on their papers, making sure the letters are quite large and noticeable.

Let's pretend that these three letters represent something you've done to disobey God. Take a moment to think of what that might represent. Give students a minute to think before continuing. **When I count to three, I'll give you 20 seconds to erase the word completely. Are you ready? One . . . two . . . three . . . GO!**

Set a timer on your smartphone or count down twenty seconds as your students try to erase the word SIN on their papers. When you're done, discuss these questions together:

- **Let's look at some of your papers. What do we notice about them?** (The student papers will be smudged, faded, and messy. It will be obvious that someone tried to erase the original mark.)
- **Many people try to cover up their sin by themselves. It seems to work at first glance, but when we look closer, we realize that the sin is still there. Why do we need Jesus' forgiveness?** (Only God can truly erase our sin. Without His grace, we are left with a messy, smudgy reminder of what we did.)

➤ **Many people don't confess unless they're caught. Why should we confess even if no one finds out?** (Jesus already knows our sins; we are not successful at “pretending” we're good. It's always right to humble ourselves quickly and ask for forgiveness.)

➤ **What happens when we ask God to step in?** (It changes everything. He is able to not only forgive us, but to completely restore us to a right relationship with Him.)

➤ **What should our response be when He forgives us?** (We should not treat His forgiveness like a free pass or a cheap gift. It cost Him His life, so we should change our behavior and respond to His love with a renewed commitment to do the right thing.)

Hand every student a brand new, fresh sheet of paper (or invite students to have their fresh papers ready at home)—the symbol of God's amazing grace and forgiveness. Have them crush the erased ones and toss them into the trash, one by one.

Now that you have this clean, brand new sheet of paper, let's imagine what we can do this week to remind us of God's forgiveness. Take a few minutes to allow your students to write down David's prayer from Psalm 51:10. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Encourage your students to post this sheet of paper in their bedroom to remind them to ask God for His forgiveness this week—even if no one else knows what they've done. **Hang this near your bed so that each night you can be honest with Jesus about your sin—and remember that He makes you clean!**

Given the nature of this week's lesson, it might be wise to end the lesson with individual prayer. If students express interest in a relationship with Jesus, be available to pray with them and share more about salvation and baptism.

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