

# FORGIVENESS



This term, we will be focusing on our school Gospel Virtue of FORGIVENESS.

Sharing the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, is a source of forgiveness, healing and grace.

## TALK ABOUT

### FORGIVENESS TOGETHER

With the grace and mercy shown to us by God, we are always able to start anew.

Everyone makes mistakes, it's part of being human. Sometimes our mistakes hurt others and then we need to say sorry. Sometimes mistakes made by other people hurt us. When this happens we need to be able to **forgive**. Forgiveness can be difficult, but without it a new start is impossible.

Talk together about:

- A time when you needed to say sorry
- A time you didn't say sorry but wish you had
- A time when you had to **forgive** someone who had hurt or upset you
- How it feels when you are given a new start because someone has forgiven you

Jesus said,  
"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."  
(Luke 23:34)



## SCRIPTURE



Let's reflect upon some of references made to forgiveness in the Bible including:

*'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.'*

(Luke 6:36)

*'Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.'*

(Luke 23:34)

*"You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call you."*

(Psalm 86:5)



## READ TOGETHER...

### Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

Zacchaeus was a little man. He was a tax collector and had become rich by making others pay lots of money in taxes to the Romans and to him. He didn't have many friends.

When Zacchaeus heard Jesus was in town, he wanted to see him. But Zacchaeus was short and Jesus was always surrounded by a crowd. So Zacchaeus decided to run ahead of the crowd and climb a sycamore tree. From there he could watch for Jesus. As Jesus drew closer, he held his breath excitedly until Jesus stopped right beneath his tree. Jesus looked straight up at him! "Zacchaeus," said Jesus with a smile, "come on down. I want to stay at your house today!"

Zacchaeus hopped down. "You are welcome at my house, Jesus," he said with a huge grin.

But others grumbled, muttering to each other. "Why does Jesus want to go home with the rich, cheating tax collector? He isn't good enough for Jesus to come and stay at his house."

Zacchaeus heard what the people were saying about him and he wanted to put things right. He turned to Jesus and said, "Master, here and now, I promise to give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone in taxes, I will pay them back four times that amount."

Zacchaeus wanted to turn over a new leaf because Jesus believed that everyone deserved a new start and now Zacchaeus believed it too!

Reflect: What does this story teach us about God's love?

Bible story based on Luke 19:2-10

## What is forgiveness?

- You give someone another chance after they have done something wrong so that they can make a new start
- You let go of your feelings of sadness, anger and revenge
- You show love for the person rather than focusing on the wrong
- You also forgive yourself so that you do not give up when you have done wrong or made a mistake, but have the courage to act differently and have faith that, with God's help, you can change.

One of the greatest modern day role models of forgiveness is Nelson Mandela. He believed that everyone should be treated the same. He chose to forgive others because he knew that forgiveness provides freedom.





## Role Models

### Desmond Tutu - (1931 - 2021)

Desmond Tutu was Archbishop of Capetown from 1986 to 1996. Throughout his life, Desmond Tutu worked tirelessly against apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid was a system that treated people differently because of the colour of their skin. They had to live where the government told them to, they were not allowed to vote, had to use separate transport, go to different beaches and use separate sports facilities.



There was much violence and oppression in South Africa during the years of apartheid, and when it finally ended in 1992, some people were left feeling bitter and angry and wanting revenge. In order to give everyone a chance to talk about what happened, Desmond Tutu set up the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission'. Many people who had behaved badly could hear from those they had hurt. There was the chance to say sorry and sometimes receive forgiveness. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission helped to provide an opportunity for a new beginning for South Africa, a chance to build what Desmond Tutu called a 'Rainbow Nation' in which everyone had the same chance in life, where diversity is celebrated.

## PRAYER AND REFLECTION



Dear God,  
Thank you for the gift of forgiveness.  
Please guide and strengthen my faith,  
especially in those times when I struggle to  
forgive. Help me to choose to forgive those  
who have hurt me and those I love.  
Help me to offer mercy in the face of every  
wrong I encounter, just as You have forgiven  
me.

**Amen**

### REFLECT:

*How can we show others that we are sorry for  
the times we have made the wrong choices?  
Have you shown forgiveness?  
What can help you when you find forgiveness  
difficult?*

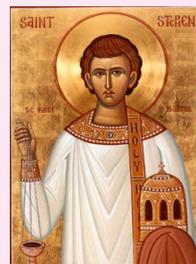
## St. STEPHEN

*Feast Day: December 26th*

St. Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit of God; he was humble and pure in heart. He forgave those that stoned him to death.

What else can you find out about St. Stephen?

What other saints or role models teach us about forgiveness?



## HOME LEARNING SUGGESTIONS:

*Please choose and complete at least one task.*

- Read and discuss the suggested Scripture
- Research saints and other role models who demonstrated forgiveness
- Reflect on things you have said or done which you want to say sorry for who should you say sorry to?
- Design and make a cross to represent forgiveness, perhaps using words
- Write a prayer or poem about forgiveness
- Design a rainbow wordle using words that make you think of forgiveness.

*Bring in your home learning to celebrate your work with your class by Friday 11th February 2022.*