



Jesus Forgives and Restores

Bible Passage: John 21:1-19

Key Passage: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” **Matthew 28:19-20**

Big Picture Question: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Bottom Line: I can always come to Jesus and be forgiven.

Christ Connection: Jesus prepared His disciples for a life of ministry. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us until He returns.

LARGE GROUP: Communicating God’s truth in engaging ways.

Say This: This time of year is always so busy! With all the student council elections, I hear one question repeated again and again: “Will you vote for me?” I think I must hear others ask that three or four times each day. Why do you think people running for office might ask that so many times? [Allow responses.] Good idea, that could be it. I think part of it comes from a desire to know for sure.

In today’s lesson we will see that Jesus asked Peter the same question three times in a row. Jesus knew the answer, of course, but I think He wanted to help Peter know for sure.

Jesus asked Peter a certain question three times before sharing an important mission with Peter. Do you remember the answer to our big picture question? **What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.** Let’s see what mission Jesus had for Peter.

Watch Video:

When Jesus was arrested, the disciples ran away. Then Peter—who had promised to die for Jesus—lied and said he didn’t even know Him. Now that Jesus was alive again, Peter wanted to be with Jesus so badly that he jumped in the water and swam to shore before the boat even landed. Denying that you know a friend when he is alone in a difficult situation could really hurt a friendship. How would you feel if your friends abandoned you when you got in trouble at school? Jesus still loved Peter and wanted Peter to know that He was healing their relationship. In fact, **Jesus forgave Peter and gave him a mission.**

Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” One time for each of the three times Peter had denied Jesus. We don’t know for sure if that’s why Jesus asked three times, but Peter almost certainly noticed the connection. Each time Peter said that he loved Jesus, Jesus commanded Peter to care for others.

These men were fishermen, but God wanted to use them as fishers of men, just as Jesus promised them when He first called them to be His disciples. Instead of catching fish, they would tell others about



Jesus.

Christ connection

Even though the disciples had left Jesus when He was arrested and even denied Him, Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan. Jesus showed Peter forgiveness and restored him in order to use Peter as a leader in the early church. Peter did not deserve to be forgiven—none of us do! But Jesus doesn't forgive us based on what we deserve. Jesus forgives and restores people based on His love and the sacrifice He made on the cross to defeat sin. Jesus rose again to show that death had no power over Him, and that the way back to God was complete. Jesus is the Lord who forgives and makes things right again. When we trust in Jesus, we are forgiven and restored to God. He sends us the Holy Spirit to help us live holy lives and live on mission to tell others about Jesus!

Let's pray together and head out to small group.

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (Small Groups, 40 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. Bible Story Review/Skills

What You Need: Story Point Poster, Bibles, sentence strips

What You Do:

- Challenge kids to name (in order) as many books of the New Testament as they can.
- Then distribute Bibles and lead kids to find John 21.
- Mix up the sentence strips and distribute them.
- Call for kids to read their strips one at a time.
- Then instruct kids to work together to arrange the sentences in order to retell today's Bible story.
- Compare their work to the Bible story script or to John 21:1-19.
- Ask the following questions:

What You Say • John is the fourth of the Gospels in the New Testament. The Gospels tell us about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Today's Bible story happened after Jesus' resurrection. Let's review what happened.

The disciples had left Jesus when He was arrested and even denied knowing Him, but Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan. **Jesus forgave Peter and gave him a mission.** Jesus told Peter, "Feed My lambs," "Take care of My sheep," and "Follow Me."

God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus, and He wants to use us in His plan to share the good news about Jesus with the whole world.

2. Discussion Questions:

- **Who went fishing on the Sea of Galilee?** (*seven of Jesus' disciples, John 21:1-3*)
- **Before they met Jesus, how many fish did the disciples catch?** (*none, John 21:3*)
- **What did Jesus tell the disciples to do to catch some fish?** (*put their nets in the water on the right side of the boat, John 21:6*)



- **How many fish were in the disciples' net?** (*153 fish, John 21:11*)
- **What question did Jesus ask Peter three times?** (*"Do you love Me?" John 21:15-17*)

Then ask kids to discuss the following questions:

- **Why do you think Jesus asked Peter the same question three times?**
- **What do you think Jesus meant when He told Peter, "Take care of My sheep"?**

3. Memory Verse Activity

What You Need: Memory Verse Poster, index cards, markers, ziptop bags, fish shaped crackers, fish cutouts and bucket, allergy alert poster

What You Do:

- Before the session, write 2 or 3 words of the memory verse on index cards and place the cards in a ziptop bag.
- Fill the ziptop bags with fish shaped crackers so kids cannot read the words.
- Line up the bags along the table.
- When you say go, each kid will grab a bag, open it and eat the fish crackers to uncover the words.
- If any kids have allergies, use fish shaped cutouts instead of crackers. In this version kids can dump the fish into the bucket instead of eat them.
- Once the kids uncover the words, they must scramble to put the memory verse in the correct order.
- Read the memory verse together from the cards.

What You Say: "Jesus reminded His disciples that He had called them to be fishers of men. Jesus didn't mean they were literally going to scoop up men into nets! He meant they would tell other people the good news about Jesus, and people would respond by trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior. This was good news for the disciples since they ran away when Jesus was arrested. What did Jesus teach the disciples? The Lord forgives and makes things right again."

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: Prayer journals, Journal page (1 for each kid), markers/crayons, Bibles

What You Do:

- Distribute journal pages and pencils.
- Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:
 - What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
 - What does the story teach me about myself?
 - Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
 - Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
 - How does this story help me to live on mission better?
- As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas and write in your small group journal.

What You Say: Pray, Thank God for forgiving us when we repent and turn to Him. Pray that kids would show their love for Jesus by obeying Him.

As adults arrive to pick up, tell kids to recite the memory verse to them.