

## LESSON SNAPSHOT

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Forgive as you have been forgiven.

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn that God doesn't want us to become hard, but to have soft and forgiving hearts.

**KEY PASSAGE:**

Matthew 18:21-35, The Story of the Unmerciful Servant

**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Lord, show me your ways. Teach me how to follow you." Psalm 25:4 (NirV)*

**SUMMARY:**

A pumpkin's hard shell hides a soft and gooey inside. God wants us to be loving and merciful, not hard like the unforgiving servant, because God has forgiven us.

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

*Dear God,*

*Teach us to forgive as you have forgiven us.*

*In Jesus' name,  
Amen*

## MEMORY VERSE

*"Lord, show me your ways. Teach me how to follow you." Psalm 25:4 (NirV)*

*"Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths." Psalm 25:4 (NIV)*

*"Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow." Psalm 25:4 (NLT)*

*"Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths." Psalm 25:4 (KJV)*

### **LARGE GROUP:**

Choose four kids who think they know the verse. Line them up on stage. Have the kids recite the memory verse, with each kid saying one word, starting left to right. When you get to the kid on the right, go back to the kid on the far left. Keep going until they get through the whole verse.

### **SMALL GROUP:**

Read the verse in a normal voice. Then read it like monsters!

## SKIT

### THE NOT SO CREEPY TALE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

#### ITEMS NEEDED:

A cape and old fashioned suit for the Count  
A lab coat for Maureen  
A storybook

#### CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

1M, 1F

#### CHARACTERS:

Count Pumpkin - A not at all spooky storyteller  
Maureen Igor - The Count's sarcastic sidekick

*The Count and Maureen enter.*

COUNT: Hello children. Welcome to Creepy Tales with Count Pumpkin. I am Count Pumpkin. And this is my assistant, Igor!

MAUREEN: That's Maureen Igor, thank you. Not that anyone cares.

COUNT: Every week, I will be telling you a chilling, terrifying tale guaranteed to—

MAUREEN: To give you a new understanding of how to follow God.

COUNT: I was going to say make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up.

MAUREEN: My hair's too thick. Not even hairspray can make it stand up.

COUNT: Igor, hand me the book!

MAUREEN: Yes, my Count. Whatever you say, my Count!

COUNT: Today's creepy tale is the story of the unmerciful servant!

MAUREEN: Oh boy, I'm really scared now.

# SKIT

COUNT: Once there was a servant who owed his cruel master millions of gold coins.

MAUREEN: Oh no. What did the cruel master do?

COUNT: The cruel master was going to throw the servant into the dark, creepy dungeon of doom!

MAUREEN: That sounds promising.

COUNT: But as hard as he was on the outside, the master was all gooey on the inside. You know like a... like a...

MAUREEN: Like a pumpkin?

COUNT: Yes. Like a pumpkin. (shudders) The master forgave his servant of his debt because he got all gooey. But then, the servant who had been shown mercy showed no mercy to another man who owed him just a few coins.

MAUREEN: Ugh. Bad move, dude.

COUNT: When the master learned of this, he changed his mind. He took back his forgiveness and tossed the unmerciful servant into the dungeon of doom forever. Muah ha ha ha!

MAUREEN: I gotta say, Count. The guy had it coming.

COUNT: He what?

MAUREEN: The man was shown a lot of forgiveness by his master, but he couldn't forgive someone else. He got what he deserved.

COUNT: And that doesn't frighten you?

MAUREEN: No. It just makes me want to be forgiving to other people like Jesus is with me. I don't want to be hard like the outside of a pumpkin. I want to be soft and loving. Like the inside of a pumpkin.

COUNT: Uck! Pumpkin guts! That is the one thing this Count is afraid of.

MAUREEN: Hardly. But yes, I want to be soft like those icky pumpkin guts so I can love and forgive others.

# SKIT

COUNT: Well, that's a good point. Disgusting, but a good point. Fine. So you are not scared.

MAUREEN: But you are!

COUNT: And next week you will be, when I return with an even creepier tale on... Creepy Tales with Count Pumpkin.

*Count Pumpkin exits.*

MAUREEN: You know what scares the Count more than pumpkin guts? Flo, the lady from the Progressive commercials. He's terrified of her!

## OBJECT LESSON OR KIDS SERMON

### ITEMS NEEDED:

A pumpkin pie

Which part of the pumpkin does pumpkin pie come from? Do you think any part of a pumpkin's hard, outer shell is in this pie? Not a chance! You can't make a sweet, delicious pumpkin pie with the shell of a pumpkin. You need the soft inner shell to make this sweet treat.

God does not want us to be hard and callous like the inside of a pumpkin. When it comes to dealing with other people, he wants us to be kind and loving. We should strive to be more like the inside of the pumpkin than out. Remember that God loves you and has forgiven you, and ask God to help you love and forgive others as well.

Let's be sweet as pumpkin pie, and just as soft in dealing with other people.

## LARGE GROUP GAME

### GOOEY CANDY

#### ITEMS NEEDED:

Two pumpkins with the top open  
M&MS  
Plastic gloves/smocks (if needed)

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Cut a hole in the top of two pumpkins. Do not scoop out the goo. Drop M&Ms down in each pumpkin.

Choose two players. The players will race to see who can be first to scoop two M&Ms out of their pumpkin. The winner gets a prize. Both get to wash their hands!

#### VARIATION:

To make it more challenging for older kids - blindfold them!

#### WHAT'S THE POINT?

Be soft, like the inside of a pumpkin, and be forgiving toward others.

## LARGE GROUP LESSON

### **BOTTOM LINE:**

Forgive as you have been forgiven.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn that God doesn't want us to become hard, but to have soft and forgiving hearts.

### **KEY PASSAGE:**

Matthew 18:21-35, The Story of the Unmerciful Servant

### **INTRO:**

There are two parts to every pumpkin. The pumpkin we see on the outside – the hard, stiff orange skin. Pumpkins are strong and tough on the outside, and that makes them perfect for carving into jack-o-lanterns. You can't carve a face into an apple or an orange the way you can a pumpkin because they are hollow on the inside and, more important, very strong on the outside.

The inside of a pumpkin is very different. It's mostly hollow, with a gooey, sticky filling loaded with pumpkin seeds. The inside of the shell is much softer too. If you scoop out the inner shell and mix it up with some eggs, evaporated milk, sugar, and spices, you can transform that soft sweetness into an even softer and sweeter filling for a pumpkin pie.

A pumpkin is a lot like God. God is strong and powerful. He is Almighty. He is also gentle and loving. God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to become our Savior, and if we believe in Jesus, He will forgive our sins. But God also expects us to extend the same mercy and forgiveness to other people.

Today's parable is all about the importance of being forgiving. It's about a king who, like God, resembles the pumpkin. He is strong and powerful, like the outer shell of the pumpkin, and when it's time to call his servants to pay their debts, the king is prepared to throw one of his servants into prison for failure to pay. But watch what happens when the servant begs the king for mercy.

**READ MATTHEW 18:21-35**



# LARGE GROUP LESSON

## MAIN POINT:

The king in this parable, like God, has a soft heart on the inside. He hears the plea of his servant, and he has compassion on him. The king knows the servant's debt is too high. He will never be able to pay it back, no matter how hard he works. In an incredible act of kindness, the king forgives the man and sets him free.

But the king changes his mind when he hears what happens next. The servant goes out, finds another man who owes him a very small amount of money, and demands payment. Where the king was soft on the inside, the servant was hard. He refuses to forgive as he was forgiven. For this reason, the king changes his mind. The servant is tossed into jail, unlikely to ever emerge.

God has forgiven us for so much, how can we ever be unforgiving with other people? God wants us to have hearts that are soft like the inside of a pumpkin. He wants us to be forgiving.

## DRIVE IT HOME:

Since this is the season for tricks and treats, let's revisit this story in those terms. What if you accidentally grabbed your best friend's candy bag? What if you mixed their candy in with yours and within a few days you ate it all? And what if they found out? In addition to a large stomachache, you'd probably feel pretty terrible about what happened. You'd apologize to your friend and beg them to forgive you. And if you're lucky, your friend would forgive you.

Now let's suppose that thirty seconds later, you spotted your younger sibling with a bag of M&Ms – YOUR bag of M&Ms. How would it look if you turned around and yelled at them for stealing a few of your M&MS after your best friend forgave you for eating all their candy!

Sad to say we've all done this. Even though we've accepted Jesus as our Savior and received forgiveness for our sins, we have all acted in an unforgiving manner with someone. Maybe it was a sister who took your shirt without asking. Maybe it was when your brother took the last cookie that should have been yours. Maybe it was a classmate who cut in line. Whatever the offense was, it hurt. It made you mad. It made you want to get even. But as much as it hurt in that moment, it was nothing compared to the pain Jesus endured for us.

Jesus took all our sins – every lie, every selfish action, every hateful word spoken – upon Himself. He died on the cross to pay for our sins so He could forgive them all. Jesus was merciful with us, and He wants us to show that same mercy to others.

When you feel slighted or wronged, take a moment to remember what Jesus has done. Remember how soft things are inside the pumpkin and ask God to soften your heart.

# LARGE GROUP LESSON

Let's forgive as we've been forgiven so that we can share that same incredible love with others.

## **CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:**

*Dear Jesus,*

*Teach us to forgive as you have forgiven us.*

*In Jesus' name,  
Amen*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

### ICEBREAKER:

Which is better: pumpkin rolls, pumpkin bread, or pumpkin pie?

### MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

**Psalm 25:4**

Read the verse in a normal voice. Then read it like monsters!

### SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Bring in some very small pumpkins and have a contest to see who can roll a pumpkin on its side the furthest.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

**Read Matthew 18:21-35**

Why did the king forgive the servant for his debt?

Why did the king later change his mind?

Who was hard like a pumpkin shell in this story?

Who was soft like the inside of a pumpkin?

Why does God want us to forgive others?

### SIMPLE PRAYER:

*Dear God,*

*Forgive us our sins and help us to forgive others!*

*In Jesus' name,*

*Amen*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3-5TH)

### ICEBREAKER:

Which is better: pumpkin rolls, pumpkin bread, or pumpkin pie?

### MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

**Psalm 25:4**

Read the verse in a normal voice. Then read it like monsters!

### SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Bring in some very small pumpkins and have a contest to see who can roll a pumpkin on its side the furthest.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

**Read Matthew 18:21-35**

Why did the king forgive the servant for his debt?

Why did the king later change his mind?

Why does God want us to forgive others?

Why is forgiving others so hard to do?

What can we do when someone wrongs us to help us remember to be forgiving?

### SIMPLE PRAYER:

*Dear God,*

*Forgive us our sins and help us to forgive others!*

*In Jesus' name,*

*Amen*

## POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME

### MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. The king had mercy on a servant who \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. owed a lot of money\*  
B. had stolen his gold  
C. had burned down his castle
2. The servant went out and \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. told everyone how kind the king was  
B. wrote a thank you note to the king  
C. went after someone who only owed a little money\*
3. When the king heard what his servant had done, he \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. changed his mind and threw the servant in jail\*  
B. threw the servant out of the kingdom  
C. gave the servant a reward
4. Jesus wants us to be \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. hard and unforgiving, like the outer shell of a pumpkin  
B. soft and forgiving, like the inside of the pumpkin\*  
C. small and crunchy, like pumpkin seeds
5. We should forgive others because \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. we don't want to go to jail  
B. Jesus forgave us\*  
C. that's what people who are hard like a pumpkin shell do



# MAKE IT STICK

4 Simple Ways You Can Make This Lesson Stick With your Kids

## Pumpkin Parables Lesson 3

### THIS WEEK'S LESSON: PUMPKIN SHELL



#### IN THE CAR:

Ask your child what they learned about this week on the drive home:

A pumpkin's hard shell hides a soft and gooey inside. God doesn't want us to become hard, but to have soft and forgiving hearts. Matthew 18:21-35, The Story of the Unmerciful Servant



#### HANGING OUT:

Make this week's lesson real:

Make a soft, sweet treat with the inside of a pumpkin (or the inside of a can of pumpkin) this week like a pumpkin roll or pumpkin pie. Ask your kids why God wants us to have soft, forgiving hearts instead of hard hearts?



#### AT DINNER:

Here are some great discussion starters:

- What did the servant do after he had been forgiven?
- What should the servant have done instead?
- What does this story teach us about forgiving others?



#### AT BEDTIME:

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

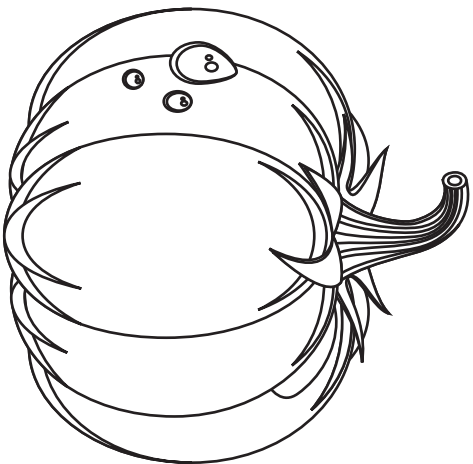
*"Lord, show me your ways. Teach me how to follow you." Psalm 25:4 (NirV)*



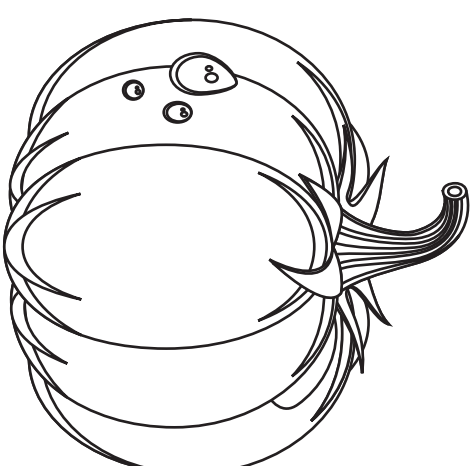
#### PARENT TIME:

What you need to know:

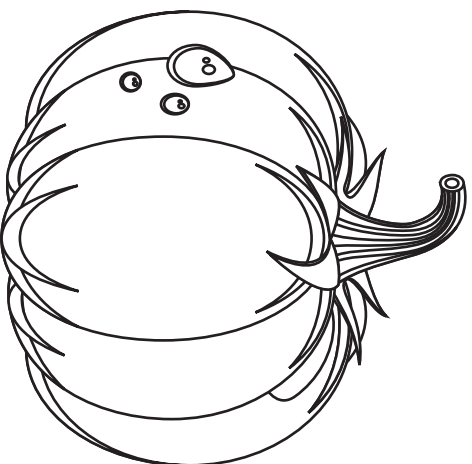
It is never easy to forgive someone who has wronged you, especially when that wound is still fresh. Nevertheless, Jesus commands us to forgive because He has forgiven us. Ask God to help you to model a kind, forgiving heart to your kids so that they too will be kind and forgiving.



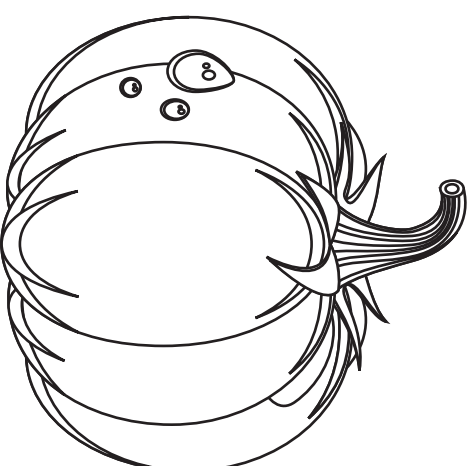
"Lord, show me your ways.  
Teach me how to follow you."  
-Psalm 25:4 (NIV)



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"Lord, show me your ways.  
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## CRAFT ACTIVITY

Have the kids make some pumpkin slime they can take home in a baggie or small plastic container. A simple recipe is below, but you can use any recipe for slime you like. Teach them that the soft, gooey slime is a reminder that we should be soft-hearted and forgiving as Jesus has forgiven us.

8-ounce bottle Elmer's white school glue  
1 1/2 – 2 Tablespoons contact saline solution  
1 Tablespoon baking soda  
Red and yellow food coloring (to make orange slime)

Pour all the glue into a mixing bowl and add the red and yellow food coloring to make a nice, pumpkin orange.

Mix in baking soda.

Mix in saline solution. If it's too sticky, add 1/2 Tablespoon more solution at a time.

Knead the slime using your hands until it holds together.