



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 5: Forgiveness

Suggested Week of Use: March 29, 2026

Core Passage: Matthew 18:21-35

News Story Summary

Jason and Laura Hughes knew they would be pranked because they both taught at North Hall High School in Gainesville, Georgia, which meant double points for students pulling off the prank. In fact, Jason was excited about catching the pranksters and causing them to lose points. As students strung toilet paper from the trees on a rainy night, Jason came out to catch them, but he slipped into the roadway. In their hurry to escape, the students accidentally ran over him. Jason later died at the hospital. The driver and four other students were charged, but they were released on bond. Even though the district attorney has the case under review, Laura Hughes is not pressing charges. Instead, she thanked the community for their prayers and support. She also asked people to pray for the students and their families. An online account has been established to help Laura and her two children with immediate expenses and a college fund.

For more about this story, search “Senior Prank Gone Wrong.”

Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, lead the group to identify situations in which forgiveness would be hard. Ask: *Why do we have such a difficult time forgiving others?* Summarize the news story related to the senior prank gone wrong in Georgia. Ask: *How can Laura Hughes forgive these students?* Affirm that forgiveness can be hard, but it reflects God’s character in a powerful way. Share that this session examines what Jesus taught about forgiving others and why it’s so important.

Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, review the story of Laura and Jason Hughes. Ask: *What are the dangers of failing to forgive? How does unforgiveness affect our relationship with God and others?* Discuss responses. Explain that no offense we suffer compares to our debt to God. Say: *Because of that, forgiveness is not optional or superficial.* Lead adults in praying for the Hughes family and thanking God for their example of forgiveness. Pray that each adult will nurture a lifestyle of forgiveness that leads them toward healing and restoration.