

Forgive

September 13, 2020
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

At Home with Faith

This Sunday's Gospel calls us to forgive each other "seventy-seven times."

This doesn't mean we keep a tally of each other's offenses. Instead, God calls us to forgive each other as many times as it takes, just as he forgives us.



The marriage researcher John Gottman has proven that strong marriages and strong families depend upon the capacity to forgive. No matter how good the marriage or how loving the family, we will commit sins against the ones we love. Families that cannot forgive will struggle, while those that readily forgive will thrive.

Forgiveness is more than a skill that leads to emotional health. In forgiving, we become more like God and his son Jesus. Seen through the eyes of faith, forgiveness is a prerequisite for becoming who we are meant to be: children of God.

Read

Take time to read and reflect on the Scriptures for this day.

Don't have access to a Bible?

Visit www.usccb.org/bible/readings or download an app such as *Laudate* or *iBreviary* to access the Mass readings.

Sirach 27:30-28:7

Wrath and anger are hateful things.

Psalms 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Romans 14:7-9

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Matthew 18:21-35

Forgive seventy times seven.

At Home with Faith

Talk

Here are some reflection questions to help you have **Great Conversations** with the whole family.

Model these five behaviors to show our children what forgiveness looks like:

- **Be humble.** Jesus teaches us we are sinners who owe more to God than any person could ever owe to us. So let go of the need to be right, be willing to acknowledge your wrongdoing and prepare to say “I’m sorry” - even if you feel the other person is guilty of a greater wrong.
- **Pick the right time.** Sometimes we need a little time to let our emotions calm down. Give yourself and the other person time if they need it.
- **Start soft.** Use gentle words, be vulnerable, and be mindful of your tone of voice.
- **Give them a free one.** The other person may not react well at first. If they say something like “Well what you were saying was really mean,” resist the urge to argue. Listen and be ready to apologize.
- **Tell them you care.** Be vulnerable enough to tell the other person the relationship matters to you and you want to work it out.



One of the best ways to teach children about forgiveness is to model it in our own relationships. If they can observe us forgiving one another as parents, there’s a good chance they will follow our example. See the Talk section for an example of some practical techniques the therapist John Gottman teaches for practicing forgiveness in our relationships.

Of course, we should always remember that Jesus calls us to work for justice in the present (Matthew 6:33) just as he calls us to forgive (Matthew 18:21) the sins of the past. We need to encourage our children to cultivate relationships with people who will treat them with kindness.

Also, we need to be patient when teaching our children forgiveness. Things that seem trivial to us can feel much more important to a child. Sometimes it can help to tell them that they can make the decision to forgive, even if they are still feeling hurt or angry. When we choose to forgive another person, even if we don’t feel like it, that decision to forgive will often allow us to experience peace later on.

Is your family in need of some calm?

Finding Calm in the Storm
Practical Ways to Find Peace at Home
September 24, 2020 at 7 PM

A webinar on creating a more grounded, peaceful home life.

To learn more and register, visit us online:

<https://marriagefamilylife.seattlarchdiocese.org/find-calm>

For more resources, visit us online at:

<https://marriagefamilylife.seattlarchdiocese.org/athomewithfaith>