



GROW

TOGETHER NOW

VOLUME 1

- ✿ FORGIVENESS
- ✿ PEACEMAKING
- ✿ SERVANT'S HEART

Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



Relational

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

GROW TOGETHER NOW

Grow Together Now, Volume 1

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HOW TO USE GROW TOGETHER NOW

Grow Together Now is rooted in Scripture and engages kids to grow to be like Jesus. Use these lessons to equip kids with the character qualities they need to each become the person God created them to be. These exciting, hands-on Bible lessons feature the three character qualities of forgiveness, peacemaking, and having a servant's heart. Kids will explore each character quality in memorable activities that reinforce God's foundational plan for a fruitful Christian life.

With these lessons, you'll introduce kids of all ages to:

- **Forgiveness**—Trusting God to help me love others who hurt me.
- **Peacemaking**—Getting along with others.
- **Servant's heart**—Thinking of others before I think of myself.

OVERVIEW CHART

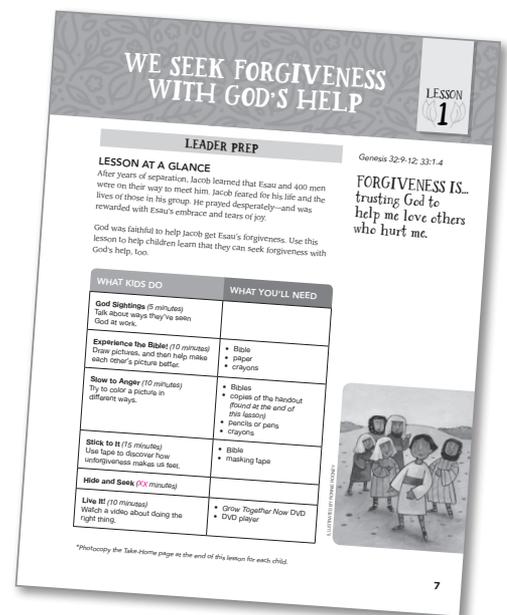
This helpful chart gives you an overview of the lesson. Read "What Kids Do" first so you have the big picture of what will happen in your classroom with kids. Use the "What You'll Need" list to review and gather all the supplies you'll need for a great lesson.

DEVOTION FOR TEACHERS

Grow Together Now isn't just for children; it's for you, too! Romans 8:29 says that God chose you "to become like his Son." With this devotion, let God speak to your heart and challenge you to grow in your friendship with him.

BIBLE FOUNDATION FOR TEACHERS

Each lesson includes an in-depth look into the related Bible passage. Allow God's Spirit to work in your heart and mind as you study the Scripture in preparation for your lesson.





THE LESSON

Research shows that people remember most of what they do but only a fraction of what they hear—which means that kids learn best by doing. Kids will act out skits, make things, create prayers, play games, do experiments, and actively participate in conversations to discover important biblical truths. Each lesson has the following features, plus more.

GOD SIGHTINGS

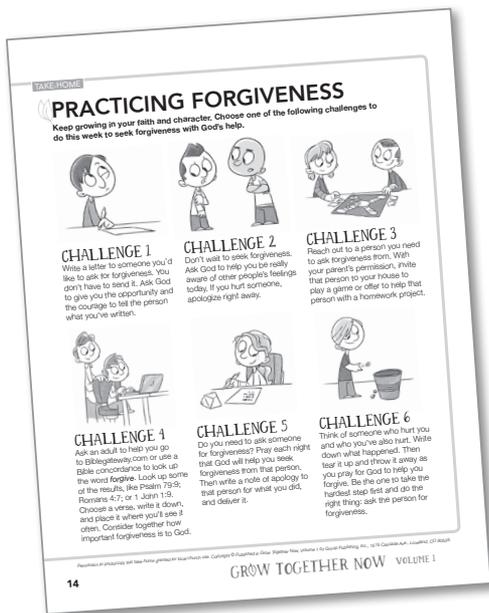
Talk about ways you've each seen God at work, and praise him!

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Dive into the Scripture with kids, and learn by doing a unique activity to drive home the point.

LIFE APPLICATION

Reinforce the message with an experience designed to help kids apply God's Word to their lives.



TAKE-HOME PAGE

Each week, kids will get six challenges on the Take-Home page. Encourage kids to choose at least one challenge to grow in character throughout the week. Let parents know that they can ask their children about the challenge and help when necessary.

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WE SEEK FORGIVENESS WITH GOD'S HELP

LESSON 1

LEADER PREP

Genesis 32:9-12; 33:1-4

LESSON AT A GLANCE

After years of separation, Jacob learned that Esau and 400 men were on their way to meet him. Jacob feared for his life and the lives of those in his group. He prayed desperately—and was rewarded with Esau's embrace and tears of joy.

God was faithful to help Jacob get Esau's forgiveness. Use this lesson to help children learn that they can seek forgiveness with God's help, too.

FORGIVENESS IS...
trusting God to
help me love others
who hurt me.

WHAT KIDS DO	WHAT YOU'LL NEED
<p>God Sightings (5 minutes) Talk about ways they've seen God at work.</p>	
<p>Explore the Bible! (10 minutes) Draw pictures, and then help make each other's picture better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible • paper • crayons
<p>Slow to Anger (10 minutes) Try to color a picture in different ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles • copies of the handout (found at the end of this lesson) • pencils or pens • crayons
<p>Stick to It (15 minutes) Use tape to discover how unforgiveness makes us feel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible • masking tape
<p>Hide and Seek (10 minutes) Play a game to understand how we have to seek forgiveness.</p>	
<p>Live It! (10 minutes) Watch a video about doing the right thing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Grow Together Now</i> DVD • DVD player



*Photocopy the Take-Home page at the end of this lesson for each child.

DEVOTIONS FOR LEADERS: FORGIVENESS

No one looks forward to facing those they've hurt. However, we can learn how to do it from Jacob. First, pray. In your prayers, remember God and his promises. Humble yourself, making your requests known to God. Be honest about your fears, and choose to trust him. Then go. Face what you've done and the person you've wronged. Just as Jacob never expected the kind of reception he got from his brother, so too your fears might be all for nothing. Jacob not only got Esau's forgiveness but he also got his brother back.

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Genesis 32:9-12; 33:1-4: Esau Forgives Jacob

CAUGHT RED-HANDED

Jacob was terrified at the prospect of reuniting with his older brother, Esau. After all, the last time they were in the same place, Esau was plotting to kill him (Genesis 27:42). It all started when Jacob stole his brother's blessing. On the surface that might not seem like a big deal—but in Jewish culture, there was nothing more important than this blessing, especially if you were the firstborn son. In *The Blessing*, Gary Smalley and John Trent point out that firstborns received the privilege of marrying first and receiving a double portion of inheritance. Once the father passed away, the firstborn son assumed leadership of the family. In a wealthy family like Isaac's, Esau's life seemed secure. Therefore, Jacob didn't steal a tender gesture from his brother—in essence, he stole Esau's future.

WHEN IN DOUBT, PRAY

As Jacob journeyed homeward, he saw his brother coming toward him with 400 men. However, rather than fleeing, Jacob chose to pray. First, he remembered who God is: "[the] God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac." Second, Jacob reminded God of his commands and promises: "You told me, 'Return to your own land...' And You promised me, 'I will treat you kindly.'" Third, he humbled himself: "I am not worthy of all the unfailing love and faithfulness you have shown to me." Next, he asked for God's help: "O Lord, please rescue me from the hand of my brother, Esau." Then he spoke to God honestly: "I am afraid that he is coming to attack me, along with my wives and



ILLUSTRATED BY <NO INTERSECTING LINK>

children.” Finally, he ended by trusting God’s commitment: “You promised me, ‘I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your descendants.’ ”

MEETINGS

After Jacob’s all-nighter in the wrestling ring, he still feared Esau’s arrival. Jacob sent messengers with explicit instructions on what to say; he sent gifts of animals; he even arranged his family in a specific order. It was as if he wanted to physically show Esau how sorry he was, even before speaking a word. At last, Jacob faced Esau. Humbly, Jacob bowed to the ground seven times. Esau, for his part, ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him—a reception reminiscent of a story that Jesus told about another younger son, a prodigal, who had wrongfully taken an inheritance but who finally returned home.

THE LESSON

GOD SIGHTINGS

Say: God is with us everywhere! When your friend shares with you, you feel God’s kindness. When you smile at a stranger and hold open a door, you’re being God at work. A beautiful sunset is evidence of God’s creativity and power. It’s important that we recognize and thank God for all the things he does in our lives. We call these God Sightings.

Ask: What evidence have you seen of God at work this week? Think about God’s creation, ways people have encouraged you, and even ways God helped you make a difference for someone else.

Share your own God Sighting first. Then let kids share God Sightings—evidence of God in our world. Then celebrate how God is at work in your lives through a prayer of thanksgiving.

YOU'LL NEED:

- ✓ Bible
- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons



EXPLORE THE BIBLE!

Talk about: **The Bible tells us about two brothers, Jacob and Esau. In what we're reading today from the Bible, the brothers hadn't seen each other in a long time. Before this time, Jacob had done something mean to trick Esau. He'd done something wrong and hadn't asked for forgiveness.**

Give each child crayons and paper. Have kids fold their paper in half and then in half again, creating four sections.

Talk about: **After I read some verses from the Bible, you'll draw in each square what Jacob or Esau did.**

Allow two minutes after each reading for kids to draw.

- Read Genesis 32:9-10.
- Read Genesis 32:11-12.
- Read Genesis 33:1-3.
- Read Genesis 33:4.

Have kids trade pictures. Say: **Ask your partner to help make your picture better by adding in something new. (Pause.) Help each other, and see what you come up with.**

Afterward, lead this discussion: **How did your partner help make your picture better? What did God do in this Scripture that seemed most helpful? In what ways can God help you when you feel worried or sad?**

Talk about: **Your partner helped, but you had to do something first. You had to ask for help. Jacob thought Esau was coming to hurt him, so he prayed to God and asked for help. Jacob bowed, showing how sorry he was, and Esau forgave his brother immediately. We seek forgiveness with God's help. Let's explore more about what forgiveness is and why it's so important.**