



CHRISTMAS

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

BEST GIFTS EVER

THE GIFT OF FORGIVENESS
KEY SCRIPTURE | John 10:10

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024
CEDAR VALLEY

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Christmas is a time where we focus more on what we want, not what we need. We make a list and tell our families what we want for Christmas. But, Christmas is a season where we celebrate how God generously gave us exactly what we needed. Our loving Father gave us His Son so we could get one thing we needed most—forgiveness. Without forgiveness, life would be hopeless. Receiving forgiveness from God and offering forgiveness to others is how we experience an abundant life (John 10:10). Jesus became human to show us how to live; He died a horrific death on the cross, and was resurrected to new life so that we could experience forgiveness of sins and new life in Him. Forgiveness is a gift that changes our lives now and for eternity. A life of forgiveness leads to a life of abundance.

QUESTIONS

Icebreaker: What's one thing you've learned about forgiveness through a personal experience?

1. What does forgiveness mean to you? How would you define it? (See Digging Deeper)
2. Have each person in your group look up one of the following passages and read it aloud to the group. What does each passage teach us about forgiveness?

1 John 1:9
Matthew 6:14–15
Ephesians 4:32
Colossians 3:13
Matthew 18:22
Luke 6:27–28
Romans 12:14–19

3. Is it ever okay to not forgive someone? Why or why not? Does forgiveness require an apology from the person who offended you? Why or why not?
4. How have you overcome the urge to hold onto resentment?
5. Have you ever been forgiven by someone you deeply hurt? How did that feel?
6. Do you struggle to receive forgiveness from God? Is there someone you are struggling to forgive right now? Pray together and ask the Holy Spirit for reassurance and help with forgiveness.

DIGGING DEEPER

The New Testament uses two different words that are translated “forgive” in English:

- Charizomai (χαρίζομαι) – the root of this word is charis which means “grace”. The idea here is canceling a debt; extending grace.
- Aphiemi (ἀφίημι) – the idea is “to let go” or “loose”. The idea here is that we let go of the desire for revenge or to get even.

In Luke 7:40–50, the woman who anointed Jesus’ feet, both of these words are used in her story.