

Forgiving Yourself

Forgiving yourself is a critical step in leadership.

You are not the sum of your past mistakes. You are the product of your next wise decision.

This lesson uses a fun exercise with money to teach kids that we do not lose our value even though we make mistakes. In the previous lesson, we learned about forgiveness. Forgiving others relieves the burden of past mistakes for the forgiven as well as the forgiver, thereby, allowing both individuals to move forward. Without forgiveness we would be perpetually weighed down by our mistakes and unable to reach our potential. Forgiving someone is like giving them a gift, and it often brings relief as well as joy.

Often, the most difficult person for you to forgive is yourself. Perhaps, it is because you know exactly what you did and why you did it. There is no “leap of faith” in forgiving yourself. However, in order to be a leader, forgiveness is required just the same.

For this lesson on forgiveness you will need a \$5 or \$10 bill.

Coach: Have you ever made a mistake? Raise your hand if you have.

Let the kids know that you are not asking what the mistakes were. To encourage them to participate, join in by raising your own hand and stating that you have also made mistakes.

Coach: I am raising my hand too because I have made mistakes.

Do not open a discussion about any specific mistakes.

Coach: It looks like we have all made mistakes. When I make mistakes, I feel pretty bad. In fact, sometimes I get real mad at myself and feel kind of worthless. Does anyone remember what we talked about at our last practice (referring to Lesson Eight on Forgiveness)?

Give hints if the kids don't immediately remember that the last lesson was about forgiveness.

Coach: That's right “forgiveness.” We talked about how important it is as leaders to forgive people.

Pull out the \$5 bill and hold it up so all of the kids can see it.

Coach: I have a question for you. Who would like to have this \$5 bill?

All of the kids will raise their hands. Give them a chance to get excited about the possibility of getting the \$5. Crumble the \$5 bill into a wrinkled little ball.

Coach: Who wants it now?

Nearly all of the kids will say they still want the \$5. Drop it on the on the ground and step on it.

Coach: OK, who wants it now?

LESSON NINE



Again, the kids will still want the \$5. Kick it along the ground away from everyone.

Coach: OK, who wants it now?

The kids will still want the \$5.

Coach: Why do you still want it? It's been crumbled up, stepped on and kicked aside.

The answer is that it's still worth \$5 regardless of what happened to it. Help the kids articulate this answer.

Coach: That's right! This piece of paper is still just as valuable and important no matter what happens to it; it is always worth \$5. I have one last question. Are you worth more than this piece of paper? (Pause and let the kids answer.) **Yes, you are! But, when we make mistakes, we sometimes forget how valuable we are. Don't get me wrong, the mistake happened, and you have to deal with it. But, you also have to know that you are still just as valuable and important as you were before you made the mistake. Once you realize that truth you can forgive yourself.**

Take a few moments to assess comprehension and answer questions. Then, move on to a summary statement or prayer that references and reinforces this lesson.

Reaffirm the APIVEO commitment with the team cheer.

Coach: Ok, are you ready? I want to make the ground shake!

Start the cheer in a normal tone and get louder each time you ask the question.

Coach: Always play for who?

Team: Each other!

Coach: (louder) ALWAYS PLAY FOR WHO?

Team: (louder) EACH OTHER!

Coach: (really loud!) ALWAYS PLAY FOR WHO?

Team: (screaming loud!) EACH OTHER!

Coach: Stand up with authority and yell "[TEAM NAME] ROCK!

Following the cheer, I will always talk to each player after every practice to thank them for "bringing it" to practice. This only takes 10-15 seconds per player, but is worth its weight in gold. There are a few players that will be headed for the parking lot before the cheer is done, so you must be intentional and act fast. I typically get right in front of the player and, then, get on one knee, look him/her in the eye and mention something positive about his/her performance in practice and how glad I am that he/she is part of our team. You need to be quick to respect the parent's time, but you also need to be sincere.

Be intentional and remember, Always Play 4 Each Other!™