

All Age Worship Service

(AAW005)

**The Lord's Prayer 5:
“As we forgive those
who sin against us”**

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THE LORD'S PRAYER 5: "AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US"

Service Aim:

To teach what it means to pray: "as we forgive those who sin against us"

Biblical Reference(s):

Matthew 6:9-15, 18:21-35, Luke 23:34

Outline of Service:

Welcome:	Introduce the theme
Opening Prayer:	
Opening songs:	<u>A couple of songs to draw people into worship</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	Invite children into "prison" and ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What do you lose when you are in prison?" • When we refuse to forgive someone, we can lose our freedom
Reading 1:	Matthew 18:21-35
Talk 1:	God has cancelled our "sin debt," using the visual aid of money
Confession:	Writing down sins and bringing them to the foot of a cross
Songs:	<u>Song/s about the Gospel</u> (See Appendix 1)
Link:	Having been forgiven, we need to be willing to forgive others
Puppets:	"The party invitations"
Talk 2:	What does forgiving others mean?
Prayer:	Choosing to forgive others by shredding papers at the cross
Songs:	<u>Song/s about freedom</u> (See Appendix 1)
Summary:	We have been forgiven much by God. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are to forgive the little, in comparison, that others owe us • Forgiveness is essential for our freedom
Prayers:	Praying for healing of relationships at home, school, work, the world etc
Final song:	<u>Final song</u> (See Appendix 1)
Blessing:	

Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

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Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the service and explain to people that you will be looking at the line of "The Lord's Prayer" that says "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

Opening Prayer:

You may choose to open the service with:

- an informal prayer
- a prayer from a book like "New Patterns for Worship"¹ that the congregation can say together,
- or the following prayer that the congregation can say together:

**Lord we are here to worship you.
Would you meet with us through your Spirit,
Teach us through your Word,
Show us where we need to change,
And give us all we need to serve you in the world.
For the glory of your name. Amen.**

Opening Songs:

A couple of songs to draw people into worship as per Appendix 1

Warm up:

Set up a large dog crate if possible at the front of church in a very visible place, like on top of a large table. This large dog crate will act as the visual aid of the "prison of unforgiveness" throughout the service. You could invite children who would like to spend time in the crate to have a few minutes in it during the service.

Imagine for a moment that this crate is a prison.

- Who would like to come and do some "time" in my prison? (*Put a willing volunteer inside the crate and shut the door*)
- We will leave you in there for a couple of minutes while the rest of us answer this question:
- "What do you lose when you are in prison?"

You lose your freedom don't you?

- You can't get up and go wherever you want to go because your freedom has been taken away.

Today in our service we are going to be thinking about forgiving other people when they do something to hurt us.

- They may hurt us in small ways or in big ways.

¹ Church House Publishing – ISBN 0715120603
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So for instance, someone at school may call you a bad name,

- or push you over in the playground and then run away laughing, leaving you feeling hurt.

A younger brother or sister may deliberately destroy a Lego model that has taken you weeks to build,

- or someone at work takes the credit for a piece of work that has taken you months to complete....leaving you feeling really angry.

Someone may steal something from you;

- either something you own,
- or your reputation,
- leaving you feeling devastated.

In all of these situations where someone has done something wrong against us, we have a choice to make.

- We can either choose to forgive the person who has hurt us,
- or we can choose unforgiveness.

Forgiveness is not an easy thing to offer is it,

- but what you might not realise is that unforgiveness is a prison
- When we choose to **not** forgive someone, it is like we are in a prison with unseen bars.

When we refuse to forgive someone, we can lose our freedom.

- Our hearts can become harder as they are filled with angry and bitter thoughts....
- We can feel miserable and far away from God.

Let's set our prisoner free shall we? (*Free your volunteer from the crate*)

- Would anyone else like to go into our "prison of unforgiveness?" (*Put another willing volunteer inside the crate and shut the door*)

One day one of Jesus' disciples, Peter came to Him with a problem.

- Someone had hurt Peter and he wanted to know how many times he should keep on forgiving them.
- Would seven times be enough?
- Jesus replied by saying: "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:22)

Jesus then went on to tell his listeners a parable:

Reading 1:

The dramatized reading is Matthew 18:21-34 and it can be found in Appendix 2.

After the reading you might like to put another volunteer inside the crate.

Talk 1:

For this talk you will need the props of some £5, £10, £20 and £50 notes, some copper coins and a cross. You will also need a million pound banknote.²

² You can purchase quite a realistic million pound note from Amazon at www.amazon.co.uk

In the parable you have just seen dramatized Jesus taught that our sins are a bit like debts that we owe God.

- I am going to use these notes to help us understand this *(wave around banknotes)*

So when we choose to lie to somebody, for instance, we owe Father God a sin debt.

- Let's illustrate that with a £5 note....*(wave around £5 note and then put it on a table in front of you)*
- When we are selfish, we owe God a sin debt...so we'll illustrate that with a £10 note....*(wave around £10 note and then put on a table in front of you)*
- Can anyone think of any other sins we might commit?
(As people suggest things put on table either £5, £10, £20 or £50 notes)

Wowlook at how our sin debt has built up.....

- The reality is that every single day none of us obey God perfectly and love Him and love others as ourselves.
- You and I actually owe Father God a sin debt of millions & millions. *(wave around million pound banknote)*

In the parable that Jesus told, the servant's debt was 10,000 bags of gold, which was a huge sum of money,

- It was way beyond what that servant could earn in a lifetime.

What Jesus was trying to show by using such a large amount of money was that the servant had no way of ever being able to pay back the money he owed the King.

- If this issue was going to be sorted out, another way had to be found.

Realising the huge debt he had *"the servant fell on his knees before the master. "Be patient with me", he begged, "and I will pay back everything"*

The King knew that the servant couldn't possibly pay him back,

- and so he showed mercy to him.
- The king gave the servant what he didn't deserve and he cancelled his huge debt.
- No longer did the servant owe his master anything.

Now can you imagine owing someone 100 million pounds and not being able to pay them back....ever?

- How would you feel? *(Receive answers)*
- How do you think you would feel if one day they rang you up and said, *"I have decided to cancel your debt....you are forgiven. You don't owe me anything anymore!"*
- How would you feel? *(Receive answers)*

We, like the servant in Jesus' parable have no way of ever being able to pay God back our huge sin debt.

- If we spent our lifetime doing good works, we could never ever pay God back for the wrong things we have said, thought or done in our lives.
- If God gave us what we all deserve, we would all suffer eternal separation from Him.

However, although each one of us has sinned,

- our God, like the king in Jesus' parable is merciful and full of love.

He has found a way to not punish us for the wrong things we have done.

- He sent Jesus to come and pay our sin debt for us.
- If we choose to come to our Heavenly Father and confess our sins to Him, He forgives us and wipes away our sin debt. *(If you have a cross, place the pile of money at the foot of it)*

Wow hasn't God been kind to us?

- How do you feel that God is willing to cancel your huge sin debt?
- Shall we ask Him to do that now?

Confession:

Pass around a piece of paper to each member of the congregation with the following prayer written at the top of the paper:

“Father, I admit that I have thought, said and done wrong things.

Today I confess that I have sinned against you by.....”

Also pass around a pen or pencil to each member of the congregation. Invite people to say the prayer together and then fill in any sins that they wish to confess. You could then encourage them to bring their prayer and put it inside a black bin bag laid at the foot of a large cross. Finish the time by proclaiming the Lord's forgiveness to people.

Song:

Songs about the Gospel as per Appendix 1

Link:

Having been forgiven by Father God, He now wants us to show the same kindness to other people.

- Father God wants us to be willing to forgive others when they hurt us.....
- It is like we are cancelling the sin debts that they owe us.....which are tiny compared to the sin debt that we owed God.
- Their sin debt is a bit like this. *(Hold up a handful of copper coins)*

However, if we choose to hold onto unforgiveness,

- we risk losing the freedom we have of close fellowship with God.

James is discovering that we can lose much when we choose not to forgive others when they hurt us.

Puppet Script:

The puppet script is called “The Party invitations” (see Appendix 3). This script works with a boy puppet “James”³ and an older man puppet “Grandad.” The aim of the puppet script is to reinforce the biblical truth that if we want the Lord to forgive us our sins, we need to forgive others when they sin against us.

Talk 2:

OK, so we have said that Jesus has taught us that if we are going to be forgiven,

- we need to be willing to forgive others when they hurt us.

So what does forgiving other people actually mean?

- The first thing to say is that by forgiving someone, we are not saying that what the other person did is okay.
- It absolutely wasn't okay....and in some cases it was a very bad thing that they did to us.

³ You can purchase both a boy and a Grandad puppet from www.onewayuk.com
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What forgiving someone means is that we are choosing not to hold what they did against them.

- We are choosing not to hurt them back when they have hurt us.
- We are choosing not to bad mouth them to everyone we meet.
- We are choosing to let go of our right for revenge.

It also means that we are choosing to hand them over to God's judgment,

- trusting that He won't sweep their sins against us under the carpet!

It can feel very unfair can't it when people have treated us really badly?

- It can feel really unfair until we remember that God wants us to treat other people in the same kind way that He treats us.

One of the things that we need to understand about forgiveness is that although it is another person who has hurt us,

- the issue of forgiveness is actually between us and Father God.

The other person doesn't even need to be there for us to forgive them.

- It is a choice that we make to obey Father God and place that person into His hands.

Father God knows that if we choose to forgive, then it is good for our spiritual health, and we will be free,

- but if we choose to hold onto unforgiveness, then we will find ourselves in the "prison of unforgiveness," growing further and further away from Father God.

When we choose to forgive someone, we may or may not get back to being friends again.

- That will depend on how the other person behaves, and if we can trust them again,
- But if we have chosen to forgive.....then we will be able to carry on walking closely with Father God.

Prayer:

You will need a cross and the appropriate number of shredders (depending on the size of your congregation) at the foot of the cross. You will also need a piece of paper for each person present.

We are going to take some time now to forgive anyone who has hurt us. The way we are going to do that is by asking Father God to show each one of us if there is anyone we need to forgive in a minute of silence.

As He shows us people, write down their names or initials on the piece of paper we are going to pass around now. We will then all bring our papers up to the shredder(s) at the foot of the cross and shred them, as a way of saying, "we are choosing to cancel the record of wrongs that we holding against the person who has hurt us and we choose to hand them over to God"

Pass around papers and pens for people.

Let's pray:

Father God thank you for the grace and kindness you have shown us.

Would you show us anyone we need to forgive.

In Jesus' Name. Amen.

After a minute, or when people seem to have stopped writing, invite people to come up to the cross and shred their papers. You might like to play some quiet music in the background while this is going on. Once everyone has returned to their seat invite people to pray the following prayer together:

Father God,

We choose to forgive the people you have shown us.

We cancel the record of wrongs that we have held against them.

We lay down our desire to hurt them even though they have hurt us.

We hand them over to you.

Please heal our pain and set us free to live again.

In Jesus' name. Amen

Songs:

Song/s about freedom as per Appendix 1

Summary:

Summarize the service by saying something like:

Jesus taught us to pray in the Lord's prayer: *"Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us"*

- So today, let us remember that God, like the king in the drama, has forgiven us much.
- Let us choose to forgive the little in comparison that others owe us, because if we choose to forgive others when they sin against us, we will enjoy spiritual freedom.
- However if we choose to hold onto unforgiveness, sadly we will lose our spiritual freedom and end up in a "prison of unforgiveness."

Prayers:

Prayers could be led by the service leader or by a family or by a Sunday school group etc.

Three or four simple prayers would work well, praying for healing of relationships:

- At Home,
- At School and Work,
- In the Church and in the World

End with the Lord's Prayer.

Final Song:

Final song as per Appendix 1

Blessing:

Pray a simple prayer to end the service something like:

As the Lord has forgiven you out of His great love, go from here willing to forgive those who hurt you,

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

[Notices: If your church gives out verbal notices my suggestion is that you do that just before the final song. That way the flow of worship is unbroken]

Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) A couple of songs to draw people into worship. Ideas include:

- At your name (Phil Wickham, Tim Hughes © 2011 Phil Wickham Music)
- Everyone needs compassion (Ben Fielding, Reuben Morgan © 2006 Hillsong Music Publishing)
- Whether you're one or two (Alan Price © 1994 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- Who paints the skies? (Stuart Townend © 1995 Thankyou Music)
- You are the Sovereign I am (Brian Doerksen © 1999 Vineyard Songs (UK/Eire))
- Your love is amazing (Brenton Brown, Brian Doerksen © 2000 Vineyard Songs)

ii) Songs about the Gospel. Ideas include:

- All glory to the King of ages (Chris Spring, Paul Oakley © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- Before the throne of God above (Charitie Lees Bancroft, Vikki Cook © 1997 Sovereign Grace Worship)
- For God so loved the world (John Hardwick © 1994 Song Solutions Daybreak)
- Grace is when God gives us (David Mudie, Paul Crouch © 1989 Song Solutions Daybreak)
- Thank you for saving me (Martin Smith © 1993 Curious? Music UK)
- There is a Redeemer (Melody Green © 1982 Ears to Hear Music / Birdwing Music)
- Who O Lord could save themselves? (Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman © 2008 SHOUT! Music Publishing)
- You are good, you are good (Jason Ingram, Reuben Morgan © 2009 Hillsong Music Publishing)
- You chose the cross (Martyn Layzell © 2002 Thankyou Music)

iii) Song(s) about freedom. Ideas include:

- Amazing grace (I've been set free) (John Newton. Arr.& add.chorus: Chris Tomlin & Louie Giglio © 2006 worshiptogether.comsongs)
- Father God I wonder (Ian Smale © 1984 Thankyou Music)
- I give you all the honour (Carl Tuttle © 1982 Shadow Spring Music)
- Jesus, we celebrate your victory (John Gibson © 1987 Thankyou Music)
- What kind of love is this? (Bryn Haworth, Sally Haworth © 1983 Bella Music Ltd)
- You have shown me favour unending (Brian Thiessen © 1991 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing)
- Your grace is enough (Reuben Morgan © 2008 Hillsong Music Publishing)

iv) Final song. Ideas include:

- And can it be? (Charles Wesley, Thomas Campbell)
- In Christ alone (Keith Getty, Stuart Townend © 2001 Thankyou Music)
- The greatest day in history (Tim Hughes & Ben Cantelon © 2006 Thankyou Music)
- With a prayer you fed the hungry (Stuart Townend © 2002 Thankyou Music)

Appendix 2 – Dramatized Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

Cast: Narrator, King (dressed with a velvety cape and crown), Servant 1, Servant 2

Props: Crown for the king, Accounts book for the king.

Beforehand: Set up a “throne” for the King centre stage with a table next to it.

.....

Narrator: Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”
Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”
Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

(Enter King, carrying his accounts book. He walks up the centre aisle and sits on his throne. He opens his settlement book and starts to read it silently)

As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

(Enter Servant 1 who stands near to the King)

King: I see from my accounts that you owe me ten thousand bags of gold.

Servant 1: I cannot possibly pay you back Sir.

King: Then you and your wife and your children will have to be sold so that your debt can be repaid.

(Servant 1 falls on his knees before the King)

Servant 1: Be patient with me and I will pay you back everything.

King: I will show you mercy..... I have cancelled your debt in my book.

Servant 1: Oh thank you Sir for your kindness to me.

Narrator: But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.

(Servant 1 walks away from the King down towards the middle of the church where he meets Servant 2. He grabs him by the neck and pretends to choke him)

He grabbed him and began to choke him.

Servant 1: Pay back what you owe me!

(Servant 2 falls to his knees before Servant 1)

Servant 2: Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.

Servant 1: No way. You are going to prison until you can pay me back the debt you owe me.

(Servant 1 exits dragging Servant 2)

Narrator: When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in.

(Enter Servant 1 who goes and stands before the King)

Servant 1: You called

King: You wicked servant. I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?

Narrator: In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

(Exit Servant 1 with his head down)

This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart, Jesus said.

(Exit King)

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Appendix 3 – Puppet Script – “The Party Invitations”

Characters:



The script is a dialogue between a young boy puppet called “James” who wants to follow Jesus but keeps getting things wrong, and his wise old “Grandad” puppet who helps to sort him out. Each puppet is operated by one person from behind a screen and so it is essential that the voices are heard; radio-microphones are ideal. Puppets and puppet screens can be purchased from many sources including <http://www.onewayuk.com/>

Enter James singing

James: I’m so happy, I’m so happy. It’s only 8 days until my birthday – la – li – la – li – laaaaaaa.....

Enter Grandad

Grandad: Hello James, you are in a good mood today. What’s going on?

James: Oh, Grandad, you are so forgetful. It’s my birthday next week and mum is going to let me have a party. Isn’t that great?

Grandad: That’s wonderful, James! Of course I hadn’t forgotten your big day, but after last year’s dramas I am surprised that your mum is letting you have a party! How many friends are you allowed.....one, two.....?

James: Mum says I can have ten!

Grandad: Really. She must have a worse memory than me! Well who are you going to invite?

James: I must have Alex.....he’s my best friend....but wait a minute. He was the one who flushed my goldfish down the toilet at my last party and then laughed about it. No I will definitely not have him.

Grandad: But that was a year ago James, and your mum replaced it the next day.

James: No I am not risking asking Alex again. I know.... I will invite Krishan and Peter. They are a good laugh.

Grandad: Right

James: Hang on.....I have just remembered something....I can’t invite them. Last week at school they both ganged up on me and told the teacher when I blocked the sink with tissues. It was such a shame because I was creating this wonderful waterfall effect.

Grandad: But James they were right to tell the teacher. That was a very naughty thing to do.

- James: But great fun. No I don't like them anymore. They're not my friends because they snitched on me.
- Grandad: How about Jeremy? He's a really nice boy.
- James: Maybe, but he isn't coming to my party. He wouldn't let me borrow his rubber when I needed it on Wednesday.
- Grandad: But James, that is such a little thing. I think you should forgive him. What about Puja?
- James: Hmm....she is a girl but I suppose she's OK.
- Grandad: So we can send her an invitation then.
- James: No I can't invite her.
- Grandad: Why ever not?
- James: I have just remembered that in year one she called me "stupid" when the teacher asked me what 2+2 was and I said sixteen because I was working out how many more minutes I had to sit through that boring maths lesson.
- Grandad: Oh James, you're not going to hold that against her are you?
- James: Yes I am. She's definitely not coming to my party.
- Grandad: How about inviting Alison? She seems like the sort of girl you might get on with.
- James: Well I don't. A few weeks ago she and her friends wouldn't let me join in their game of rounders. She said I couldn't catch a ball for toffee nuts and all her friends laughed. I felt really silly.....no she's definitely not coming.
- Grandad: What about Raj?
- James: Nope, he pinched me two days ago for absolutely no reason at all.
- Grandad: Arun?
- James: Nope, He didn't invite me to his party.
- Grandad: But from what I remember his mother only lets him invite a couple of friends around to celebrate his birthday.
- James: Well he didn't invite me, so I am not going to invite him.
- Grandad: Oh James.....How about Theepa?
- James: Nope,
- Grandad: Ashley?

- James: Nope,
- Grandad: Eileen,
- James: Nope,
- Grandad: James, do you realize something?
- James: What, Grandad?
- Grandad: You have no friends left to invite to your party. Each one of the children you have mentioned has hurt you in some way this year or even last year, and because you haven't forgiven them, you are the loser. I don't think you are going to have a very happy party without any friends to come.
- James: No I don't think I am.
- Grandad: You know something James. Your mum had to forgive you and your friends a lot after last year's party..... remember there was the food fight at tea, the ducking of Alice in the slimy pond, next door's dog painted green and purple, the painting of the lounge wallpaper and
- James: Yes Grandad.....I remember it well, and mum said "never again!"
- Grandad: And yet she has forgiven you and your friends and is willing to give you another chance to have a birthday party. Do you think that in light of her forgiveness you might be able to forgive your friends?
- James: You're right Grandad. I do need to forgive them all. In fact I will invite all eleven of my forgiven friends to my party.
- Grandad: But I thought your mother said you could invite ten children James.
- James: She did Grandad....but when I tell her that I have forgiven eleven children, I am sure she won't mind. Will you help me write the party invitations?
- Grandad: Of course I will.
- James: Don't let me forget to add the P.S's
- Grandad: What P.S's James?
- James: The bit at the bottom of the invitation that tells my friends to bring their water pistols. We are going to use next door's cat for target practice.
- Grandad: James!
- Exit James and Grandad*