

ERIC

SAYS SORRY

Leader's Guide

Session 2



AIM:

To help children have an awareness of God as the giver of forgiveness.

OUTCOMES:

- Know that God is a person.
- To introduce the idea of sin.
- To know why we need to say sorry.
- To have a basic understanding of God's grace to us.

NOTES FOR LEADERS:

Eric Says Sorry reminds all of us of the basic truth that God is willing to forgive sin. As we lead this session, we see how Eric begins to understand the possibility of being forgiven. The idea of guilt is introduced and Eric's inability to deal with this guilt by trying to fix things himself, and blaming others, is exposed. Eric's dad then introduces another possibility – grace. In response to Eric's owning up to his wrong, Eric's dad pays the price to put everything right. This becomes a simple picture of repentance and God's "undeserved kindness when we've been bad". God paid for our mistakes with Jesus' death and resurrection. This takes us to the heart of the gospel story for the children.

The Bible says in Ephesians 2:8-9:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."

As we lead this session, we see how Eric begins to understand how he is being given what he does not deserve, both in terms of his neighbour but ultimately from God. Expect God to use this to impact the children and have a profound effect!

Spend some time thinking about your own life and give thanks for what God has done for you in his grace. Worship him as you reflect on your journey of faith.

MENU

KICK-STARTER

Choose your kick-starter activity from the options below. Instructions are in the activity menu at the end of the session. Make sure that you have all the resources that you need ready to go before the children arrive.

- **Tower of newspaper (for older children) – time-limited activity**
- **Line of bricks (for younger children)**

Discuss

- 1. Why were you not able to complete the task?** (Encourage the children to see that they needed more – something else from you as the leader – to complete the task, e.g. more time.)
- 2. Was it a fair task to ask you to do? Why or why not?**
- 3. Do you think you deserve the prize?** (Although the children may say yes to this, encourage them to see that the rules mean that they do not deserve to get the sweets!)

Explain to the children that you are going to watch and listen to a story on the video about something that Eric did. Before you start the video, tell the children that although they did not complete the task, they are going to get the sweets anyway to eat while they are watching. Instead of giving one large pack to the team, give the children a small packet of sweets each, e.g. small pack of Haribo.

Encourage the children that as they are watching/listening to the story, to watch for where Eric got something that he did not deserve. Encourage them to listen out for the word *grace*.

STORY

Watch the video of Dai Hankey telling the story of Eric Says Sorry at <https://vimeo.com/327923214/e7525f829d>

If you do not have access to video equipment, the storybook can be used to tell the story 'live'.

Explain to the children that you are going to think in the next few activities about some of the things that happened in the story and what Eric learned from his mistakes.

Say Eric had to learn to say sorry for what he had done wrong, so that he could be forgiven for what he had done. At this point he also learned what grace is – his dad called it “undeserved kindness when we’ve been bad.”

Discuss with the children times when they have done something wrong. What sorts of things have they done that need to be forgiven? Maybe you/another leader could tell a story of a time when you did something wrong, tried to cover it up and eventually had to confess or tell someone what you had done.

Ask how did it feel to be forgiven for doing something wrong? Encourage the children to answer, but also be aware that forgiveness may not be something that they experience often. You may need to help them by explaining how you have felt.

BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY

This activity is to help the children learn the Bible verse that is used as part of the story in the book.

We want the children to understand the ideas of sin and grace.

Say: In the story, Eric discovers he cannot fix the plant pot that he broke by himself by gluing it back together. He also discovers that blaming the situation on his sister doesn't help! However, when he owns up to breaking the pot, Eric's dad steps in and pays the price of buying a new one. When Eric then gives the new pot to Percy, he forgives Eric and tells him that he is glad Eric has learnt to own up to the wrong things he has done. Eric saying sorry is the turning point in the story and the first step towards receiving grace. His dad says: “We all mess up but God loves us still. Grace puts things right and pays the bill.”

BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY CONTINUED...

The verse says: "If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. We can trust God. He does what is right. He will make us clean from the wrongs we have done."

This verse is from a book in the Bible called 1 John chapter 1 verse 9. It is in the New Testament part of the Bible, which was written after Jesus lived on earth and went back to heaven.

Note for leaders: at this point in the session, there are three simple things that we want to reinforce for the children.

Like Eric:

- Like Eric, we all need to own up to the things that we do wrong and say sorry;
- Like Percy, God is willing to forgive us;
- Like Eric's dad, Jesus paid the price by dying on the cross.

Use the Bible verse relay from the activity menu at the back of this session.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

This activity is to encourage children to encounter God. One way that we can do this is through some creative prayer ideas.

There may be some children who are particularly impacted by hearing the gospel and understanding for the first time what Jesus has done for them. Again, set up the three activities and encourage your leaders to interact with the children as they participate. This will allow space for any conversations needed.

- Fizzy forgiveness
- Rubbish bin prayers
- Bubble prayers

PULL IT TOGETHER

Take a couple of minutes at the end to bring the whole session together.

Who can tell us the word beginning with G that we have been learning about?

(Allow the children to respond. Grace.)

Who was the last person that Eric learnt to say sorry to?

(Allow the children to respond. God.)

There are many times that we do things wrong but we can say sorry to God for those things and he forgives us. He sent Jesus to die and rise again so that we could be God's friends. We don't deserve that much love but God loves us so much that he wanted to send Jesus to die for us. That's called grace. Let's pray to say sorry to God but also to thank him for sending Jesus.

Pray with children before they leave – a simple prayer is printed at the back of the book:

Dear God, I am praying this prayer to say sorry to you, for all the wrong things I think, say and do. Forgive me for all of my sinful mistakes, thanks for the cross and your beautiful grace. Amen!

TAKE IT HOME

It can be good to have something that the children can take home with them to remember what they have been learning. There are two ideas to choose from.

1. Give the children a copy of 'Why did Jesus die?' or 'Why did Jesus rise?' by the Good Book Company.
2. Give the children a bookmark with the words 'Sorry God' on it to remind them he forgives.

ACTIVITY MENU

Tower of newspaper

Give the children two newspapers and a roll of sticky tape. Give the group the challenge to make a tower in two minutes that reaches the whole way to the ceiling without using any other support. Tell the children if they complete the task they will win a bag of sweets for their team.

This task is not possible to complete in the time as they would need a support to make the tower stand alone.

Fizzy forgiveness

You will need: large vase or jar, water, soluble vitamin tablets (lemon work best as they do not cloud up the water as quickly).

This is an activity about forgiveness and thinking about how God forgives us when we say sorry.

Put the jar of water on a table with a bowl of vitamin tablets and the instructions next to it. Break the tablets into smaller pieces – they will dissolve quicker and the water will have to be changed less often. It is best to have a team member nearby to ensure that students don't put lots of tablets in at once.

Encourage the children to think for a minute – have you done something wrong that would make God sad? Is there something that you would like to say sorry for?

Encourage the children to say a sorry prayer to God for what they have done. When they have finished, drop one of the tablets in the water and watch it fizz away. Help the children to understand that when God forgives us, he takes the sin away and leaves us clean.

Line of bricks

Give the children a bag of bricks, e.g. Lego bricks or wooden blocks. Give them the challenge of putting them end to end from one side of the room to the other. Make sure that there are not enough bricks to complete the task. Tell the children if they complete the task they will win a bag of sweets for their team.

Rubbish bin prayers

Put a bin in the space with some paper and pens beside it. Encourage the children to write or draw something that they want to say sorry to God for. Then have them crumple the paper and throw it in the bin. During the feedback, you could then light all the paper with a match so that the 'sorry prayers' disappear and explain that God forgives us completely so that those things we have done are gone.

Bubble prayers

Leave some containers of bubbles. Encourage the children to think of things they want to say sorry for. Then have them blow bubbles. As the bubbles burst, explain that God takes away the bad things we have done when we say sorry and he forgives us. Just as the bubbles disappear so do those things we are sorry for.

Bible verse relay

Have the children say the Bible verse a few times to get it in their head.

"If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. We can trust God. He does what is right. He will make us clean from the wrongs we have done." 1 John 1:9

Put the children into teams of four.

Have each team stand at one side of the room.

At the other side, have the four cards of the memory verse words and the pictures (one set for each team).

Send each child individually to collect a card before the next child runs to collect a card and so on.

The team must then put the cards in the correct order to make the memory verse.

Card 1: If we confess our sins

Card 2: He will forgive our sins

Card 3: We can trust God. He does what is right.

Card 4: He will make us clean from the wrongs we have done.

Again go through the memory verse with the children using the pictures from the story.