

JESUS EXTENDS FORGIVENESS

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

John 8:1-11, 39-59

A VERSE TO REMEMBER

Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.” (John 8:11b)

Daily Bible Readings			
M	Sept. 18	Eph. 4:17-32	Forgive as God in Christ Has Forgiven You
T	Sept. 19	Ps. 130	God Forgives
W	Sept. 20	Matt. 5:27-32	Adultery in the Heart
Th	Sept. 21	Matt. 7:1-5	You Get the Judgment You Give
F	Sept. 22	Ps. 32	Rejoice in God’s Forgiveness
Sa	Sept. 23	Isa. 55:6-13	Let the Wicked Forsake Their Way

STEPPING INTO THE WORD

Molly is leading the children’s time during the worship service at her church, and she invites the children forward. She sits on a low stool, and the children cluster around her. Molly asks them to imagine that they are in a crowd gathered around Jesus, and a man in the crowd asks Jesus a question.

“Instead of answering right away,” Molly tells the children, “Jesus bends down and writes in the dirt. What do you think he might be writing?”

“God is love,” one child chimes in. Another says, “God loves you.” Molly affirms those two children and waits for more suggestions. Another child proposes, “Maybe he writes one of the names for God, like Good Shepherd, or maybe he writes his own name.” “Maybe he writes the answer to the question,” a child says tentatively. Molly then asks if the children have ideas about why Jesus might have written in the sand. One child suggests, “Maybe he had to think about his answer.”

Molly says to the children, “In the sermon today, your parents are going to hear about a story from the Gospel of John. In that story a man asks Jesus a question, and before Jesus

answers, he writes in the dirt. Christians have always wondered what he wrote and why he paused to write something before he answered. You did a great job suggesting options. Isn't it fun to imagine ourselves there with Jesus?"

Molly is right that Christians throughout the centuries have wondered what Jesus wrote in the dirt. Later in the service, the adults listen to the reading from John 8 about the woman caught in adultery and hear a sermon about the interaction between Jesus, the Jewish leaders, and the woman. They know it takes two people to commit adultery, and some wonder if Jesus wrote, "Where is the man?"

Jesus, healer and forgiver, help us engage deeply with the stories of your conversations with people. Help us imagine ourselves there, listening carefully and learning from you. Fill us with your Spirit so we can interact with others the way you would.



SCRIPTURE

John 8:2–11, 56–59

8:2 Early in the morning [Jesus] came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach them. ³The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and, making her stand before all of them, ⁴they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. ⁵Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ⁶They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again." . . .

⁵⁶"Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad." ⁵⁷Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." ⁵⁹So

