

# HOW MANY TIMES?

# 77

**Theme:** Forgiving others

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:21, 22

**Prop:** A flash card with the number 77 on it

I brought a number to show you today. (*Show card.*) There it is: 77. Does that number mean anything to you? Of all the numbers in the world why do you think I'd pick that number?

I'll give you the answer in a little while. But first, have you ever been angry at someone because they said something that hurt you? I think everyone has. Well, when people are mean to us, is it OK to say mean things back to them? No! Should we find other ways to hurt them back? No!

You remember that they did some pretty mean things to Jesus, didn't they? What were some of the mean things they did to him? (*Made him wear a crown of thorns, beat him, whipped him, spat on him, nailed him to the cross.*) And when he was dying on the cross, did he say, "I'm mad at you guys and when I'm resurrected I'm going to get back at you."? No. He said, "Father, forgive them." And if Jesus could forgive the people who crucified him, do you think we should forgive the people who hurt us? Sure.

But what if they keep being mean to us after we forgive them? Do we have to forgive them again? Let's see what the Bible says in Matthew 18:21 & 22: "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but...(*Show flashcard.*)...seventy-seven times.'"

In other words we need to keep on forgiving people when they hurt us. And by the way, when we talk about forgiveness, what it means is that we should stop being angry. If you're still angry, you haven't forgiven. That's not always easy, but God gives us his Holy Spirit to help us do the right thing when it's hard to do.

And it always helps to pray about it, so let's do that now: Father in Heaven, we're thankful that you forgive us when we sin. Please help us to forgive others, because we know that Jesus didn't die just for us: He died for those people who hurt us, too. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

**Song: "The Bond of Love"**