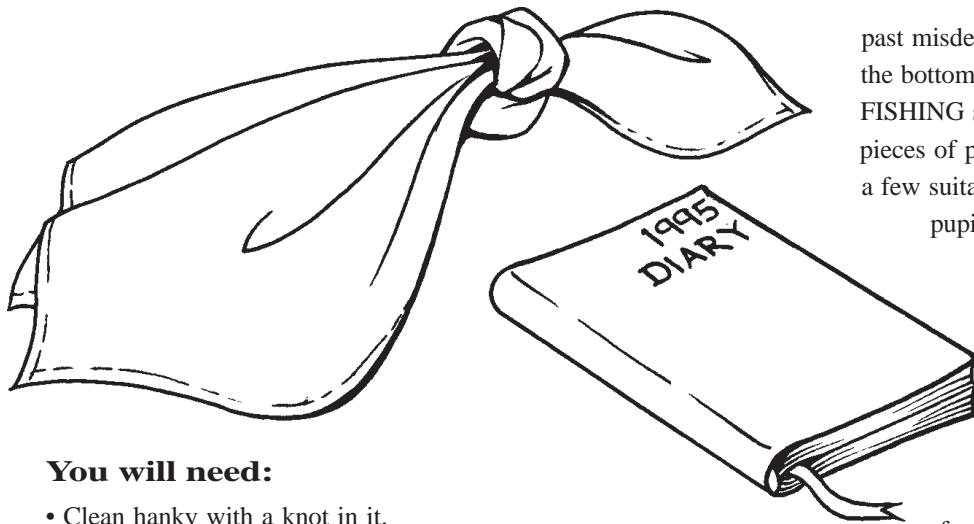


# Forgiveness

## Biblical Material: Proverbs 17.9

'If you forgive someone when they do wrong, you make a friend.'



### You will need:

- Clean hanky with a knot in it.
- Diary.
- A photocopy of the NO FISHING sign (provided).
- A bowl of water and a stone (optional).
- An improvised fishing rod (stick, string and magnet) (optional).
- Pieces of paper with paper clips on them. (optional)

### Introduction

Talk about forgetting things and different ways of jogging your memory. Show the diary etc. Ask the pupils about different ways they have of remembering. There are some events it is right to remember and commemorate. There are other things about which it is better not to remind people.

### Core Material

Read the Biblical Material and make it clear to pupils that this proverb is about the ordinary ups and downs of friendship. When someone makes a mistake, real friends don't keep reminding them of it. If people keep reminding others of the wrong they have done in the past it shows that they bear a grudge and have not forgiven them. People may find it hard to forget, but it is not necessary to keep dredging things up.

In the Bible, it talks about God putting people's wrongs behind his back or throwing them to the bottom of the sea (Isaiah 38.17, 43.25; Micah 7.18-19). These are word pictures: they mean God has forgiven people's wrongs and he is not going to keep reminding them of

past misdeeds. It is as if he has put them at the bottom of the ocean and put up a NO FISHING sign. If you have the rod and pieces of paper, introduce them here. Write a few suitable wrongs on the papers and pupils can fish for them with the rod.

It does not help, either ourselves or others, if we keep dredging up past wrongs, whether that be our own or other people's.

Remind the pupils that forgiveness does not mean putting up with ill-treatment.

### Prayer/Reflection

Show the NO FISHING sign. If you have a bowl of water and a stone, ask the children to look at the sign and then close their eyes and listen for the splash as the stone sinks. The splash is a reminder of God's forgiveness. Read Micah 7.18-19: 'Who is as forgiving as God? He delights to show mercy and hurls our wrongs to the bottom of the ocean.' God forgives: it is as if he puts people's sins at the bottom of the sea and puts up a NO FISHING sign.

*Father, help us to remember that you forgive. Give us the generosity do the same for others.*

*Note.* For guidance on prayers and reflections see pages 9-11.

