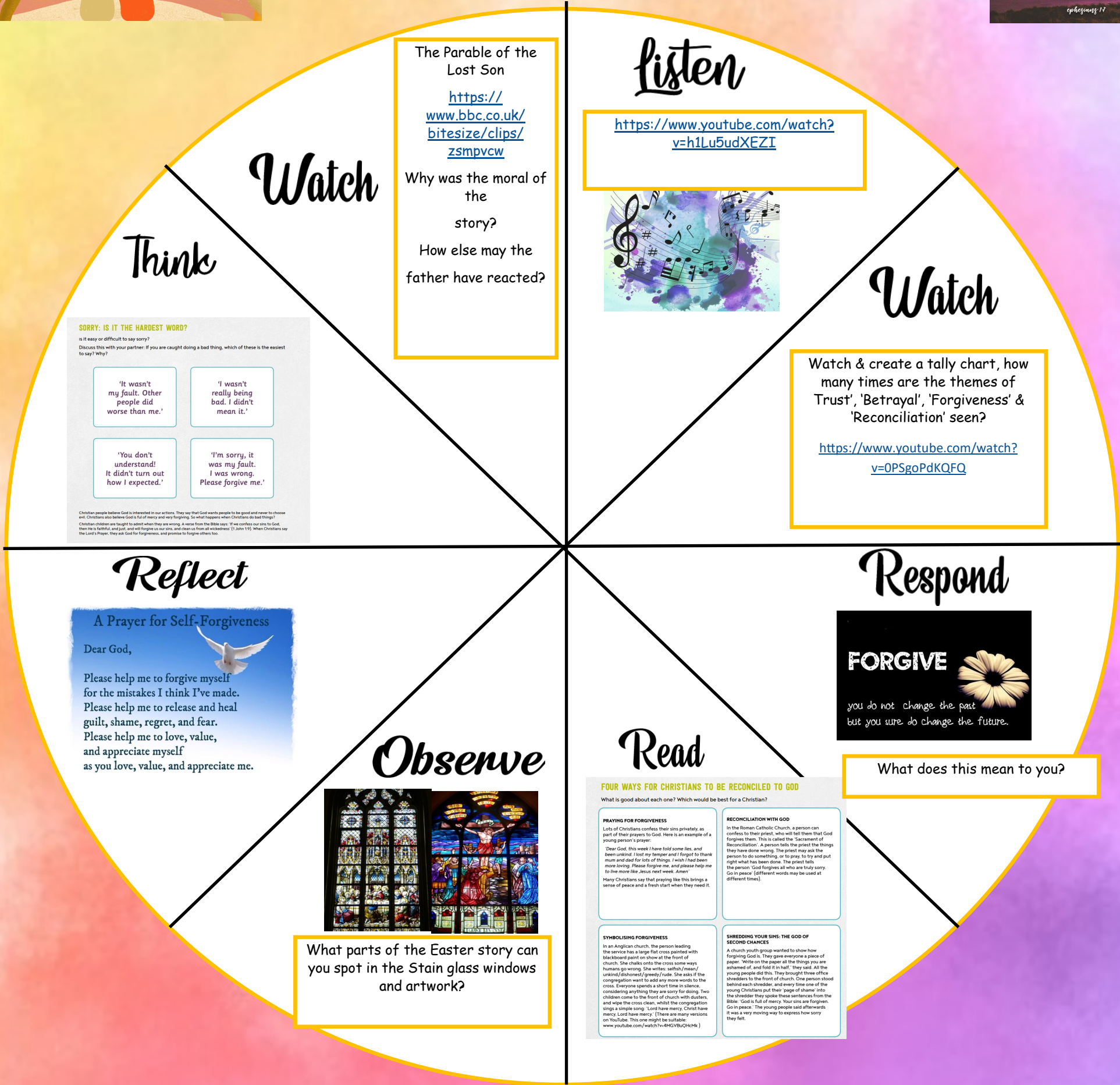
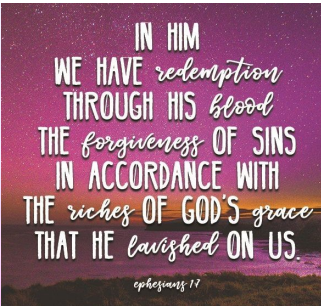




Do not judge, and you will not be judged.
Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.
Forgive, and you will be forgiven.
(Luke 6:37, NIV)

Forgiveness REF Wheel



Suggested Activities

Reflect—How does the Easter story show ultimate forgiveness?

Write a forgiveness prayer

Create forgiveness lyrics / poetry / artwork

Create a continuum—the beginning of the actions do you think Christians would find hard to forgive? What would be easy? Write them on your continuum.

What do you think Judas / Peter / Jesus would say reflecting on their actions—draw them and fill in speech bubbles with what you think they would say

Reflect—Think of a time when you forgave someone, how did you feel afterwards?

Talk to someone at home. Discuss, should all actions be forgiven?

SORRY: IS IT THE HARDEST WORD?

Is it easy or difficult to say sorry?

Discuss this with your partner: If you are caught doing a bad thing, which of these is the easiest to say? Why?

'It wasn't
my fault. Other
people did
worse than me.'

'I wasn't
really being
bad. I didn't
mean it.'

'You don't
understand!
It didn't turn out
how I expected.'

'I'm sorry, it
was my fault.
I was wrong.
Please forgive me.'

Christian people believe God is interested in our actions. They say that God wants people to be good and never to choose evil. Christians also believe God is full of mercy and very forgiving. So what happens when Christians do bad things?

Christian children are taught to admit when they are wrong. A verse from the Bible says: 'If we confess our sins to God, then He is faithful, and just, and will forgive us our sins, and clean us from all wickedness' (1 John 1:9). When Christians say the Lord's Prayer, they ask God for forgiveness, and promise to forgive others too.



FOUR WAYS FOR CHRISTIANS TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD

What is good about each one? Which would be best for a Christian?

PRAYING FOR FORGIVENESS

Lots of Christians confess their sins privately, as part of their prayers to God. Here is an example of a young person's prayer:

'Dear God, this week I have told some lies, and been unkind. I lost my temper and I forgot to thank mum and dad for lots of things. I wish I had been more loving. Please forgive me, and please help me to live more like Jesus next week. Amen'

Many Christians say that praying like this brings a sense of peace and a fresh start when they need it.

RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

In the Roman Catholic Church, a person can confess to their priest, who will tell them that God forgives them. This is called the 'Sacrament of Reconciliation'. A person tells the priest the things they have done wrong. The priest may ask the person to do something, or to pray, to try and put right what has been done. The priest tells the person 'God forgives all who are truly sorry. Go in peace' (different words may be used at different times).

SYMBOLISING FORGIVENESS

In an Anglican church, the person leading the service has a large flat cross painted with blackboard paint on show at the front of church. She chucks onto the cross some ways humans go wrong. She writes: selfish/mean/unkind/dishonest/greedy/rude. She asks if the congregation want to add any more words to the cross. Everyone spends a short time in silence, considering anything they are sorry for doing. Two children come to the front of church with dusters, and wipe the cross clean, whilst the congregation sings a simple song: 'Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.' (There are many versions on YouTube. This one might be suitable: www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MGVBuQHcMk)

SHREDDING YOUR SINS: THE GOD OF SECOND CHANCES

A church youth group wanted to show how forgiving God is. They gave everyone a piece of paper. 'Write on the paper all the things you are ashamed of, and fold it in half,' they said. All the young people did this. They brought three office shredders to the front of church. One person stood behind each shredder, and every time one of the young Christians put their 'page of shame' into the shredder they spoke these sentences from the Bible: 'God is full of mercy. Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.' The young people said afterwards it was a very moving way to express how sorry they felt.