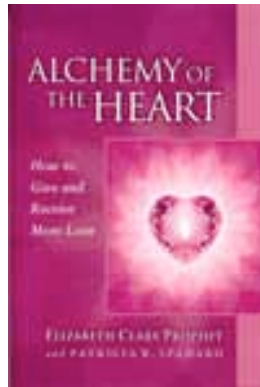


Book Study Groups Children's Lessons Based on

Alchemy of the Heart

By Elizabeth Clare Prophet and Patricia R. Spadaro

Alchemy of the Heart offers powerful insights and tools for wholeness based on a deep understanding of the heart. It draws from the wisdom of the world's spiritual traditions to show you how you can nurture your soul through developing heart qualities of love and mercy.



Lesson Five (Based on pages 85 to 107) The Merciful Heart For Children ages 6 – 10

Parent/Teacher Preparation: This lesson is taken from the chapter, “Healing the Heart.”

Review the first three sections of Chapter Three, *The Merciful Heart*, *The Mystery of Self-Transcendence* and *A Ritual of Forgiveness* before you begin.

Review the lesson, including the activities. Please note that the text of what you can say to your child is in *italics*.

Gather the following materials you will need:

- CD and music (optional)
- Drawing materials

Set Your Environment:

Pick a time when both you and your child are rested and happy.

If you have a CD player and classical music CD's, select something soothing to play as you and your child begin.

Suggested Music:

Mozart or Bach – your choice.



Overview of the lesson

- Learning to forgive is to become merciful.
- It is important to learn to forgive and forget.
- Forgiveness does not mean that what someone does was right, it means that we forgive from our heart, we ask God to forgive them and we go on our way.

Learning to be merciful

Do you know what merciful means? Merciful means to be full of mercy. Mercy is when you can forgive and love someone, even when they have done something wrong or hurtful to you. Being merciful is the opposite of having a hard heart. Our heart is hard when we stay mad and refuse to forgive someone that has hurt us. To help us think about being merciful, here is a story about a little boy named Josh.



The story of Josh

Josh was an eight-year-old boy. He was not very big and Tony, a neighbor boy who was big and tall, thought it was funny that Josh was small. Josh did not think it was so funny and often ran away from Tony when he saw him coming. One day Josh was walking home from school and Tony threw a rock at him.



On this day, Josh could not run fast enough and the rock that Tony threw hit him hard in the back of the head. It knocked him over. His mother heard neighborhood children yelling out in the street and she looked out the window and saw him lying on the street, bleeding. She ran to get him and immediately took him to the hospital where Josh woke up. His head

was hurting so badly! Tears ran down his cheeks as the doctor gave him a shot and had to give him five stitches to sew up the wound from the rock.

The doctor was very nice to Josh, but it still hurt he did not like being at the hospital.

When it was all over and Josh and his mother got home, Josh was very angry with Tony. He had already decided he was NEVER going to forgive Tony, even if he said he was sorry.

The next day, Tony and his mother came over and Tony's mom made him apologize. Josh did not think Tony really meant it. He nodded at Tony but would not look at him and did not say one word back to him while the mothers talked about what had happened.

After Tony and his mom left, Josh's mom asked him to sit down and talk to her. Josh was still mad and did not want to talk to her but she insisted. She told Josh that it was very important to forgive, even the people who hurt you! Tony did something stupid, but he did not really want to hurt Josh.

She explained that when we do not forgive, we hold on to the thing that happened and it stays with us. If we can forgive it, we can forget it and it is over. She told Josh about karma. Jesus taught us: "As you sow, so shall ye reap."



Sowing is another word for planting

That means that if we plant negative ideas and actions, and we do bad and unkind things to people, those same things will come back to us at some time, so we learn what it feels like to be treated that way. It also means that if we are loving and kind, others will at some time be loving and kind to us. Our souls learn this way.

She also told him about reincarnation, that our soul is born in many bodies over hundreds of thousands of years and when we do not forgive someone,

we may have to come into a new life and be with that person to finally learn to forgive that one.

She told him that many times when someone acts unkindly, it is because they are upset about their own lives. Tony was probably feeling bad about himself and to make himself feel better, he did something unkind to Josh. Possibly Josh himself had done something unkind to Tony in another lifetime and now he had to experience that pain so he would learn not to hurt someone ever again.

Josh could understand that. But he was still a little confused. Why did he have to forgive? Why would his mother want him to forgive the kid who had made him hurt so badly?

His mother told him again, that when we do not forgive, we are the one that hurts inside. We are the one that is tied to the person who hurt us. We are the one that may have to come back and learn to forgive.

“But mom,” he said. “What Tony did was wrong!”

Josh was confused because he thought that to forgive someone meant that somehow, that meant that what they did was all right. And he knew that Tony’s rock was not all right.

His mother smiled at him and told him that forgiving does not mean we accept that what the person did was all right. It was still wrong. But to forgive means to forgive the soul of the person who did us harm and to ask God to forgive them. Then we can let go, knowing that God will teach that person the lesson he needs – it is not our job to teach the soul who has hurt us by trying to hurt them back. That would just make more karma for us!

Josh’s mother reminded him of the line in the Lord’s Prayer – “Forgive us our debtors as we forgive our debtors.” It means that as much as we forgive those who owe us or have hurt us, God will forgive us for our misdeeds. Some people want to seek revenge and get back at the person who hurt them, but that is not God’s way.



Josh ate his snack and thought about it. Finally, he got it! Some time, some place, Tony will learn his lesson. But that is not Josh’s business. That is Tony’s business with his parents and with God. All Josh has to do is to forgive and go on with his own life. It wasn’t easy, but Josh made up his

mind that it was better to forgive, and so he did.

Next day, when Josh saw Tony at school, he smiled at him. Tony seemed surprised but smiled back. They did not become friends, but Tony never teased him again or threw another rock.

Asking for forgiveness and saying you are sorry

Sometimes, we do not send love, or we are not obedient or helpful. We do not do the right thing and we may feel badly about it. When that happens, the most important thing we can do is admit it to ourselves, apologize for the error and ask God for forgiveness. If we deny it and if we start making up stories about what we say we did, we do not ask for forgiveness and the lie becomes a dark spot between us and God.

The next most important thing is to say you are sorry to the person you were not kind to and try to make it up to them by kind words and actions.

Activity 1: Is there anything you need to forgive?

There may be people who have said or done something to you and it made so angry that you never forgave them. Think about it and ask God to forgive them and try to help you to forgive them as well.

Activity 2: Asking for forgiveness

Sometimes, the hardest person to forgive is you! People can feel guilty and even like they do not deserve to be forgiven, but God will ALWAYS forgive us if we ask.

Think about a time that you did something or said something that may have hurt someone. Ask God to forgive you and to help you forgive yourself. If that person is in your house or near you, and you feel comfortable doing it, talk to them and tell them you are sorry.



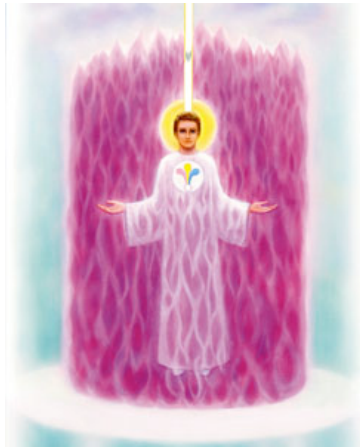
With your parents, make up a prayer asking God for forgiveness. It can be very simple, like this:

Step 1: *Dear Lord, please forgive me for.... (You can fill this part in silently, or out loud.) I am sorry and I will work on being kinder, (or more obedient – whatever is the opposite of what you did wrong.)*

Step 2: *Tell the person you are sorry. If that is not possible, write a letter of apology to the person you have offended and ask your parents to burn it for you. This is a good way to get the matter off your chest.*

Step 3: You can take this another step and invoke the spiritual light from God to dissolve the whole thing.

The light of forgiveness is violet. When we say the term I AM, all in capital letters, we mean "God in me is." The real self in us is the connection in our heart to the presence of God. Simply close your eyes, see the violet flame, and give the following prayer:



***I AM a being of violet fire
I AM the purity God desires***

Activity 3: Another prayer for forgiveness

Here is a special prayer you can give when you need to forgive someone. When you say the words I AM it means "God in me is." As you say these words, see violet-pink flames blazing up inside of you, going out from your heart to the hearts of everyone who want to bless.



Affirmation for Forgiveness

*I AM forgiveness acting here,
Casting out all doubt and fear,
Setting men forever free
With wings of cosmic victory.*

*I AM calling in full power
For forgiveness every hour;
To all life in every place
I flood forth forgiving grace.*

You can develop a momentum of being truthful and asking for forgiveness when you make a mistake. Try it next time you make a mistake!

Activity 4: The film, *The Tale of Despereaux* centers on the theme of forgiveness. We suggest you get it from your local library and watch it first to determine if it is right for your family.

Summing up

- Learning to forgive is to become merciful. How can you be more merciful?
- It is important to learn to forgive and forget. What are two things you want to forgive for yourself or for your friends?
- Forgiveness does not mean that what someone does was right, it means that we forgive from our heart, we ask God to forgive them and we go on our way. How do you ask God for forgiveness for someone else?