READY TO USE PARABLE

# Freddy and the false forgiveness

Freddy sat outside Miss Whittaker’s office. His knuckles were bloodied from the punch he’d thrown earlier. He knew he shouldn’t have done it, but Stefan had it coming. He was so cocky, so arrogant. And what he’d said about Freddy’s mum was the last straw. It had felt good to land a fist on that stupid face, followed by a knee to the chest.

But any lasting satisfaction had been wiped out by the knowledge that he was in trouble. Big trouble. A long exclusion, maybe even a permanent one, was on the cards. His dad had been called, as had the police.

The office door open and the head appeared next to him.

“Come in, Freddy.” He shuffled in and stood in front of Miss Whittaker’s desk.

“This is serious, Freddy. You’ve stood in front of my desk far too often. I’ve got no choice but to exclude you from school.”

“But Miss Whittaker,” he said, “you can’t. I’ve got exams coming up and if I miss them, I won’t be able to go to college.” He dropped to his knees and begged the head to give him one more chance.

She looked at him, her eyes narrowing. “OK, I’ll go one better,” she said. “I’m going to wipe your slate clean. Consider your record blank. Now go back to class.”

Freddy couldn’t believe his ears. He rushed out of the office and off down the corridor before Miss Whittaker could change her mind. As he ran, he collided with a group of lads coming the other way. He turned and grabbed the nearest one, Sam, by his shirt collar.

“What do you think you’re playing at?” he roared into Sam’s surprised face. He threw Sam to the floor and screamed: “Are you looking for a kicking?”

He lifted his foot to start administering his own style of justice when a voice cut through his anger. It was Miss Whittaker.

“Freddy. My office – now.”

Freddy stood in front of the head’s desk.

“I cleared everything from your record, Freddy. And yet you could not forgive someone who had accidentally bashed into you.” She looked down and wrote a note on Freddy’s file.

“I’m going to have to exclude you. Permanently.”

## Discussion questions

Ask the young people these questions. Try to let the discussion flow as much as possible, without interjecting too many of your own ideas.

* Why did the headteacher wipe Freddy’s slate clean?
* What do you think Freddy does next?
* Have you ever been in a similar position to Freddy?
* What does this story tell you about forgiveness?
* How easy is it to forgive others?

This story is based on Matthew 18:21–35. Read the story together and discuss Jesus’ conclusion. You may want to chat about the story using these questions:

* Why do you think Peter asks Jesus about how many times you should forgive someone?
* Do you think there should be a limit to forgiveness? Can someone be unforgiveable?
* Why do you think the king forgives the official his massive debt?
* How would you describe the character of the man who is forgiven, but refuses to forgive?
* What do you make of Jesus’ comment at the end (in verse 35)?
* What does this story tell you about forgiveness and the character of God?

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