FORGIVING

A GOOD FRIEND FORGIVES AND FORGETS

ED U. GATOR LEARNS TO FORGIVE

TAKING A CHANCE TO HELP A PERSON
Good Friends Forgive and Forget

"I’m sorry" and "I forgive you" are two of the toughest things to say. Have you ever done something that you knew was wrong, but you just couldn’t bring yourself to apologize for it? Maybe you broke or spilled something by accident, or lost something important, or said something that hurt someone else’s feelings. When it happened, maybe your mom or dad or teacher told you to say "I’m sorry." Well, that’s not always easy, but it’s always the right thing to do. And it’s one of the best ways to show what a good friend you really are.

You know what’s another thing that good friends do? Good friends forgive. Just as you had to work hard to say you were sorry, someone else is having a hard time saying "sorry" to you! Maybe they took a toy you weren’t finished playing with, or pushed into you in line, or said something that made you angry or sad. If they apologize to you, be a good friend and a brave and responsible person and say, “That’s okay, I forgive you!” Because when friends say they’re sorry, and when friends forgive each other, they can get back to sharing stuff, laughing and playing, which is really what good friends do best of all!

Activity:
Think about how much fun you have with one of your best friends. If you two had a fight and didn’t play together for a day or two, what kind of stuff would you miss the most?
i, good friends. Ed here. The other day, my friend Alice did something that really made me angry. We were all outside on the playground, and I decided I wanted to kick around a soccer ball that was on the ground next to the water fountain. Just before I got to it, Alice pushed past me and grabbed the ball. I was very surprised. “Alice,” I said, “I was just going to get that.”

“I saw it first!” she said, and ran off across the field. Boy, I was burning up! She knew I wanted that ball and she took it anyway. That was completely unfair! Mr. Salam Ander was on the playground at the time, and he said he was sure Alice would let me have it when she was done with it. But that wasn’t the point! Anyway, it bothered me for the rest of the afternoon. When I was getting on the bus to go home, Alice came running up to me.

“Hey, Ed,” she said, “I’m really sorry I grabbed that ball away from you at recess.”

“That’s okay,” I said. But I wasn’t really telling the truth, because it wasn’t really okay! I guess my feelings were still hurt. That evening, Alice called my house and asked if I wanted to ride bikes in the park the next day. “No thanks,” I said, “I’m busy.” But you know what, that wasn’t the truth either! Before I fell asleep that night, I thought about Alice, and about my own behavior. I decided the soccer ball thing wasn’t really as big a deal as I was making it. And I never should have lied to my friend, especially twice! The worst part was, I really wanted to ride bikes with Alice, more than anything! I was the one missing out by not forgiving Alice.

The next day I rode my bike down to the park, hoping I’d see Alice. There she was! She came over to me and said, “Ed, I know you’re still mad at me, but . . .”

“No, I’m not Alice,” I said, and this time I meant it. “I forgive you, and I’m sorry it took me so long to get over it.” Guess what happened then? We gave each other a great big hug, just like good friends do. It felt so much better to forgive and forget, and to not be angry with Alice anymore!
WHAT IS THE COLOR OF FORGIVING?

Directions: In the picture below, two friends are carrying a basket of flowers after an argument. Color in the picture with crayons or markers.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD FRIEND?

Directions: Earlier in this paper, we talked about some of the things that good friends do, like saying “sorry” or “I forgive you.” Think about some of your good friends, and list below some of the stuff you especially like about them.
IN THE NEWSPAPER

**Directions:** There are many pictures of peoples' faces in the newspaper. Find and cut out ones that show different expressions, like happiness, sadness, surprise and anger. Can you find a face that looks like it’s forgiving?

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CAN YOU MEND THIS BROKEN HEART?

**Directions:** Below is a picture of a heart, but all the pieces are jumbled up. Cut the pieces out and paste or tape them together on another page.
One bright summer day, a young boy named David took his dog Pepper for a long walk. Pepper was a beautiful and energetic black Labrador, who loved to run fast and play hard with David and his two older brothers. Against his father's wishes, and his brothers' stern warnings, David would sometimes take Pepper out to the big open field near the stream, undo his leash and let him run free. He knew it wasn't the right thing to do, especially because he was disobeying his father, but David got so much delight from seeing Pepper jump and frolic in all his glory!

Just like other Saturdays, Pepper was chasing and retrieving one of David's old baseballs. Suddenly, a wild cat ran across the field. Before David could stop him, Pepper was off and running, past the stream and out of sight. David hoped Pepper would return when he was done chasing the cat, but he never did. David looked all afternoon and most of the evening, until it was getting too dark to see. He returned home alone, hearing his father calling their names from a distance. “Where have you been?” David’s father asked. “I was worried sick about you. Where is Pepper?” By the time David explained about the field, the leash and the cat, his dad was furious. “You have completely ignored my wishes,” he told David. “Tomorrow we’ll go out and look for Pepper, but you’re grounded for a week.”

David’s brothers were waiting upstairs. Already feeling terrible about losing Pepper, his brothers made him feel even worse. That night he cried himself to sleep. He missed Pepper's warm body, snuggling up against him on the bed. The next day, David and his Dad drove all over the county looking for Pepper. They stopped and asked people in town, and people along the highway, but no one had seen him. For seven days, David hardly spoke, and he wasn’t very interested in his meals, even when his grandmother made his favorite chocolate cake for dinner. “David,” Grandma said, “I know you feel terrible about losing Pepper. Everyone makes mistakes. Your father and brothers have forgiven you. I think it’s time you forgave yourself.” Then she told him about a special place she knew where you could forget all your sorrows. “I’ll wake you up at 7:00 tomorrow morning. Pack your bathing suit and a towel.”

When morning came, David and his grandmother walked to a place a half a mile beyond the stream. There was an incredible fountain, spraying water in all directions! David couldn’t believe he had never been here before. “It's my little secret for special occasions. It’s a forgiving fountain. No matter what you’ve done, it will never judge you. I’ve come here a few times myself over the years. Now go and have some fun!” David changed into his suit and dove headfirst into the water. It was a bit chilly, but it felt absolutely wonderful! He splashed and dove and drank refreshing mouthfuls of the crystal clear water. For the first time in a week, David forgot about Pepper and his great sadness. After an hour, David’s grandmother called him out of the water. “David,” she said, “you are a good boy. Don’t ever forget that. We all learn some tough lessons from time to time. That’s called growing up.” David hugged his grandmother. He dipped his hand in the cold water one more time. The fountain had forgiven him, and although he would always miss Pepper’s companionship, he was finally able to forgive himself.
Sometimes people disagree about certain things. Throughout history, people have argued, and entire nations have gone to war over differences in opinions. Imagine you knew someone who always did or said mean and hurtful things to you. It would be very hard to be that person’s friend, wouldn’t it? Chances are you’d stay as far away from that person as possible, and instead, you’d probably stick with those kids who treated you nicely and wanted to be your friend.

Well, this is a story about an 18-year-old girl named Keshia Thomas, who didn’t stay away from a person who had no interest in being her friend. This person needed her help, and Thomas risked her own life to save his. One afternoon in June of 1996, a man named Albert McKeel, Jr. was nearly beaten to death by an angry group of people. Thomas threw herself on top of him to protect him from a barrage of kicks and punches. It was an unbelievably brave and forgiving thing to do.

Her act of courage and kindness touched people all across the country. Her story appeared in magazines and on television shows. But Keshia Thomas is very modest, too. She said, “A lot of kids do the right thing. They just never get the attention.” Two months after the incident, the Congress of Racial Equality honored her with its Harmony Award, and a Michigan businessman donated $1000 toward her tuition at Louisiana State University. After college, Thomas hopes to join the Peace Corps, to spread her good will throughout the rest of the world.

VOCABULARY:
Opinion: a belief based on what someone thinks to be true.
Risk: the chance of getting hurt.
Barrage: a heavy attack.
Modest: not vain or boastful; humble and decent.
Incident: something that happens in real life or in a story.
Harmony: peace and friendship.
Tuition: the cost of attending school.
1) Forcing a young child to say “I’m sorry” may not always be the best approach, especially since he might not be sorry. It could be more effective to explain to him the serious consequences of his actions, which may have involved hurting another child or damaging something that belonged to someone else. If your child can see how he might have been affected if the shoe was on the other foot, he may think twice about repeating the behavior.

2) Modeling “I’m sorry” and “I forgive you” in appropriate situations in front of your child will probably have more meaning than a direct demand for an apology.

3) Often, forgiving is more difficult than apologizing. Sometimes it’s easier for kids (and adults) to hold onto anger than to simply “get over it.” How you handle similar situations with your child will leave an indelible impression.

4) Some kids blame themselves for situations that are completely out of their control. Help your child to understand where her responsibility begins, and ends.

5) People say “I’m sorry” and “I forgive you” in different ways, often without using those exact words. Look for situations where your child is striving to “do the right thing,” even if his method falls short of a full apology or forgiveness, and encourage his step in the right direction.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Feeling sorry and expressing forgiveness are sophisticated emotions. Just like anger and sadness, it may take some defining on your part to help your child understand what’s going on inside his or her head. The Aliki book Feelings, listed below, is a good tool for teaching the range of emotions. Another possible method is looking through magazines or newspapers with your child (like the activity on page 5), and talking about different facial expressions. Just for fun, watch an appropriate television show together with the sound turned off. Can you tell what each character is feeling just by watching the faces?

RESOURCES

Hazen, Barbara Shook. Even If I Did Something Awful. Atheneum, 1981.

FAMILY PLEDGE CARD

Our family has completed the Family Page together:

______________________________                     Child’s name
Family members:

______________________    ___________________
______________________    ___________________
School: ___________________________________
Teacher/grade: ___________________________