

LESSON PLAN EXERCISES

This month's lesson plans are based on the value of Forgiveness.

FORGIVENESS - Related Values:

LOVE:

Acceptance, Affection, Care, Compassion, Consideration, Empathy, Forbearance, Forgiveness, Friendship, Generosity, Gentleness, Kindness, Patience, Reverence, Sacrifice, Sharing, Sympathy, Thoughtfulness, Tolerance, Trust and Unselfishness.

TRUTH:

Fairness, Fearlessness, Honesty, Integrity, Intuition, Justice, Optimism, Purity, Quest for knowledge, Self-awareness, Sincerity, Trusting, Truthfulness, Unity of thought, words and deed.

RIGHT CONDUCT:

Social Skills: Good behaviour, Good relationships.

Ethical Skills: Code of Conduct, Courage, Respect for all.

PEACE: Contentment, Dignity, Equanimity, Happiness, Harmony, Humility, Optimism, Patience, Reflection, Satisfaction, Self-acceptance, Self-confidence, Self-control, Self-esteem, Self-discipline, Self-respect, Understanding, Virtue.

NON-VIOLENCE:

Psychological: Benevolence, Compassion, Concern for Others, Consideration, Co-operation Forbearance, Forgiveness, Joy of Life.

Social: Harmlessness, Universal Love.

COMMENT FOR TEACHERS:

As teachers we know that the children in our care experience being forgiven for certain unacceptable behaviour when they show remorse. Children need to know the boundaries in order to feel secure. They need to be shown clearly what is acceptable, or not acceptable, behaviour. They also need to know that they are loved unconditionally, so that even if they have been reprimanded for stepping out of line they have not stepped out of the boundaries of our positive feelings for them because we can forgive them.

DISCUSSION PAPER FOR PUPILS:

According to the Webster's Dictionary, to FORGIVE means to give up resentment or a claim to requital for an insult, etc. In Chambers Thesaurus the noun FORGIVENESS is associate with the following synonyms: pardon, absolution, exoneration, acquittal, remission, amnesty, mercy, clemency and leniency.

FORGIVENESS is about mending and repairing. It is about dissolving barriers of separation and allowing oneself to feel loving towards some one even if they have treated us badly. Mother Teresa once said that it is easy to show kindness to a leper, but to show love towards someone who has hurt us in some way is a true test.

When you have been hurt, have you ever found yourself feeling resentment or even hatred?
The result of this can be very serious. It can lead to an escalation of tension and can even provoke retaliation. Lack of forgiveness is the stuff that wars are made of. As we harbour grudges, our feeling of separateness can grow.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation or condition that we are unhappy with and resented it?

If you cannot have things you want, in the past, present or in our future projections, have you ever felt resentment?

One useful exercise is to examine our inner feelings in order to get to the root of the problem. We can ask ourselves why we have reacted in a negative way to the treatment that we have experienced from someone.

What part of me is really hurt?

If it is the body that is hurting it is sometimes easier to come to terms with (unless the injuries are very serious). If it is that we feel an injustice has been perpetrated against us then it can be often very difficult to let go of feelings of resentment. In other words it is not so much what happens to us that is the problem, it is our reaction to whatever happens and how we feel. If we can remember this, then we can take positive steps to lessen or even prevent ourselves from becoming negative and resentful.

Does bearing a grudge against another make us feel relaxed, happy, and contented?

When we bear a grudge, we feel unhappy, angry and often very emotional and volatile. Sometimes we find ourselves taking these feelings out on others or we may isolate ourselves and/or throw ourselves into work to avoid dealing with these feelings. Often all we need to clear ourselves is a good friend who encourages us to take time out to release our feelings or we may seek more professional help. Whatever way we choose part of the healing process is letting go of the past and allowing ourselves to forgive.

QUOTES

Forgiveness is the fragrance the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it (Mark Twain)

To err is human; to forgive is divine. (Proverb)

People who live in glasshouses should not throw stones. (Proverb)

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. (The Lord's prayer - Jesus)

Turn the other cheek. (Jesus)

Before you enter the temple, forgive. (Jesus)

Forgiveness is to offer no resistance to life-to allow life to live through you. (Eckhart Tolle)

STORY

*The Cycle Of Things**by Kai Amea*

“How can we learn to forgive?” the flowers asked the sun. “How can we forgive all those who pick us, all those who spray us with weed killer, with no thought?”

“How can I forgive?” said the stream. “How can I forgive those who poison me with pollution, who cast their waste into my waters with no regard?”

“How can I forgive?” said the pheasant. “How can I forgive those who shoot my young for sport? How can I forgive those who kill with no concern?”

“How can we forgive?” cried the farm animals. “How can we forgive the way that we are treated? How can we forgive those who treat us with no love or respect?”

The world mimicked the cry. The cry of pain echoed across the galaxy. The moon heard the anguish and paled, her tears falling as she felt the torment.

“What is to be done?” she asked the sun.

The sun blazed in glory. “Love,” he said. “Love has the power to overcome any adversity, no matter how unjust it may seem. You cannot change others by force. You can only show by example. Love from deep within yourself. Love from your heart and live your love by loving all you meet and by loving yourself.”

The sun blazed with light. He sent the energy to the moon who gleamed with silver, mirroring his light. She smiled. The flowers felt the sun’s rays. They opened their petals and turned their heads to the light, focusing on the love they felt, rather than their torment, and they were happy.

The stream gurgled with merriment, feeling the love from the sun, glistening as the sunlight reflected on its surface. The pheasant and the farm animals also felt the love. They felt the warmth soak into their bodies and they felt at peace.

“Show those who torment you the same lesson that I have shown you,” the sun said. “Do not live in pain by attaching to the negative behaviour of others around you. Focus on love and as my love aided you in finding peace, so will your love affect those around you, encouraging them to be aware of the error in their ways. Do not lose sight of love. Then forgiveness comes, for there will be nothing to forgive.”

QUESTIONS:

1. Why were the flowers sad?
 2. Why was the stream finding it difficult to forgive?
 3. How did the animals’ torment affect the planet?
 4. What did the sun do?
 5. What did the flowers and things learn?
 6. What did it mean, “for there would be nothing to forgive”?
 7. How did you feel when you heard the story?
 8. Did the story remind you of anything about your own behaviour?
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POEM

The following poem is for Junior and Secondary levels to stimulate thought discussion and class work related to the value of Forgiveness.

Shall I forgive you?

by Zita Starkie

If I don't forgive you
I'll be upset today
I'll feel the sadness, hurt and pride
And my heart will fill with grey.

If I don't forgive you
These feelings just won't hide.
I know you only hurt me
Because you felt bad inside.

I remember when I hurt you
And you were crying too.
That time I acted badly
And made you lonely, sad and blue.

But you forgave me later
When I said, "I'm really sorry".
You told me we could still be friends
And I didn't have to worry.

And now that I forgive you
I'm feeling good today.
I feel so light and happy
And my heart just wants to play.

POEM

This poem is for Secondary level.

Forgiveness

by Zita Starkie

Can I
Let it
Go?

This
Slow Ache
Heart break
Dark lake
Mend or break?

Shall I
Let it
Go?

This
Slow pain
Inner drain
Blackest stain
Deepest grain.

Have to
Let it
Go!

This slow
Resentment
No contentment
Disappointment
No enjoyment.

Time to
Let it
Go

And glow.
Store less
Judge less
Egoless
Forgiveness.

CURRICULUM SUGGESTIONS

WHOLE SCHOOL: A day could be set aside as FORGIVENESS day. The school could prepare for the day by inviting suggestions from the pupils and the staff as to how the day could be marked. A suggestion box could be placed in a prominent place. A short brief during assembly, or from their form teacher, could inspire the children. Children could be encouraged to reflect upon the benefits of FORGIVENESS. This could take the form of telling them about the lives of some inspirational people such as Jesus and Nelson Mandela who stressed the importance of FORGIVENESS. Pupils from different years could be asked to talk about the importance of FORGIVENESS in strengthening relationships. A mended heart could be used as an appropriate symbol to commemorate the day and badges could be presented to pupils who have displayed FORGIVENESS.

ENGLISH:

At **Junior level**, SSEHV materials from the books and CDs can be used as the basis of discussion, activities and work. Lessons can be based on the following sections:

- Book 1, Lessons 1.3 “Fearlessness”, 1.6 “Owning up”, 1.7 “Being Loving”, 1.10 “Friendship”, 1.12 “Being even tempered and dealing with bullying”, 1.26 “Universal love” and
- Book 2, Lesson 2.4 “Optimism”, 2.7 “Caring”, 2.8 “Friendship”, 2.10 “Kindness”.
- The songs “Whose afraid” (Track 4), “If you wish for love” (Track 8) and “When we’re in a mood” (Track 13) can be found on CD 1.
- The following can be used from CD 2: “Optimism” (Track 4), “Happy are they” (Track 11), “Umbrellas of love” (Track 12) and “St Francis Prayer” (Track 18).

Other suggestions:

- The first of the above poems, “Shall I forgive you?” can be used in a similar way.
- Dipak Fakey’s Human Values board -games (available from SSEHV Promotions Ltd) is also a very useful source for activities.
- Pupils could be asked to talk about the benefits of FORGIVENESS. Suggestions could be placed on a mind map/flow diagram, which can be displayed in class.
- Stories and poems could be written on the theme of FORGIVENESS. Possible titles could include, “I was glad when I forgave my friend” and “The day I was forgiven”. The best can be put on display.

At **Lower Secondary level:**

- Book 3 could be used as a basis for discussion and work. In particular Lesson 3.3 “Friendship”, 3.4 “Self control”, and 3.8 “Tolerance” and 3.18 “Forgiveness”.
 - The second poem in this newsletter, “Forgiveness”, can also be used as a basis of stimulus and discussion.
 - A play could be written as a joint class project concerning the theme of FORGIVENESS. Two contrasting families could be portrayed; one that displays the quality and one that does not.
 - Essays and poems can be written that are related to the topic. Possible titles could include, “I forgave my friend because it made me feel good”. “Not forgiving makes you unhappy”.
 - Projects could also be set on the life and works of Jesus.
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At GCSE level:

- Pupils could give a talk about FORGIVENESS or the lack of it. A debate could be arranged, Topics could include: "To err is human, to forgive is divine" and "Forgiveness is an important basis for long lasting friendship".
- Letter writing practice could involve the theme of FORGIVENESS. Pupils could be asked to write letters asking forgiveness of someone. These could be made up or based on real experiences.

A number of set texts could be used to explore the theme:

- In *"To Kill a Mocking bird"* by Harper Lee, Atticus' sons resent the way their father fights to get justice for his black client, because it makes them a target for ridicule in the community. Eventually they accept their lot and learn to forgive Atticus for ignoring their needs.
- In *"Mice and Men"*, by John Steinbeck, Lennie always forgives George for his often inconsiderate remarks and likewise George is seen to hold no grudge against Lennie for his anti-social behaviour.
- *"A View from a Bridge"* by Arthur Miller demonstrates how lack of FORGIVENESS can isolate communities and individuals.
- Shakespeare can also be used to explore the theme.
 - In *"The Merchant of Venice"* Portia reminds Shylock about the value of FORGIVENESS in the speech beginning, "the quality of mercy".
 - *Romeo and Juliet* embraces a similar theme; the lovers' tragic deaths are mainly a consequence of the two families' refusal to forgive each other for past injuries.
 - In *"Macbeth"* Malcolm has to learn to forgive himself for not apparently displaying the required character necessary for kingship.
 - The same theme is evident in Henry IV.
- In *Silas Marner*, Silas is at first unable to forgive those that betrayed him but later, as he is taught love and compassion by Eppie, he finds it in his heart to forgive Eppie's real father for all his misdemeanours.

Various poems can be used to explore the theme both at GCSE as AS/A level. Suitable poems include:

- *"The Ancient Mariner"*, by Coleridge, which illustrates how FORGIVENESS is granted when man atones for wrong deeds, as the mariner does when he shows compassion by blessing the creatures of the sea.
- In *"Porphyria's Lover"* by Robert Browning the lover strangles his beloved because he cannot forgive her for not giving him the love he wanted.

At A/S level:

- Pupils could prepare a debate for presentation to the school. Suitable titles could include, "FORGIVENESS builds character", and "We can only learn to FORGIVENESS from good role models."
- Essays and poems can be based on the quotes at the beginning of the newsletter or similar titles.

In the A/S Literature course, the theme of FORGIVENESS can be explored in different ways:

- Throughout the play, *"Dr Faustus"*, the good angel reminds Faustus that it is never too late to ask for God's forgiveness.
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- Charlotte Bronte on the other hand said that Heathcliff, from her novel *“Wuthering Heights”*, “stands unredeemed; never once swerving in his arrow-straight course to perdition”. Pupils could explore how far this description of Heathcliff as damned is an accurate assessment of the way that he is represented in the novel.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A multi-faith activity could be set up FORGIVENESS DAY. Individual pupils or small groups could work on a spider-gram (flow diagram) which outlines their views on FORGIVENESS. Their work could be mounted and displayed in a prominent place on FORGIVENESS DAY. The lives of great spiritual teachers whose lives have been a shining example of forgiveness, such as Jesus and the present Dalai Lama, could be studied in relation to the theme. Pupils could explore the meaning of such quotes as “turn the other cheek”, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us” and “FORGIVE them, Lord, for they know not what they do”.

They could look at the stories of the prodigal son and Jesus’ meeting with Mary Magdalene. At Junior level pupils could act these out.

At Secondary level pupils could write and act out scripts based on a more modern interpretation of these stories. These plays could be presented at assembly on FORGIVENESS DAY.

At GCSE and AS/A Levels, pupils could compare views on forgiveness as found in the New and Old Testaments of the Bible and from an interfaith point of view by researching what other religions have to say on the subject. The role of Confession, in particular in the Catholic Church, could also be investigated.

DRAMA

At all levels, both Junior and Secondary, pupils could enact plays based on the lives of people that have demonstrated great FORGIVENESS in their work such as JESUS and the Dalai Lama. They could write a play based on a modern day version of Mary Magdalene, or the prodigal son.

PSHE

The theme of FORGIVENESS could be introduced by asking pupils to investigate what Jesus meant when he said, “Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do.” Pupils could be encouraged to investigate how far actions, which cause pain to others, are the result of deliberate malice, ignorance, misguided actions, a direct or indirect retaliation for a real or perceived hurt, or a cry for help.

GEOGRAPHY

At Secondary level pupils could investigate the nature of injustices related to world economic policy. Suitable areas of study could include cash crops, the Brazilian government’s policy de-urbanisation, (in particular their policy of moving people to forest areas in order to reduce pressure on town and its effect on reducing the tropical forest). Another topic could be flooding in Nepal, (a consequence of cutting down trees to supply charcoal heaters in tourist shelters in the Himalayas). Pupils could also investigate the local effects of acid rain, for example on the forests of Scandinavia and Southern Germany.

At GCSE and AS/A levels, pupils investigate trading between third world countries and prosperous nations. They could look at, for example, the distribution of profit between multinational corporations and local producers.

To find out about fair trade they could write to Cafod Campaigns, Romero Close, Stockwell Road, London SW9 9TY Tel: 020 7733 7900 Fax: 0207274 9630 Email: campaign@cafod.org.uk www.cafod.org.uk/menucamp.htm for up to date information.

They could also visit their local body shop to learn more about the way fair trade operates in practice. Another suitable area of study would be to look at economic pressures that are impacting on third world countries as a result of high interest repayments on World Bank loans suitable country to study would be Ghana whose rapid deforestation has partially been due to their need to meet interest payments on foreign loans.

HISTORY

At junior level, pupils could look at inspirational figures in History that have displayed great FORGIVENESS towards those that have acted badly toward their country. Suitable examples could include Mahatma Ghandi and Nelson Mandela.

At GCSE and AS/A levels, suitable topics could revolve around the theme of historical events that have caused suffering and the need to forgive the perpetrators for their misguided actions. Suitable topics could include colonialism, wars, Arab/Israeli conflict, Irish question, the Spanish/American conquest and the taking of land from the North American Indian tribes. Pupils could look at the legacy of such actions and the long-term implications in both local and global terms.

ART

At Junior level, children could make collages to illustrate the theme of FORGIVENESS. Each child could draw a small picture to illustrate the theme. This could be put together to make a display that could be placed on display in a prominent place on FORGIVENESS DAY.

At Secondary level, pupils could be asked to observe their thoughts and reactions when they are producing artwork. Teachers could suggest that they might like to practice FORGIVENESS of themselves if their work does not reach the standard that they are aspiring to. Pupils could be set a project entitled FORGIVENESS in which they would have to explore how they would interpret this; for example they could do painting of someone's hands joining or a sculpture of people hugging in FORGIVENESS. These could be displayed on FORGIVENESS day in a prominent place.

At GCSE and AS/A levels pupils could study the works of artists that have an association with the theme of FORGIVENESS. Suitable works could include the works such as "Return of the Prodigal Son" by Lucas Van Leyden and "Wrathful God" by William Blake.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Pupils can be asked to design and make inspirational objects for FORGIVENESS DAY. These could include badges, a school plaque (see quotes) or some other representation of FORGIVENESS through a sculpture, collage, tapestry or other medium. (See whole school)

MATHS

At junior level, children could be given a sticker when they have demonstrated that they can be patient with themselves whilst learning something new and forgive themselves for making errors. They could place these stickers on a large graph. The graph could be analysed at the end of a suitable period of time.

At Upper and Secondary levels, pupils can be asked to devise surveys concerning the theme of FORGIVENESS. These findings can be analysed as both quantitative and qualitative evidence and displayed in a prominent place of the school for FORGIVENESS DAY or longer. A variety of types of graphs can be used to display the evidence such as bar, line, flow, scatter, and pie diagrams. The survey can be conducted in the form of questionnaires. Pupils could be asked to tick the relevant box (boxes) and write comments in appropriate places. Suitable questions could include:

- “If you cannot understand or do something straight away do you FORGIVE yourself” *yes, no sometimes, never.*”
- Do you think that it is important to FORGIVE yourself and others when mistakes are made.” *Yes, no, sometimes, not sure.*
- “How do you feel when you have FORGIVEN someone for something.”? *OK, not sure, very happy, excited, proud of yourself? (You may tick as many boxes as you want).*
- “Why do you think that people are reluctant to FORGIVE?” *only think of negative things, don't value themselves or others enough, have not been shown how to forgive? (You may tick as many boxes as you want).*

At GCSE level, pupils could be set work based on the trial and error method. The teacher could use the opportunity to focus on the benefits of FORGIVING oneself for making mistakes. It may also be useful for the teacher to explain that making mistakes can be a positive aid to learning. Through mistakes, we can learn patience, perseverance and forbearance.

BIOLOGY

At Junior level, children could talk about things they like and dislike about their bodies. They could be asked to forgive parents for genes they do not like.

At GCSE and AS/A levels, pupils could look at the importance of Quantum Medicine and its impact in the field of Biology. Deepak Chopra's book “Quantum Healing” could be used as a source for investigation. The benefits of FORGIVENESS of self and others could be investigated in terms of the positive impact on the sympathetic nervous system. The effect of stress in relation to the weakening of the immune system can also be investigated. Pupils can refer to “The Awakened Mind” by C. Maxwell Cade and Nona Coxhead and Quantum Healing by Deepak Chopra, MD.

CHEMISTRY

At all levels, FORGIVENESS can be compared to adding alkali substances to acids, such as adding dilute potassium hydroxide with sulphuric acid. It could be likened to forgiveness neutralising the effect of acid relationships.

At GCSE and AS/ levels, pupils could relate the theme of FORGIVENESS to conservation issues. Teachers could suggest that pollution has been a result mainly of ignorance and therefore is forgivable, but modern pollution is often the result of blatantly ignoring government guidelines or not acting with due care and attention. They could look at how conservationists are working to clean up the planet. Pupils could write to the environmental organisations Green Peace and Friends of the Earth to ask them how their organisations have been persevering in their attempts to remove or reduce the use of harmful chemicals. They could target major companies such as Shell who have been working in ecologically sensitive areas of the world, such as Antarctica, asking them about the possible effects of chemical pollution in such areas. They could also look at the kind of chemicals that are harmful to the environment and study their effects, such as acid rain on soils.

PHYSICS

At Junior and Lower Secondary levels, the theme of FORGIVENESS can be introduced through looking at inventions that have caused harm to mankind and the planet. Pupils could study the various methods of producing electricity and their positive aspects and their drawbacks. The nuclear industry, for example, could be one area of study. Pupils could balance the advantages of lack of visible emissions against the dangers of leaks of radiation and the dangers associated with nuclear waste.

At GCSE and AS/A levels, the same topic can be explored in more depth.

MUSIC

Pupils could be encouraged to forgive each other and their own self for making mistakes when they are singing or playing a piece of music. The teacher could point out that through forgiveness comes greater ease and peace of mind, which in turn will allow for greater concentration, better relationships and performances that are more pleasant. All of which are important for musical performances.

LANGUAGES

At lower Secondary level, pupils could be asked to enact a play based on the theme of FORGIVENESS. Key words related FORGIVENESS could be displayed in a spider diagram (see dictionary definitions at the beginning of the Newsletter.) Each child could be responsible for translating and writing up one of the related meanings.

At GCSE level, pupils could write about nature (see first poem).

At A/S level, pupils could write an essay or a talk on the theme of FORGIVENESS. Great French heroes/heroines such as Joan of Arc or ordinary people such as the members of the French Resistance during the 2nd World War could be subjects for essays and for talks.
