



# SOCIAL AWARENESS

## Teacher/Student Social Awareness Home Activity Goals



### TEACHER NOTES

This home activity is not intended to have a tangible product. Rather, it's an opportunity for you to reinforce the concept of forgiveness as a universal part of healthy relationships. By providing families with an opportunity to share their own stories of forgiveness with one another, you open the door to an increased awareness and shared underscoring of the value of forgiveness that may well transfer to students' classroom interactions.

Explore the concept of forgiveness with your students through literature. Fundamental to human nature and interactions, forgiveness is a recurring theme in many books for people of all ages.

### SUGGESTED BOOKS

- Primary: *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse* by Kevin Henkes
- Intermediate: *Protecting Marie* by Kevin Henkes
- Middle: *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelson

### Introduce the homework handout (p. 4)

Discuss the opening graphic. Share an age-appropriate personal example that highlights the power of forgiveness in helping people move forward together.

Explain that this assignment does not have a product they need to bring back, but rather that you'll be watching for evidence of an understanding of the importance of forgiveness in their behavior toward one another. If you want indication of completion, consider attaching a slip for a signature so the original can stay at home. (Or you could assign a drawing that depicts how it feels to forgive or be forgiven as tangible product after the story sharing.)

One of the Social Awareness indicators on the DESSA assessment is being able to forgive someone who has caused hurt or upset. There are many ways to support students' development of forgiveness as a skill to be learned and practiced throughout our lives.

Modeling is one of the most powerful things from which children learn. When you create a classroom with a caring, accepting atmosphere in which adults and children make mistakes and own up to them, cause hurt feelings and authentically apologize, and accidentally inflict pain or upset, immediately make amends, you create the fertile conditions for forgiveness and the uplifting fresh start that results from offering it to others.

If this topic is of interest to you, The Forgiveness Project (<http://theforgivenessproject.com/resources/>) is a site that may provide ideas, examples and resources to further explore the power of forgiveness.



# SOCIAL AWARENESS

## Teacher / Student Goals

*Social Awareness: The capacity to interact with others in ways that show respect for their ideas and behaviors, recognize our impact on them, and use cooperation and welcoming behaviors in social situations.*

**TEACHER:** Social Awareness goals

**My students are able to:**

- Understand the power of forgiveness
- Empathize with others who have given and received forgiveness

**I am aware of my individual students' abilities to:**

- Express forgiveness toward others
- Be willing to accept forgiveness from others

**The environment I create supports my students' growth related to:**

- Contributing to a group in which mistakes and bad choices are acknowledged, apologized for, and forgiven

**STUDENT:** Social Awareness goals and demonstrated behaviors

**Students will:**

- Listen to others express personal stories of forgiveness
- Share their own stories of forgiveness
- Develop in their understanding of the power and importance of forgiveness

### DESSA SOCIAL AWARENESS INDICATORS

Note: Highlighted indicators are directly addressed in this lesson.

I can:

|   |
|---|
| Cope well with insults and mean comments  |
| Get along with different types of people  |
| Act respectfully in a game or competition |
| Respect another person's opinion          |
| Contribute to group efforts               |
| Resolve a disagreement                    |
| Share with others                         |
| Cooperate with peers or siblings          |
| Forgive somebody who hurt or upset me     |
| Respond to another person's feelings      |



# SOCIAL AWARENESS

## Helping Each Other by Forgiving

### THOUGHTS FOR ADULTS SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT

Forgiveness comes when we purposefully choose to change the way we're feeling about someone who has done us a wrong. When our feelings, our belongings, or our opportunities have been hurt or disrespected, it takes a strong internal core to decide to shift our attitude and feelings toward the person who injured us. By letting go of our negative feelings (such as disappointment, revenge, or bitterness) and actively working to become more willing to wish that person well, healing can happen. Forgiveness brings peace to the injured person as well as to the person who is being forgiven. It is an effective coping strategy when dealing with hurt and disappointment. Forgiveness is a gift we give ourselves, even more than being a gift we give to others.

The purpose of this activity is to build on our ongoing conversations at school about the power of forgiveness. The Aramaic word for forgiveness actually means "to untie." Lifting away the weight of difficult feelings and letting go of resentment can feel like a burden lifted for all concerned. A school in which people know that everyone makes mistakes but, in the end we care about each other, helps us all feel settled and ready to learn.

**KEEP IN MIND:** You are a powerful model for the young people in your life. Hearing stories of times when we've been strong enough to forgive, as well as times when we've been humble enough to accept forgiveness, sends a strong message. When our children hear the thinking behind why we act the way we do, it's easier for them to pause and think about their own actions. When they see us live our lives from a place of generosity and optimism, they can imagine themselves growing up to be the same kind of person.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS:** When is it hard for me to forgive someone? When does forgiveness come easily to me? How does my child know when I've forgiven him/her?

**EXTENSION:** Consider sharing stories another time about self-forgiveness. Think together about the importance of being as loving and kind to ourselves as we are to others.

### DESSA Social Awareness indicators

|   |
|---|
| Cope well with insults and mean comments  |
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| Resolve a disagreement                    |
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| Cooperate with peers or siblings          |
| Forgive somebody who hurt or upset me     |
| Respond to another person's feelings      |

## forgiveness...



“Write injuries in sand,  
kindness in marble.”

What do you think that saying means?

What value could come from living with this as your way of interacting with others?

What value could come from living with this as your way of interacting with others?

Invite one trusted person who is older than you to discuss the questions below with you.

Listen carefully to each other's stories. Think about ways your listening partner's experiences could help you be stronger during times when you have cause to forgive others, or ask them to forgive you.

- 1. When was a time in your life when you've chosen to forgive someone? What do you think that was like for them? What was it like for you? Is there anything you wish you'd done differently?*
- 2. When was a time in your life when you've been forgiven? Why do you think you remember this?*

When you finish your conversation, share an appreciation for something about your partner's story, or the way they told their story, that was important to you.

You will not be sharing these stories in class. These stories are private. We will continue to talk throughout the year about the importance of forgiveness, and how it helps each of us get a fresh start, to try again to be our best selves with one another.



# REFERENCES

Below is a list of resources that were referenced within this strategy document. You will find links to research and additional information that may be helpful as you continue your understanding of the content in this strategy.

## Home Activity

Primary: Lily's Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes  
Henkes, K. (1996). Lily's Purple Plastic Purse. New York, NY: Greenwillow Books

Intermediate: Protecting Marie by Kevin Henkes  
Henkes, K. (1995). Protecting Marie. New York, NY: HarperCollins Children's Nooks

Middle: Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson  
Mikaelson, B. (2001). Touching Spirit Bear. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers