

Session 5

Practising Forgiveness

Key learning

Pupils explore the complexity and transformational power of forgiveness, including self-forgiveness and reconciliation.



Before the session

You will need:

- Slides for this session
- A copy of *The Rough-Face Girl* by Rafe Martin and David Shannon
- A copy of *Wild* by Emily Hughes
- Include mini whiteboards or scrap paper



Notes

Story

Be Curious (Community)

Notes



Children's literature

Return to *Wild* – look at the page which ends 'all knew it was right.'

Highlight that there is something inherent (a characteristic of human beings) that tells us the difference between right and wrong.

Additionally, forgiveness isn't just important for the person who forgives, but for everyone around them. Even though forgiveness starts with one person, it can help the whole community.



Activity

The three wise monkeys

Show children the image of 'The Three Wise Monkeys'.



Hear no evil

See no evil

Speak no evil

Ask the children what they think it means.

difference.

We often see, hear, and experience things that help us understand what is right and wrong. It's important to remember to avoid doing things that we know are wrong.

This proverbial saying is often used to describe those who choose to overlook wrongdoing.

Space

Be Present (Embrace)



Children's literature

Return to *The Rough-Face Girl*; look at the page where the sisters call her ugly.

Ask:

- Is this right or wrong?



Activity

Right or wrong?

Have the children either hold up a tick or a cross on show-me boards or move to one side of the room designated as right and the other side designated as wrong.

Give the group a number of scenarios on the board and have them decide whether it is right or wrong. Include scenarios linked to the texts and case studies looked at thus far. Discuss the subjectivity of each scenario.

Suggested scenarios:

- During an art lesson, one child tells another that their drawing is not as good as another child's. **Right or wrong?**
- A child sees another child sitting alone at lunch and invites them to join their table. **Right or wrong?**
- A child spreads a rumour about another child to make themselves look better. **Right or wrong?**
- A child stands up for a friend who is being teased by others. **Right or wrong?**

For each scenario, ask children why they have made the decision that they have made.

For the scenarios that were wrong (1 and 3), imagine you were the child who had been 'wronged'. How could you best practice forgiveness?

Discussion

Explain that these sorts of issues are historical as well as current.

Show the of images of Cleopatra (Ancient Egypt).

Ask:

- Which image is likely to be more accurate? Why?

Explain that by showing her with white skin this suggests that darker skin may be less beautiful.

Ask:

- How do we define beauty?

Encourage the children to think about beauty in terms of qualities and actions rather than just physical appearance.

Explore a few of the things Cleopatra was known for:

- She actively influenced Roman politics – involved with Julius Caesar.
- She was highly intelligent and was one of the few Ptolemies to learn the Egyptian language, in addition to Greek, which was typically spoken by the ruling elite.
- She was the last ruler of the dynasty.

Explain that sometimes, society teaches us that certain things or people are considered "beautiful" based only on how they look on the outside, like their appearance. But it's important to know that beauty isn't just about looks; it's also about kindness, being helpful, and having a good heart.

When we challenge or question assumptions people have about beauty, we can help everyone feel accepted, no matter how they look or where they come from.

Discuss that when we try to understand how others feel and show empathy, that means caring about how others feel; we can stop judging people based only on their appearance. This helps us see that true beauty comes from who someone is inside, not just what they look like on the outside.

Emphasise the importance of inherent worth using the following quotes.

"Your outer beauty will capture the eyes, your inner beauty will capture the heart."

Steven Aitchison

"The most beautiful eyes are those that seek beauty in others."

Sanctuary

Reimagine (Power)



Bible passage

"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone..."

Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)

Practising forgiveness doesn't look the same for everyone – reconciliation looks different for each of us, and we value those differences.



Activity

Circle of appreciation

Here are some optional ways for your pupils to respond:

Option 1

In small groups, have each child write their name in the middle of a piece of A4 paper. Children move around writing on the sheets of every child why they are special or what they value about them. Do this until every child has had words of value written on their sheet by each child in the class.

Ideally, this activity should be done with peaceful music playing in the background.

Option 2

In groups of six, have one child sit in the centre of five other children in a circle on chairs. Each child should tell the child in the centre what it is they value about that child. Continue to rotate until every child has sat in the centre.

Ideally, this activity should be done in a space different to the classroom. A prayer garden or reflection area would be ideal.



Reflection

You may want to read this reflection aloud to your pupils.

Forgiveness is when you decide to let go of the hurt or anger you feel towards someone who has done something wrong. It's like taking a deep breath and saying, "It's okay, I forgive you." This doesn't mean you forget what happened or say that it was okay, but it means you're choosing to move on without holding a grudge.

Forgiveness is a powerful way to show kindness and keep our hearts light and happy. It helps us become better friends and create a more loving and peaceful world. So, the next time someone hurts your feelings, take a deep breath, talk about it, and lean into forgiveness.



Prayer

Notes

Dear God,

Sometimes, people do things that hurt us and make us feel sad. It can be hard to forgive when we have been wronged.

Please help us to find it in our hearts to forgive others, just as you forgive us. Teach us to let go of anger and hurt and fill our hearts with kindness and understanding.

Help us to remember that everyone makes mistakes, and that forgiving others makes us strong and loving.

Thank you for always being there to guide us and help us do what is right.

Amen.



End of session 5