

Forgiveness Makes Us Strong



TARGET AGE: Grade 2-4

KEY TAKEAWAY: When we choose to forgive, we grow stronger!

INTRODUCTION

In *Ari's Awful Day*, Ari and Mainer were both unkind to one another. Although it wasn't part of the story, we can imagine that they became friends and forgave each other for how they treated each other.

When you apologize, it means you go to another person and say sorry for the way you treated them. But if you forgive someone it means that they did something unkind to *you* and you are making a choice to let it go.

DISCUSSION

What are some unkind things that people have done to you?

Now, what happens when you think about what those people did to you? Does it sometimes feel like things just keep getting worse or at least that it is happening over and over again?

This is why we forgive. We forgive the other person because WE don't want to feel hurt anymore. It's like that hurt is stealing our power from us. When we forgive, we take back the power that was stolen from us!

That is why forgiveness makes us strong! It gives us back our power.

Here are some very important things to remember about forgiving someone:

1. No one needs to say sorry to you for you to forgive them. You can forgive anyone who has hurt you even if they never say sorry!
2. Forgiveness is about you. It isn't a nice feeling to carry hurts. When we forgive someone we are saying we don't want to carry hurts anymore.
3. Just because you forgive someone doesn't mean you have to be friends or trust them. For example, if someone always steals your dessert, you don't need to sit with them at lunchtime! Or if someone is always rough with you on the playground, you don't need to play with them! Forgiving just means that you aren't going to get mad about things that they did to you in the past.

ART ACTIVITY

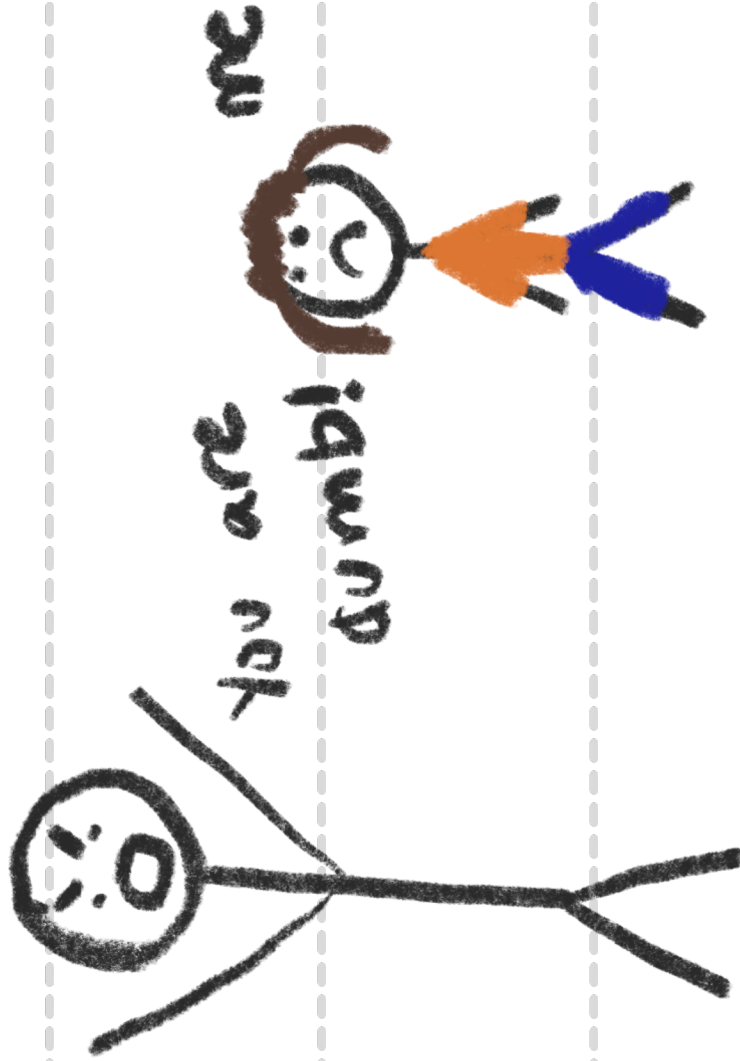
First have students think about a time that someone hurt them. It could be anything at all, big or small. Then have the students draw a picture of what happened. They shouldn't put any names on the picture and it doesn't have to be drawn well (encourage them to use stick figures to make it very simple); they are just getting it onto their paper as a way to get it out of their hearts.

We have included a worksheet with an example on one side for the students.

Next get the students to cut their picture into at least six strips lengthwise, and use those strips to make a paper chain. Finally, join all the students chains together to make a long forgiveness chain. Chains are strong and if we work together to forgive everyone gets stronger together. It is a powerful visual!

Forgiveness Makes Us Strong - EXAMPLE

Draw a picture of when someone hurt your feelings or made you upset. You can use stick people if you want. And don't write their name on the picture!



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