



February 2009

Character Council Educator Quality of the Month Forgiveness

Forgiveness: Clearing the record of those who have wronged me and not holding a grudge.

I will:

- be quick to forgive
- not cover up my own wrongs but will be quick to ask for forgiveness
- not seek revenge
- respond kindly to those who hurt me
- not take up offenses for others

Did you know that many snakebites are actually from dead snakes? People assume that the decapitated heads are safe to touch but they are as dangerous as a live snake. The same goes for harboring a hurt. Without forgiveness, you can still be 'bitten' by the sting of bitter memories. This month, the focus is on asking for and granting forgiveness.

☺ **Quotables** – There are a number of quotes that help explain the importance of forgiveness. Divide the class into small groups and give each group one of the following quotes to study and then explain to the class.

Forgiveness is me giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me. (Anonymous)

Friends may come and go, but enemies accumulate. (Thomas Jones)

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one getting burned. (Buddha)

An apology is the superglue of life. It can repair just about anything. (Lynn Johnston)

For every minute you are angry you lose 60 seconds of happiness. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

"Hate is like acid. It can damage the vessel in which it is stored as well as destroy the object on which it is poured." (Ann Landers)

"He who angers you conquers you." (Elizabeth Kenny)

☺ **How To Apologize** – Role play with another student, how to apologize. Do not explain the 3 steps ahead of time but rather have them try to distinguish them from the example. Pair up the students. Have them practice apologizing to each other. You can make up scenarios for them or let them do that themselves.

Step 1: Tell the (victim) that you are sorry for the wrong you committed. Explain why it was wrong, and that you will try not to do it again.

Step 2: Ask for forgiveness for the wrong you committed.

Step 3: Ask what you can do to make up for the wrong. This is the step that is most forgotten when apologizing. This shows true repentance for the wrong.

When they have finished practicing, ask them if forgiveness is automatic. (No) Bring in the character trait of trust. Sometimes an apology is not accepted because there is no trust that the words mean anything. Explain that in this case, it will take proving the words with future behavior.

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