

Social Awareness: Helping Each Other by Forgiving

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

Thoughts for adults supporting this project

Social Awareness, like skills in sports, the arts, and academic subjects, are carefully built by practice, practice, practice. The more intentional we are about noticing people who demonstrate positive Social Awareness and sharing that with our children, the more they will grow in their ability to notice and name those traits themselves. Hearing that you value these ways of interacting with others supports your child's willingness to work at developing their Social Awareness. It also can strengthen their appreciation of other students who are working on building their skills, too.

The purpose of this activity is to remind children that the skills we all use to build and maintain strong, healthy relationships are learned. We develop them by thinking about how we want others to receive us, and then by actively working to be open, caring, and supportive as we interact with others.

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.



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.

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.

