

Falling out and Forgiving

Here is a nice story and activity from Floreat's Character programme that would be great for work on Falling Out.

The story is Squirrel Grey and Squirrel Red, written for Floreat (see [R Forgiveness](#)). When Squirrel Grey hurts Squirrel Red, Squirrel Red writes it in the sand where it is washed away. When Squirrel Grey did something very kind for Squirrel Red, Squirrel Red wrote it in rock and was always remembered.

Discussion points: Squirrel Red wrote in the sand when he was sad. If I write something in the sand will it still be there tomorrow? Next week? Next year? Why not? Squirrel Red wrote on stone when Squirrel Grey saved him. Why do you think he chose stone? At the end of the story is Squirrel Red still cross with Squirrel Grey?

At the end of the story Squirrel Grey asked 'When I hurt you, you wrote in the sand, but now that I have helped you, you wrote on stone. Can anybody explain why he did this?'

Follow this with an activity. Get a rucksack and some blocks or stones. Tell a story about your morning today, pretending that the following happened:

The neighbours were playing loud music so you couldn't get to sleep last night.

You had an argument with your housemate because they'd used all the milk so you couldn't even have a cup of coffee.

You couldn't iron your favourite shirt because your housemate was using the iron.

The bus driver didn't stop even though you had your hand out.

After describing each event, place a block in the rucksack, and put it back on your back, showing each time it getting heavier and heavier to carry round. You could also have them act this out themselves.

After you've described your morning, ask the children how I'd feel if I always kept hold of the bad and annoying things that happen in my day?

What could I do to get rid of this heavy feeling? *Forgive the people who annoyed you.* Some children won't know this word, so don't forget to teach that forgiving means you choose not to carry a bad thing around any more, and instead to forget it. This exercise helps to explain that carrying around all of those negative feelings weighs us down and gets in the way. When we forgive we can take off the rucksack and leave it behind. The process of forgiveness is like taking out each block and saying 'I choose to forgive x for doing y'.

You can set up a Forgiveness Book with a massive rubber. This rubber needs to be truly special and appealing in every way possible. It must only be used for forgiveness and should be kept somewhere special and safe, perhaps in a glass jar or on a velvet cushion. In the process of one child forgiving another, if both are there, the person who needs forgiveness should draw what they did in the book. The child who is going to forgive can use the forgiveness rubber to rub it out.