

Addressing Girl Aggression  
Instructor Jan Davis  
By Howard Mozen

12/9/08

## Apologizing

### Lesson Plan

Objective: To have students learn an effective and appropriate way to apologize for something they did wrong, or a mistake that they wish to make right.

Audience: 6th, 7th and 8th graders that have already been exposed to the Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders curriculum, or something similar.

Materials:

- a copy of the poem "Making Sarah Cry" by \_\_\_\_\_
- a class set of cards that have the 4 steps of an apology
- a class copy of the chart for filling in events that happen in the skits
- Ideas for 4 to 8 realistic events that can be used in student skits that would create a situation where an apology is appropriate. (Bumping in the hallway, stealing a cell phone, spreading rumors, etc. )

This is a two day lesson.

Day One: 25 minutes: introduce concept, have students discuss and think about it.

Day Two: 45 minutes: student skits, and learning the 4 steps of an apology.

Day One: Introduce the lesson as a "tune up" to previous bullying discussions.

Read the poem "Making Sarah Cry" discuss the poem, and see if any of the students see somewhere where an apology could be appropriate. Ask the question: "What is an apology?" write student ideas on the board. Have students think about situations that they needed to apologize. Teacher share?

Write on board: "We will not remember the words of our enemies but we will remember the silence of our friends" -Martin Luther King Jr. Discuss in the framework of apologies.

Day Two: Hand out the table that shows the 4 steps of an apology, and has a place to make notes on 3 skits. With the help of upper classmen, 2 to 6 students come in and act out skits. First showing the insincere "sorry" sort of apology, then demonstrate the 4 part apology. Students discuss differences, fill in their chart. (a chart on the smart board or whiteboard is helpful, class can fill that one out together for the first skit). Have the upper classmen do at least one more skit, and discuss with class what happened and if the 4 part apology will work.

After 2 or 3 skits from visiting students, have the class volunteer to try acting out a scenario, and making an appropriate 4 part apology. Let students read off cards if needed. Have students demonstrate through their acting in skits, their knowledge of the 4 part apology

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill in the boxes with comments about how you noticed these parts of an apology taking place in the skit.

Parts of an Apology:

<b>Skits</b>	<b>1. Find the right time</b>	<b>2. "I apologize for..."</b>	<b>3. Ask the person if they accept the apology</b>	<b>4. "Thank You"</b>
1				
2				
3				

Reflections on this lesson:

- Working with Nacho the counselor and having him prepare some students to do a skit for my class worked very well. If that option wasn't available, I would selected students from the class to volunteer to come in at lunch a day or two before and practice a couple of skits.
- I purposely did not introduce how to do an apology on day one, which worked well.
- I had two classes one with 4 students and one with 14 students. By the end of the two day lesson, both classes had almost every student have a chance to say the 4 steps of an apology in a skit. This may not be the case in larger classes.
- The upper classmen acting for the 6th graders was a big hit in both classes. The students were somewhat shy to act themselves until the older students left the room. It was interesting that the students that were most vocal about not wanting to be in a skit when the older students were in the room, were those who wanted to be in the skits the most when the older students left. As often happens, I was beginning to think that I had lost the students and that they did not understand the lesson, but then they surprised me with their eagerness to act in the skits and practice appropriate apologies.
- There is a video on the web called "The Last Lecture" by Randy Pausch. This video inspired the idea of this lesson. In his wildly popular lecture, Pausch hopes to impart his life's wisdom to the world before he dies. He does a great segment on apologies. I would have shown this inspirational video to my students, however they will see it in their Language Arts class later in the year. I did alert them to this so they would be looking for it. It would be a great addition to this lesson. Though he has 3 parts to an apology, instead of 4, which could lead into more good discussions.
- The chart for this lesson on day 2 was somewhat helpful at keeping some of the students focused on the 4 steps of an apology. Some filled it out with words, and some filled it out with check marks indicating that the part of the apology occurred. I believe that this paper is an important component, but that it could be modified and improved.
- An important point that Nacho and I made was that these apologies will not always work, especially with peers. But they are almost guaranteed to work with adults. We challenged them to use the apology strategy that we taught them (especially with adults) and prove us wrong.
- Another important point that came up is that people who have been hurt may not be ready to accept an apology. It is important to emphasize that the person apologizing is making it right in the best way that he or she can, and it is still a success, even if the person who is being apologized to does not accept the apology. Trying the strategy more than once may be necessary, and not unusual in the real world; but it is worth it!!
- The apologies in the skits were seemingly effective even if they were read off the cards. So students should be encouraged to use the cards as they practice this skill for the first few times.

- There was a non-reader in the class who held the card in front of her as she did her skit with another student. She did a perfect apology, that included the 4 steps as well as some additional things that came out of our discussions.

#### THE ART Of APOLOGY

- Find the right time. Ask, “ Do you have a moment?”
- Say. “I apologize for...”
- Ask the person if they **accept** the apology.
- Say, “Thank you for your time.”

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