

The Forgiveness Project

Stories of Forgiveness Lesson Plans

Guidance Notes

Introduction

The Forgiveness Project (TFP) is a UK-based charity that uses storytelling to explore how ideas around forgiveness, reconciliation and conflict resolution can be used to impact positively on people's lives.

The Forgiveness Project Stories of Forgiveness Lesson Plans have been designed for schools to deliver in lessons, drop down days, tutor time or other timetabled sessions. The resources are aimed at students from Year 9 upwards, however in some schools they may be more appropriate for older students. The lessons cover topics in PSHE, Citizenship, RE and History and currently comprise three main topics:

- 1) *Forgiveness and Justice*
- 2) *Why do people forgive?*
- 3) *Forgiving the Unforgivable*

The resources are at a pilot stage and we would welcome feedback from teachers using these via our online feedback form on this page: <https://www.theforgivenessproject.com/forms/education-resources-feedback-form>, or by emailing education@theforgivenessproject.com.

What do the resources include?

Each topic comprises three separate lessons, and each lesson includes a lesson plan, individual student booklet and a PowerPoint presentation.

What types of activities will the students be doing?

Each lesson includes either a film or a written account from a TFP storyteller, which act as a stimulus for discussion, exploration and response. Activities include discussion, fact finding, pairing, timeline sequencing, categorising and personal interpretation, some also include a written task.

Who should be delivering these lessons?

The Forgiveness Project Stories of Forgiveness Lesson Plans explore real life stories which some students may find distressing or confusing. ***Some of the films contain descriptions of violence, killings and concentration camp conditions, therefore please ensure that staff have watched the films and read the resources beforehand to ensure it is suitable for their students.*** We recommend lessons are facilitated by a staff member who knows the class well and feels able to use prompt questions and direct responses to encourage healthy discussion, whilst maintaining a safe environment for all young people.

Lesson outlines:

1) Forgiveness and Justice

Lesson 1 – Introduction to Restorative Justice

Students will explore what Restorative Justice is and the impact it can have for all participants. They will examine why victims and offenders may decide to take part in the process and what they need from the process. Students will start to think about what impact Restorative Justice can potentially have for participants.

Lesson 2 – Margaret Foxley's journey towards Restorative Justice

Students will hear a first-hand account from Margaret Foxley about how she interrupted a burglary in her own home and the Restorative Justice process with the offender that followed. They will examine the varying emotions Margaret experienced from the crime through to after the Restorative Justice meeting, and the impact it had on her physical and emotional well-being.

Lesson 3 – How does Restorative Justice differ from criminal justice?

This lesson builds on the previous two lessons and examines the differences between Restorative Justice and criminal justice. Students will hear first-hand accounts from Will Riley and Peter Woolf, a victim and offender, who have been through the Restorative Justice process and the impact it has had on them and their lives.

2) Why do people forgive?

Lesson 1 – Why do people forgive?

Students will hear Mary Foley's first-hand account of how she lost her child in a violent attack at a 16th birthday party. They will explore some of the benefits of forgiveness on people's physical and emotional well-being and start to think about empathy and how this can influence people's ability to forgive.

Lesson 2 – Does compassion for an offender influence your decision to forgive?

Building on the previous lesson, students will explore compassion and empathy and how Mary's feelings towards her daughter's attacker influenced her journey of forgiveness. Using a statement from Mary regarding 'What happens next', students will explore the emotional well-being of the offender and how Mary's forgiveness could impact her future.

Lesson 3 – A cycle of forgiveness

Students will hear Barry Mizen's first-hand account of how his son, Jimmy was killed. They will explore Desmond Tutu's cycle of revenge and forgiveness and build on ideas from lesson 2 looking at how empathy for an offender / the offender's family can impact a journey of forgiveness.

3) Forgiving the Unforgivable

Lesson 1 – A personal experience of the Bosnian War

Students will learn about Kemal Pervanic and hear first-hand about his experience during the Bosnian War. They will explore how events unfolded in his home village and his time in Omarska and Manjača concentration camps. Students are given the opportunity to identify parallels to current political insecurity and treatment of ethnic / religious groups.

Lesson 2 – How can forgiveness impact the survivors of war?

Building on lesson 1, students will learn more about Kemal's experience in the Omarska camp and the reality that he personally knew many of his guards and interrogators as his teachers, friends and neighbours. Students will explore his journey towards forgiveness and the impact this had on him. They will learn about Kemal's project in Bosnia to unite young people of all nationalities.

Lesson 3 – Can there be forgiveness without justice?

Students will explore the Rwandan Genocide through a first-hand account of Mary Blewitt who lost 50 members of her family. They will examine what has happened to bring about justice since the genocide ended and hear an example of a Tutsi victim and Hutu ex-militia living as neighbours following a community meeting. Students will explore Mary's decision not to forgive her family's killers and how she makes meaning of what has happened through her dedicated charity work.

Can the resources be adapted?

The Forgiveness project storytellers have entrusted us with their story and provided us with film footage to enable us to share their stories widely. We therefore would ask schools to refrain from adapting our resources.

The Forgiveness Project website has hundreds of real life stories which you may like to explore for use in the classroom or in assemblies - <http://www.theforgivenessproject.com>. For any suggestions of stories that may be appropriate for topics you are teaching, or for further information about our Speakers' Bureau or F Word exhibition please contact info@theforgivenessproject.com or 020 7821 0035.