



Why Forgiveness Education?

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Operating in U.S. and international classrooms since 2002

Forgiveness education:

- reduces anger in students
- increases cooperation in classrooms
- can improve academic achievement

Forgiveness education:

- has no cost to schools
- has free training for teachers
- has free support

Additional opportunities for students in participating schools include Skype and other electronic communication with students in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and Monrovia, Liberia, Africa.

General information about Forgiveness

Definition of Forgiveness – *Forgiveness involves a willingness to abandon one's **right** to resentment, negative judgment, and negative behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the **undeserved** qualities of compassion, generosity, and sometimes even moral love toward him or her.*

Notice in the definition that one has a **right** to feel resentment, anger and other negative feelings after experiencing a deep hurt and that the offender does not **deserve** our compassion and generosity based on his or her actions.

Guidelines surrounding the practice of forgiveness:

1. Forgiveness occurs in the context of personal and unfair hurt.
2. Forgiveness is a **choice** one makes for him or herself. One can be educated about the process of forgiveness but no one should be forced into forgiving.
3. **Forgiveness and justice are not mutually exclusive.** Thus, one can personally forgive and the offender can also be punished.
4. **Forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same.** Forgiveness is a moral virtue; reconciliation is a negotiation strategy in which two or more people come together again in mutual trust. One can forgive without reconciling.
5. Forgiveness is **not** the same as forgetting, excusing, condoning or pardoning.
6. Although an apology makes forgiving easier, it is not necessary to be able to forgive.
7. Forgiveness helps students **increase in empathy and perspective-taking**. Forgiveness **reduces anger** and can give students more energy and focus for **academic achievement**.

Descriptions of each curriculum guide (pre-kindergarten through grade 12) used in the Forgiveness Education Program can be found at:

<http://www.internationalforgiveness.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Curriculum-Guides-Basic-Description-5-2014.pdf>

The guides are available for purchase at:

<http://www.internationalforgiveness.com/store/category/curriculum-guides/>.

Forgiveness Education in Milwaukee's Central City

Executive Summary

Highlights of teacher evaluations (four-year averages) in Milwaukee's central city:

- 91% of the teachers found the forgiveness curriculum materials **easy to use**.
- 75% of the teachers observed that, as a whole, the students **decreased in anger** as a result of learning about forgiveness.
- 78% of the teachers observed that the students increased in **cooperation** as a result of learning about forgiveness.
- 71% of the teachers observed that, as a whole, the students improved in their **academic achievement** as a result of learning about forgiveness.
- 91% of the teachers thought that they became a **better overall instructor** as a result of teaching the forgiveness curriculum.
- 93% of the teachers thought that they became a **better person** as a result of teaching the forgiveness curriculum.
- 84% of the teachers thought that their **classrooms as a whole began to function better** as a result of the forgiveness curriculum.
- 76% of the teachers thought that the **school as a whole began to show improvement** because of the forgiveness education program.

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To learn more, visit the **International Forgiveness Institute** website:

www.internationalforgiveness.com

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