

**A Family Guide to Forgiveness Education:
A Guided Curriculum for
Parents**

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Lesson One:

All People Have Deep Worth

From the Authors

Dear Parents,

Congratulations! You are about to begin teaching your child(ren), in a formal way, about forgiveness. As previously mentioned, this forgiveness curriculum consists of lessons that will help you teach your child(ren): 1) what forgiveness is and is not; 2) the meanings of and ways to practice seeing the deep inherent worth of all people and offering moral love and goodness apart from forgiveness; 3) the ways in which these concepts and virtues generally help a person to forgive; 4) how to begin practicing seeing the worth in all people, even those who have been unfair and offering moral love and goodness to them; and 5) the importance of seeking and receiving forgiveness.

In this first lesson, you will teach your child(ren) about inherent worth. This will provide your child(ren) with an important foundation for learning forgiveness in later lessons. All people have deep worth. What does this mean? It means that all people have deep value and that this deep value is an essential part of their nature. It cannot be earned and it cannot be taken away.

Inherent worth does not stem from personal differences like behavior, appearance, health, abilities, degree of wealth, group membership, or positions in life. It does not come from those things that people have in common: the same basic needs; bodies with 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 legs, 2 arms, a heart, stomach, brain, and so forth; emotions (love, anger, sadness, and so forth); the ability to think, choose, and reason; or from similar experiences.

When we understand that all people have deep, inherent worth, we will treat them as people with deep, inherent worth. Please feel free to email with questions about this lesson: rd.enright@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,
Jeanette, Bob, and Breanne

Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- ◆ Introduce and read chapters 1-3 of Patricia MacLachlan's book *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.
- ◆ Discuss with your child(ren) the questions in the Family Talk section.
- ◆ With your child(ren), do the "Remembering My Worth" activity. See the Forgiveness Building section.

In this lesson, your child(ren) will:

- ◆ Learn that *all people* are of deep worth.
- ◆ Learn that inherent worth is not based on personal differences like appearance, possessions, behavior, position in life, place of residence, and so forth.
- ◆ Learn that inherent worth cannot be earned nor can it be taken away.
- ◆ Learn that all people have inherent worth (deep personal value) simply because they are people.
- ◆ Learn that people are not on this earth to be used, manipulated, or disrespected. We are to try treating each person as he or she is—a person of great worth.

Family Talk

Today we are going to talk about the idea that all people have deep worth.

Parent Teach Section:

Please take a few minutes to help your child(ren) understand the concept of deep worth. Work through this together with your child(ren). Please use language appropriate for your child(ren)'s age. If you have difficulty with this concept, then please refer to the glossary provided with this guide or to the 'Is your child struggling? Try this!' section.

1. What do you think deep worth means? *All people have deep value and are worthy of love.*
2. What gives people deep worth? *All people have worth simply because they are people—members of the human family. This worth cannot be earned and it cannot be taken away.*
3. What does not give people deep worth? *Deep worth does not come from what we do (though some behaviors are better than others), where we live, what we look like, how much money we have, what groups we belong to, or even how others treat us. This deep worth doesn't come from the fact that, as people, we share many things in common. For example, people have 2 eyes, 2 ears, a nose, a mouth, 2 legs, 2 arms, a heart, stomach, brain, and so forth. We can think, feel, and share many similar experiences.*
4. How can we show that people have deep worth? *By loving them (treating them with kindness, respect, generosity, mercy, and so forth)*

Child Application Section:

Once your child(ren) understands the concept of deep worth, please talk through the following questions with them.

1. We have now completed the beginning of our story, *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. What are your favorite parts of the story? Why? Who did we meet today? Describe the different people we met (where do they live, what are their lives like).

2. Papa, Anna, and Caleb wrote letters to a lady named Sarah. Why did they write to Sarah? What did we learn about Sarah through her letters? Where does she live? Does she have family? What does she like?
3. Caleb loved to read Sarah's letters. He wondered if she would really come to visit them—and whether she would stay. He wondered if she would like them. He asked, "What if she thinks we are loud and pesky? What if she comes and doesn't like our house?" Caleb seemed to think that their behavior, where they lived, and the size of their house gave them deep worth. Is he right? Why or why not?
4. Sarah did visit Papa, Anna, and Caleb. How did she treat Papa, Anna, and Caleb? Did she treat them as people of deep worth? Why or why not?
5. Would Papa, Anna, and Caleb have somehow lost their deep worth if Sarah failed to see their worth and treat them as such? Why or why not?
6. Sarah told them in her letter that she was plain and tall. Did Sarah's worth depend on her appearance? Why or why not?
7. Did Papa, Anna, and Caleb treat Sarah as a person of deep worth? Why or why not?
8. Would Sarah have lost her deep worth if Papa, Anna, and Caleb failed to treat her as a person of deep worth? Why or why not?

Reflection:

9. Do you think that all people have worth? Why? Why not?
10. Do you have deep worth? Why?

Forgiveness Building

Remembering My Worth

Please give your child(ren) a stuffed toy (a dog, horse, cat, or any animal of choice), when available. Please feel free to use any new stuffed toy or select one from home that is already of importance. Tell them their little friend can be a constant reminder that all people have deep worth. Ask your child(ren) the following questions:

1. You are now holding a toy friend of your very own to love and cuddle. Do you now have greater worth because you have a toy friend to love and cuddle than before you had the toy friend? Why? Why not? *No. Our worth does not come from what we have or possess.*
2. Your new friend is really cute (perhaps it is made of expensive or fine fabric). Does it have great worth because it is cute or costly? *No. Worth does not come from appearance. Worth does not come from monetary value.*
3. We are now talking and having a good time together as a family. Do you and each of us have greater worth in this moment than during those times when we are fighting or struggling to get along? *No. Our worth does not depend on our behavior. Our worth does not depend on how others treat us.*

4. Let's pretend now that your toy friend is a real person. Your toy friend has a nose, eyes, and feet. What else does it have that others like it have? Does it have worth because it has a nose, eyes, or feet? Why or why not?
5. What else can your toy friend do? Does your toy friend have worth because of what it can do? Why or why not?
6. What gives people deep worth?

Family Activity

Together, make a house for your friend by decorating a shoebox or some other container.¹

1. Does your friend have greater worth now than before it had a home? Why? Why not? *No. Worth does not come from where we live.*
2. If these things do not matter, what else does not matter in determining deep worth? *Position in life. Group membership. Abilities. Health.*
3. What gives you worth? *You have worth because you are a person.*

To conclude the activity, with your child(ren) make a list of all the reasons why you and they have deep worth.

Is your child struggling? Try this!

This activity is completely optional. If your child is having trouble understanding the concept of deep worth, then this activity may be a helpful tool.

The Worth of a Pence

1. Have your child find two 1p coins, one that is very dirty and another that is new and shiny.
2. Ask your child: If I took the shiny pence to the store, then would I be able to buy more than if I took the dirty pence? In other words, is the shiny pence worth more than the dirty pence? *No. A pence is worth the same amount no matter if it is dirty or clean. Just like your worth never changes no matter what you look like.*
3. Next, have your child give you one pence and keep the other pence. Ask your child: Do you have more worth because your pence is shinier? *No. A pence is worth the same whether it is dirty or clean.* Do we now have more worth because we each have a pence? *No. Our worth does not depend on how much money we have, what toys we have, or anything that we possess.*
4. Take the pence away from your child. Now ask, do you have less worth now that you do not have a pence? *No. Your worth does not come from money. Your worth cannot be earned or taken away*
5. Finally, have your child put one of the pence in a wallet, purse, piggy bank, etc. Ask your child: Is the pence in the wallet (or purse, piggy bank, etc.) now worth more than the pence that is not? *No. A pence is still worth 1p whether it is on the table or in a wallet, purse, or piggy bank. Just like your worth never changes no matter where you live.*

Just as the worth of a pence does not change, your worth does not change.

¹ The idea of “creating a home for the stuffed animal” was taken from the following Northern Ireland teachers: Patricia Campbell, Grace Davin, Lynne Gilles, Barbara Johnston, Roisin McGrann, Jane Robinson, and Esme Spence.

We'd Like More Stories on the Topic, Please!

Following is a list of additional resources used in our primary school forgiveness curricula on the topic of inherent worth:

I Love You , Stinky Face by Lisa McCourt

Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss

The Sneetches and other Stories by Dr. Seuss

The Butter Battle Book by Dr. Seuss

The Fox and the Hound by Disney

Dumbo by Disney

Evaluation of Lesson One (Please fill out this sheet and return it to school)

(Please put a tick in the box next to each objective you completed)

- Did you read chapters 1-3 of Patricia MacLachlan's book *Sarah, Plain and Tall*?
- Did you discuss with your child(ren) the questions in the Family Talk section?
- Did you complete the "Remembering My Worth" activity with your child(ren)?
- Did your child(ren) learn that *all people* are of great value (deep worth)?
- Did your child(ren) learn that inherent worth is not based personal differences like appearance, possessions, behavior, position in life, place of residence, and so forth?
- Did your child(ren) learn that inherent worth cannot be earned nor can it be taken away?
- Did your child(ren) learn that all people have inherent worth (deep personal value) simply because they are people?
- Did your child(ren) learn that we are to treat each person as a person of great worth?

The following discussion questions and/or activities were especially meaningful because:

I would change the following activities and/or discussion questions because:

My child(ren) responded well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:

My child(ren) did not respond well to the following ideas, discussion questions, and activities:

General Comments:

Please indicate the date that this lesson was taught: _____

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____