

SPRING  
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# Families

WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH



**Making  
It Right**

**From a story told in many cultures.**

The Families pages are adapted from Tapestry of Faith lifespan faith development programs.

[uua.org/tapestry](http://uua.org/tapestry)

**T**here was once a wise woman who lived in a village. People came from all over to seek her advice. They said that she was never wrong—not ever.

Some of the children didn't believe it. Surely she could not know everything! They decided to test her. They asked her questions about the planets, the animals, and the world. No matter how hard the questions, she always answered correctly.

The children were amazed at her knowledge. Most were ready to stop testing the wise woman. However, one child was determined to prove that the old woman couldn't know everything. They told the others to meet at the woman's home the following afternoon

to prove she was a faker.

The next day the child caught a small songbird in a net. Triumphant walking to the wise woman's home, the child held the little bird behind their back so no one could see what was there.

"Old woman!" the child called. "Come and show us how wise you are!"

The woman walked calmly to the door. "May I help you?" she simply asked.

"You say you know everything. Prove it! What am I holding behind my back?" the youngster demanded.

The old woman thought for a moment. She could make out the faint sounds of a bird's wings rustling. "I do not say I know everything. That would be impossible," she replied. "However, I do

*continued on page 2*

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continued from page 1

believe you are holding a bird in your hands."

The child was furious. How could the woman possibly know they were holding a bird? Thinking quickly, the child came up with a scheme. They would ask the woman whether the bird was alive or dead. If the woman replied, "alive," the child would crush the bird with their hands and prove her wrong. If she answered, "dead," on the other hand, they would pull the living bird from behind their back and allow it to fly away. Either way the child would prove their point and the wise woman would be discredited.

"Very good," the child called. "It is a bird. But tell me, is the bird I am holding alive or dead?"

The wise woman paused for a long moment while the child waited with anticipation for the opportunity to prove her wrong. Again the woman spoke calmly, "The answer, my young friend, is in your hands. The answer is in your hands."

The child realized that the woman had spoken correctly and truthfully. The answer was indeed in their own hands. Feeling the bird feebly moving as it tried to escape their grasp, the child felt suddenly very ashamed.

Slowly, gently the child brought their hands forward. Looking into the eyes of the delicate bird the child apologized, "I am sorry, little one," and opened their hands to let the bird go free.

## EXPLORING TOGETHER

What happens when something you do hurts someone else? Whether you realize it on your own or someone tells you about it, you might feel regret.

Will you have a chance to make things right?  
That is up to you.



In the story, the child apologizes to the songbird. In your life, who do you need to apologize to? When the child set the songbird free, did that make things right?



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## How to Build a Bridge

An apology and an action to make things right can build a bridge. Forgiveness might not come right away, or ever. All you can do is try to build a bridge.

Which actions, with an apology, can help?

(Hint: There is more than one right answer!)

IF YOU:

Broke something

Made a mean comment

Laughed at a friend's mistake

Showed off / Acted like you were better

Took something that was not yours

THEN YOU CAN:

Return the item

Tell the friend ways you appreciate them

Replace the item

Tell the person you know you hurt them

Be kind and helpful to the person

## Make-It-Right Checklist

Can you recall an apology you received that felt satisfying and sincere? The person probably....

- ☐ Used eye contact to show that they were truly sorry.
- ☐ Told you specifically what they did that they were sorry about.
- ☐ Took responsibility. (Did not offer excuses.)
- ☐ Offered to repair the harm.
- ☐ Said what they would do to keep it from happening again.



## When a Nation Needs to Make It Right

**D**uring World War II, the U.S. fought against Germany, Italy, and Japan. In 1942, our government forced more than 100,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry to leave their friends, pets, jobs, and homes behind to live in poor, crowded conditions in “relocation centers.” Why? Racism.

Forty-six years later, the U.S. government apologized for what our country had done to Japanese Americans, calling it a “grave injustice.” The apology offered payments to help compensate people for all they had lost.

Our country has serious harms to make right. For example, most black Americans have ancestors who were brought here against their will to be enslaved by white people. When slavery ended in 1863, racial discrimination was still legal. Harm from racism is still a real problem in black people’s daily lives. Unfair policing is an example of continuing racism.

The U.S. House of Representatives apologized to African Americans for slavery and racist laws in 2008. But this apology did not offer even a symbolic payment or a way to repair or stop the harm.



Chloe Coleman/NPR

How might an official apology still fail to make things right?

Can a payment make things right?

Why does an apology from the government matter?

## Give Two-fers Generously!

When kids get together and someone’s words hurt someone else, here’s one way to try to make it right: Two-fers.

**A:** You are really bad at this game.

**B:** Hey, ouch. I’m still learning it! I only played it once before.

**A:** Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t really mean it to be mean, I wish I could take it back. I’m truly sorry. Here are TWO things I really appreciate about you: You are a really good artist. And I like the way that you’re kind to younger kids.

Saying one, two, or a dozen nice things about a person won’t take the hurt away. But a sincere apology, followed by at least two sincere compliments, helps bring balance back to the relationship and the community.

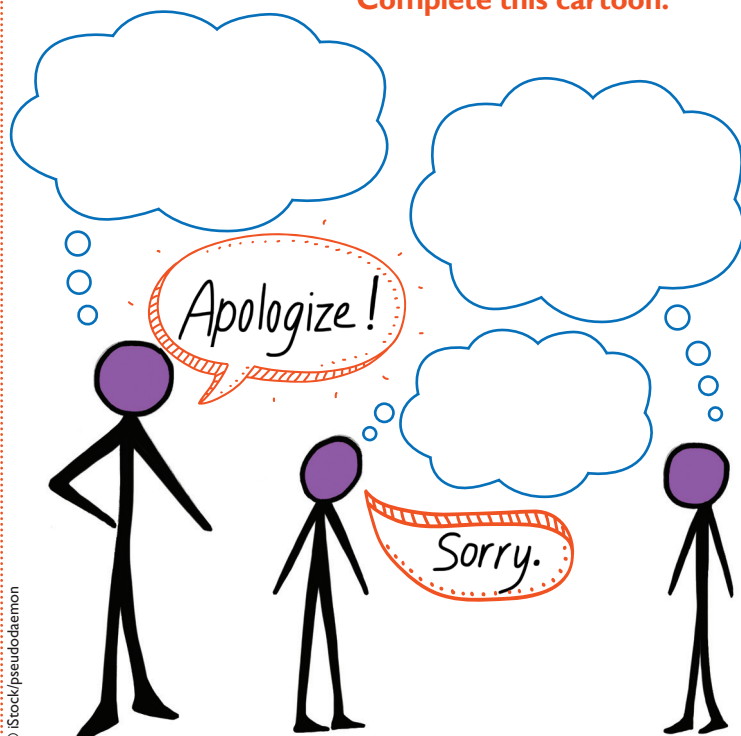


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## Imagine How It Feels

Sometimes parents tell their kids, “Go and say you’re sorry!” Have you ever been forced to apologize? Was someone else forced to apologize to you?

Complete this cartoon.



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## How to Teach Good Apologies

**E**veryone makes mistakes. When you're a parent, you want to be aware of your mistakes that can harm your child. So, it's good to have the skill of making things right with others afterward.

Offering a sincere apology with an effort to make things right is an important skill you can teach your child.

We all feel better once we make a meaningful apology for harm we have done. We usually feel better when we receive one, too. Even without complete healing and forgiveness, both parties benefit from restored balance and, often, new hope for reconciliation.

Why not practice the art of a good apology with your children?

If you want to teach a child how to make things right after a wrong, search your own

experiences for wisdom. Think about a time when someone else made amends with you. What did they do that showed you their remorse was real?



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It's not about the word "sorry." Children know you're not apologizing when you say, "I'm sorry you can't go to Khaliah's party." Children recognize when "I'm sorry" starts an interaction that aims to make things right. "I'm sorry I yelled so loud when I was angry. I wish I had not acted scary like that. I will try not to do that again. May I give you a hug?" That's the real deal.

When you apologize appropriately to your child, you demonstrate empathy, which nourishes their own. You affirm

the cleansing power of taking responsibility. You model making the effort to build a bridge and invite them to meet you on it.



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### FAMILIES: WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

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### FIND OUT MORE

■ Explore UU history together. Learn how a mostly white congregation in Cincinnati, Ohio reached out with an apology to the descendants of W.H.G. Carter, an African American minister who their Unitarian forebears had wronged with racism generations before. Find the story in the Tapestry of Faith online program, Toolbox of Faith, Session 15: Reconciliation. [www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session15/reconciliation](http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/toolbox/session15/reconciliation)

Read the original, in-depth *UU World* story by David Whitford, "A Step Toward Racial Reconciliation," in the *UU World* online magazine. [www.uuworld.org/articles/a-step-toward-racial-reconciliation](http://www.uuworld.org/articles/a-step-toward-racial-reconciliation)

■ Consider pros and cons of the forced apology. Read the article "Sorry, Not Sorry" on the Great Schools website. [www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/sorry-not-sorry/](http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/sorry-not-sorry/)

■ See "Five Times the United States Officially Apologized" in the *Smithsonian* online magazine. [www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/five-times-united-states-officially-apologized-180959254/](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/five-times-united-states-officially-apologized-180959254/)