Lesson 3.17  Making a Sincere Apology

Objectives: Students will be able to:

1) Compare a weak apology to a sincere apology.
2) Explain the benefits of apologizing.
3) Identify obstacles to apologizing and how to overcome them.
4) Demonstrate a sincere apology.

Materials Needed: ☐ Handout 3.17.1 ☐ Sound equipment for video

Bell Ringer

[A still image of a slide with the words "A still image of a slide with the words "A still image of a slide with..."

Write about:
• Do you agree with this quote? Why or why not?
• Did you receive a weak (stiff) apology?
• How did you feel?
• How did you know it was weak?
• Did you receive a sincere apology?
• How did you feel?
• How did you know it was sincere?

Introduce Lesson and Essential Questions

Whenever we reflect on conflicts and recognize our role in them, we come face to face with opportunities to apologize. Today we will discuss and practice what makes a sincere apology.

[Ask one or more students to read aloud the essential questions.]

 Why should we apologize?
 What makes an apology sincere?
 How do we overcome obstacles to apologizing?

Bell Ringer Discussion

Have students do a think-pair-share on the Bell Ringer, then discuss as a class.

 Do you agree or disagree with the quote? Explain.
 How did you feel when you received a weak apology? How did you know it was weak?
 How did you feel when you received a sincere apology? How did you know it was sincere?

The Value of an Apology

[Lead the guided image exercise on the slide, then ask the following.]

 Given this image, do you think learning to apologize is a valuable use of your time? Why or why not?
 What is the purpose of an apology? (To resolve a conflict, heal a relationship, take responsibility for our actions but not defend them)
 In your eyes, how do you make a sincere apology?

Composing an Sincere Apology

The important components of an apology can be remembered as the Five A’s. [Provide examples for each. Have students take notes.]

1. Admit you were wrong; say what you are apologizing for but refrain from defending your actions.
2. Acknowledge the hurt or damage. I understand that I hurt you. If it happened to me...
3. Apologize: I am sorry.
4. Make amends and promise to do better in the future.
5. Seek for forgiveness. (Hope you can forgive me.)

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3. Apologize (I am sorry.)
4. Make Amends and/or promise to do better in the future.
5. Ask for forgiveness. (I hope you can forgive me.) (Optional)
   - What does it mean to make amends? (Do something to make up for, or atone for, your actions.)
   - What are some examples of making amends that you have experienced or done for someone else?
   - Why might asking for the person’s forgiveness be optional? (While it gives the power back to the recipient, asking for forgiveness might put them on the spot. Many people need time to reflect on an apology before responding.)
   - What if the person does not accept your apology? (Accept and show understanding; she/he may not be ready to forgive.)

Obstacles to Apologizing
- What can make it difficult to apologize? (Not wanting to be wrong, fearing how the person might respond, feeling not wholly at fault and that the other person shares the blame, holding negative attitudes about apologizing.)
- If you think you haven’t done anything wrong, what should you do? (Say that you regret the effect your actions had on the person, and say it was not your intention.)
- Do you think apologizing is a sign of strength or of weakness? Explain.

Videos: Improve an Apology
[Have students work in groups of three to four. Tell them that this activity requires collaboration and remind them about disagreeing without being disagreeable.]
CLICK to show videos of four different people making an apology. Show each video at least twice. After each apology, ask students to critique it according to the guidelines for making a sincere apology. As a group they should agree on a rating for each apology using a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the best.
Discuss each apology and ask for group ratings by a show of fingers. Then have groups rate themselves on their ability to disagree without being disagreeable.

Role Play a Sincere Apology
[Have students pair up and practice two of the role plays on the handout. Circulate the room and observe role plays.
CLICK to next slide. After they have practiced, ask volunteer pairs to compete in an "Apology Olympics" by standing up and performing their role play for the class. The rest of the class provides feedback and selects a winner on the basis of the loudest clapping or group ratings (on a scale of 1-10). Choose a prize for the "Top Three" winners (e.g., bonus points, a treat, or a privilege].

Wrap Up
[Review the essential questions.]

Reflection/Application
Reflect on a past or current situation in which your actions caused hurt or damage to someone. Compose a sincere apology. If it is not too late, make your apology and reflect on how you feel now.