Falling out and Forgiving

Here is a nice story and activity from Floreat’s Character program.

The story is Squirrel Grey and Squirrel Red. When Squirrel Grey hurts Squirrel Red, Squirrel Red writes it in the sand where it is washed away. When Squirrel Grey did something very kind for Squirrel Red, Squirrel Red wrote it in rock and was always remembered.

Discussion points: Squirrel Red wrote in the sand when he was sad. If I write something in the sand will it still be there tomorrow? Next week? Next year? Why not? Squirrel Red wrote on stone when Squirrel Grey saved him. Why do you think he chose stone? At the end of the story is Squirrel Red still cross with Squirrel Grey? At the end of the story Squirrel Grey asked ‘When I hurt you, you wrote in the sand, but now that I have helped you, you wrote on stone. Can anybody explain why he did this?

Follow this with an activity.

Get a sack and some blocks or stones. Tell a story about your morning today, pretending that the following happened: The neighbors were playing loud music so you couldn’t get to sleep last night. You had an argument with your child/spouse because they’d used all the milk so you couldn’t even have a cup of coffee. You couldn’t iron your favorite shirt because you could not find the iron. Your car was acting like it was about to break down and you had forgotten to get gas yesterday.

After describing each event, place a block in the rucksack, and put it back on your back, showing each time it getting heavier and heavier to carry round. You could also have them act this out themselves. After you’ve described your morning, ask the children how I’d feel if I always kept hold of the bad and annoying things that happen in my day? What could I do to get rid of this heavy feeling?

Forgive the people who annoyed you. Some children won’t know this word, so don’t forget to teach that forgiving means you choose not to carry a bad thing around any more, and instead to forget it. This exercise helps to explain that carrying around all of those negative feelings weighs us down and gets in the way. When we forgive we can take off the sack and leave it behind. The process of forgiveness is like taking out each block and saying “I choose to forgive.”