

**Recommended Grade Levels:** 2-5**Applicable Character Traits:** Forgiveness**Objective:**

By the end of the lesson students will understand the meaning of Zen and why forgiving someone and moving on is the best choice for yourself. The class will have a short discussion, listen to stories and then answer questions.

Time Frame: (Approximately 40 minutes)

Approximately how long the entire lesson should take to complete. It's nice to let the teacher know, so you are both on the same page. Be sure to check with the teacher in advance as to how much time is allotted for the lesson, and keep an eye on the clock.

Materials/ Preparation:

- Copy of Zen and the Art of Forgiveness lesson
- Copy of the book, *Zen Shorts* by Jon J Muth
- Character Trait Statement (attached)
- Optional- Panda templates – 1 per child (attached)
- Optional- List of Quotes to show on overhead

Opening Statements: (Approximately 10 minutes)

- Greet the class.
- Ask the class:
 - Does anyone know what the character trait is for the month? (Forgiveness)
 - What does it mean to forgive? (call on 2-3 students)
 - Read the forgiveness character trait to the class (attached)
 - Do you think it's important to forgive? Why? (so you can feel better and move on)
 - Can you think of a time when someone had to forgive you?
 - Has anyone ever heard of the word Zen?
 - Explain - Zen is a Japanese word that simply means meditation.
 - Read the first 3 paragraphs on the last page of the book, *Zen Shorts* to explain further.

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Activities: (5 minutes for book reading / 15-20 minutes for discussion)

- Explain to the class that you will read short stories from a book call Zen Shorts, by Jon J Muth.
- After reading the stories you will have a discussion about what was read to them.
- Read pages 1-15
- **Questions for discussion** from *Uncle Ry and the Moon*
 - How would you react if you saw a robber? (mad, mean, tell him/her get out!)
 - Were you surprised by Uncle Ry’s kindness to the robber? (yes!)
 - Do you think he could have been angry/agitated? (yes), but he chose to be kind.
 - Do you think he was practicing Zen? (yes)
 - State - Remember, being in an angry/agitated state we can’t see things clearly.
 - What did he say about the robber? (He felt bad for him calling him a “Poor Man”)
 - Were you surprised when he gave him his only robe? (yes)

**Do not read Michael’s story and *The Farmer’s Luck* pages 16-21(doesn’t apply to forgiveness).

- Read pages 22-33
- **Questions for discussion** from *A Heavy Load*
 - How could you figure out the young woman wasn’t happy? (She stood there looking very mad and impatient. She scolded her attendants.)
 - Do you think anyone could have changed her mean attitude? (Probably not)
 - What did the older monk do for her? (He put her on his back and carried her across the water.)
 - Why do you think he did that? (To show kindness)
 - The young monk was thinking about the mean woman for hours. How do you think he felt? (unhappy, mad, agitated, etc...)
 - Do you think that made him feel bad? (yes)
 - Did the old monk dwell on the fact that the young woman was mean? (no)
 - What do you think the old monk’s meant by his response to the young monk? “I set the woman down hours ago. Why are *you* still carrying her around?” (Don’t carry around bad feelings, move on, and feel happy)
 - Do you think he was practicing Zen? (yes)
- **Optional-**
Zen Forgiveness Pandas (attached) – 1 panda per student.
If time permits, briefly have students read and explain quotes.
Have students choose their favorite quote and write it on their panda as a reminder of Forgiveness, Zen, and the lesson.

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List of Quotes

Chinese Proverb

Water and words... Easy to pour impossible to recover.

Buddha

You will not be punished for your anger; you will be punished by your anger.

Buddha

The tongue like a sharp knife... Kills without drawing blood.

Buddha

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.

Buddha

Better than a thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace.

Yasutani Roshi

The quieter you become, the more you can hear.

Mahatma Gandhi

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

Wrap up and Reflection: (5 minutes)

Everyone makes mistakes.

We can't control how other people act.

Holding on to bad thoughts can make us feel mad and agitated.

Forgiveness means accepting the apology of others and moving on.

Character Trait Statement:

Forgiveness

At EBS we practice Forgiveness.

We acknowledge our mistakes, apologize, and try to make things right again.

We understand that everyone makes mistakes and we accept the apologies of others.

We do not bring up past mistakes or gossip about what others did wrong.

We move on and are friends again.



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