

## APAWLOGIZING THE RIGHT WAY

### ABOUT:

My grandpuppy, Murray, a huge Goldendoodle, sometimes comes to visit and Winston loves playing with him. When Murray is here our next-dog-neighbor Hazel stays away and just watches. So, I came up with the story about how Hazel gets her feelings hurt because Winston ignores her. Winston comes to realize that he needs to apologize. And not just to say, "I'm sorry," but to apologize the right way.

### PURPOSE:

As I mentioned, when we tell our children to, "Say you're sorry," the apology holds no weight with the offender or the offended. The offender takes no personal responsibility and the offended knows the offender really isn't sorry. This 'no fault' attitude carries on through adulthood. Apologies such as, "I'm sorry, but if you hadn't \_\_\_\_\_," insinuates the problem is actually the offended's fault instead of the offender's. Only when one tries to understand or recognize the other person's feelings is an apology sincere. A child who develops empathy and recognizes and expresses personal responsibility will carry these life-long skills into adulthood improving relationships on all levels.

### SUGGESTIONS:

Empathy is understanding how another person feels, not just when offended. A good exercise is to show pictures of people and have children identify how they are feeling, and why they might feel that way. Happy and sad are easy to identify, but asking the question, "*Why do you think they are feeling this?*" gives an opportunity to deepen empathy. Also explore emotions such as jealousy, embarrassment, and fear. Brainstorming emotions, and even sharing some of your personal experiences with these emotions will help a child recognize these in others. Former schoolteacher, JoEllen Poon, shared a simple approach to apologies. She uses three sentences: *I am sorry for \_\_\_\_\_, I was wrong because \_\_\_\_\_, In the future I will \_\_\_\_\_*. She said this three-sentence apology transformed her students' apologies. She has a great website: [cuppacocoa.com](http://cuppacocoa.com)

### IDEAS:

We read that Sugar was in her garden. Many ideas can come from gardening:

Talk about good bugs and bad bugs in a garden.

Study earthworms.

Have a horticulturist visit your class, or take your children to a local garden center

Build a garden fairy house: <https://kidsgardening.org/resources/garden-activities-build-a-fairy-house/>