
Start With Sorry: Lesson Plan for Grades 1–3

Core Concept

Apologising is a way to take responsibility, repair relationships, and show respect and kindness.

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand why and when to apologise.
- Students will identify the parts of a real apology.
- Students will practice apologising, forgiving, and making things right.
- Students will reflect on how apology builds respect and trust in their community.

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: Why Apologise?

Ask: “Why do we say sorry? How does an apology help when someone is upset or hurt?”

Share examples: Times when the teacher, a friend, or a character from class stories offered or received an apology.

Key point: Apologising is about making things right, not just using “magic words.”

2. Story Time & Discussion

Read aloud: A short story or picture book where a character apologises.

Discuss: How did the character feel before and after apologising? What changed for both people?

3. The Anatomy of an Apology

Teach these steps (write on board):

Say what you did. (“I forgot to include you in the game.”)

Say sorry and mean it. (“I’m really sorry.”)

Ask how to make it right, or offer a way. (“Can I play with you now?”)

Listen to the other person’s feelings.

Class brainstorm: When are some times it’s hard to say sorry? Why?

4. Apology Practice & Role-Play

Scenario Cards: Prepare cards with realistic situations (e.g., “You pushed someone in line,” “You broke a friend’s pencil,” “You said something rude by accident”).

Pairs/small groups: Students draw a scenario and practice the four-step apology with a partner, switching roles.

Reflection: What was easy or hard? Which apology felt real or helpful?

5. Repair in Action

Real-life connection: Ask students to think about a time they needed to apologise but found it difficult, or a time someone apologised to them.

Apology Journal: Students write or draw about one time they apologised or wish they had.



6. Creating a Classroom Apology Agreement

Group discussion: “How can we make apology normal in our class?”

Agreement creation: Students help write a short list (e.g., “In our class, everyone can say sorry and be heard. We listen to apologies and try to make things better.”)

Display in classroom: Students sign or add their names.

7. Home Connection (Optional Extension)

Send home a letter outlining what students learned about apologising.

“Family Apology Challenge”: Students and family members practice a real apology using the 4 steps, and students may share a story with the class (optional).

8. Celebration and Reflection

Circle Time: “How can apology help even when it feels hard?”

Apology Chain: Each time a student uses their apology steps well, add a paper link to a chain in the classroom.

Recognition: Award certificates or “Repair Heroes” badges for students who practice sincere apologies.

Materials & Resources

Apology scenario cards (print)

Apology steps poster for the classroom wall

Individual “Apology Journals” (notebooks or handouts)

Certificate/sticker (“Repair Hero” or “Sorry Star”)

Optional: Book suggestions, family letter template (print), classroom chart for apologies

Teaching Tips


Model apologising as a teacher whenever appropriate.

Normalise making mistakes as part of learning.

Praise effort and sincerity, not just perfect wording.

Differentiate activities for students who prefer talking, drawing, or writing.

This lesson plan uses evidence-based social-emotional learning strategies appropriate for Grades 1–3, building community, responsibility, and kindness through structured practice and reflection.

<p>Accidental Bump You were in a rush and accidentally knocked over a classmate's art project.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry for the accident and offering to help fix it</p>	<p>Unkind Words You said something mean to a friend during a game because you were frustrated.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and choosing kind words next time.</p>	<p>Taking Without Asking You borrowed your classmate's pencil without asking and they got upset.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and returning the item respectfully.</p>
<p>Breaking a Toy You broke a shared classroom toy while playing roughly.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and taking responsibility.</p>	<p>Excluding a Friend You left someone out of your group at recess.</p> <p>  Practice noticing others' feelings and saying sorry for not including them.</p>	<p>Laughing at a Mistake You laughed when someone made a mistake during reading time.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and encouraging your friend instead.</p>
<p>Not Listening to the Teacher You interrupted while the teacher was giving instructions and caused a distraction.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry to the teacher and classmates.</p>	<p>Messy Sharing You didn't clean up after using the shared paint tray and your classmate had to do it.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and offering to help clean next time.</p>	<p>Name Calling You called a friend a silly name and they looked sad.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and using respectful names.</p>
<p>Breaking a Promise You promised to sit with a friend at lunch but sat with someone else instead.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and explaining kindly.</p>	<p>Ignoring a Friend Who Needed Help Your friend dropped their books and asked for help, but you walked away because you were busy.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and offering to help next time someone needs a hand.</p>	<p>Blaming Someone Else You spilled water on the floor but said it was someone else so you wouldn't get in trouble.</p> <p>  Practice saying sorry and telling the truth, even when it's hard.</p>

Say what you did. (“I forgot to include you in the game.”)

**Say sorry and mean it.
 (“I’m really sorry.”)**

**Ask how to make it right,
or offer a way. (“Can I play with you now?”)**

**Listen to the other
person’s feelings.**

Apology Journal Introduction

"This is your Apology Journal—a special place to think about times when saying sorry can help hearts heal, friendships grow, and kindness shine through.

[illegible]

Dear Families,

We are learning about the power of apology in our classroom through a new program called **Start With Sorry**. This program teaches students how to take responsibility for their actions, understand how others feel, and build stronger relationships at school and at home.

In the coming weeks, your child will participate in activities and role plays that help them practice saying “I’m sorry” in meaningful ways. They'll also use Apology Journals to reflect on their actions and how they can make things right.

We invite you to support this at home by modelling and encouraging sincere apologies. You might ask:

- “Is there something we need to fix?”
- “How do you think they felt?”
- “What can we do to make it better?”

We believe saying sorry isn’t just polite—it’s powerful. It helps heal, reconnect, and grow.

Thank you for being part of this important journey.

Warmly,

[Your Name]

[School Name/Classroom]



Classroom Chart for Apologies

"We Start With Sorry!" Classroom Apology Chart

Create a poster or whiteboard chart with the following format. Use colourful visuals and space for kids to interact:

Step What It Looks Like What Kids Can Say

1. Notice (Step)

Recognise when you've hurt someone (What It Looks Like)

"I think I made a mistake." (What Kids Can Say)

2. Feel (Step)

Understand how they might feel (What It Looks Like)

"I see that you're upset." (What Kids Can Say)

3. Say Sorry (Step)

Use sincere words (What It Looks Like)

"I'm sorry for what I did." (What Kids Can Say)

4. Make it Right (Step)

Ask how to fix it or offer to help (What It Looks Like)

"Can I help fix it?" or "Next time I'll..." (What Kids Can Say)

5. Learn & Grow (Step)

Think about how to do better next time (What It Looks Like)

"I've learned and I'll try to do better." (What Kids Can Say)