

What the Sorry Names

Facilitator note: The skill is the specified apology - naming the harm and the change - and the story's frame is content, not intensity. Menucha's first sorry was loud and sincere and useless; the second was plain, specific, and built repair. Do not teach that apologies must be long - the second sorry works because of what it NAMES, not its length. Keep the money offer in view: it is what repair looks like when the apologizer wants the discomfort to end fast. Protect Rifky's pace throughout - "I know," the closed voice, the months of fine-but-not-warm are all legitimate; the story never punishes her for them, and warmth, when it comes, arrives because of a recipe card, not because Menucha earned it on a schedule. Do not force students to share real apologies they owe or have received; Activity 7 uses a made-up case. If a student realizes mid-lesson that she owes someone a specified sorry, the hoped-for outcome is that she writes it privately and tells a parent - not that she delivers it in class.

Teacher answer key

Activity 1: The first apology names only Menucha - her sorrow, three times, intensifying. It protects her from the inventory: no cards, no cap, no change. The second names the harm (six cards, four in the old handwriting, the spice cake), the cause (the unclicked cap, reaching across), the change (bottle in bag, walk around), and offers a repair Rifky gets to choose. The first is built to end Menucha's discomfort; the second is built to carry Rifky's loss. Activity 2: Money is the fastest repair-shaped thing available, and the offer is really trying to end the unbearable present - the bleeding cards, the closed voice. Rifky's answer exposes it: there is nothing to buy. A wronged person can tell a comfort-offer from a repair-offer because the comfort-offer arrives before anyone has asked what would help. Activity 3: Without the inventory, the apology guesses at the harm - and guesses low, because guessing high is painful. Menucha's "I want to know what I broke" converts her sorry from a feeling into a debt with a shape: two replaceable, three re-copyable, one permanent gap. A sorry that skips the inventory apologizes for a blur, and the wronged person hears that the apologizer never actually looked. Activity 4: 3 of 4 parts are done. Missing: doing the repair the wronged person chooses. The arithmetic does not capture that the parts have an order - the choosing question cannot be skipped to, and the parts do not work as a menu; it also cannot capture that 4 of 4 still does not purchase forgiveness. Activity 5: Waiting for warmth makes Rifky responsible for ending Menucha's discomfort - the same self-centered reach as the bottle. Repairing is Menucha's work and finishes when the work is done; forgiving is Rifky's gift and runs on Rifky's clock or never. The story keeps them in separate hands: "My part is done and stays done, whatever her part does." Activity 6: Drawings vary. Accept any showing only the visible: the round table, the lace cloth, the cards and pens, the slow copying. Caption from the story, e.g. "It should look like today on the card. The card should tell the truth about who copied it." Activity 7: Answers vary; require three sentences with names. Model: inventory - Faiga asks her brother to tell her exactly what the rip damaged before she apologizes again. Specified apology - "I took your binder without asking, ripped the cover stuffing it into my bag, and from now on I ask before I touch it." Choosing question - Faiga asks what would actually help: paying for a new binder, fixing the cover together, or something else he names. MENUCHA row 1 columns 1-7; RIFKY row 2 columns 1-5; CARDS row 3 columns 1-5; SPILL row 4 columns 1-5; SORRY row 5 columns 1-5; BUBBY row 6 columns 1-5; COPIED row 7 columns 1-6; REPAIR row 8 columns 1-6