

Good Choices Marble Jar Friends

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When I was a preschool and kindergarten teacher, I had a marble jar, often called the "Good Choices Jar." The idea behind the jar was simply that I put marbles in when the students were helping each other, making good choices and cooperating together. When students were hurtful or mean, marbles had to be taken out of the jar. A filled jar of marbles meant a "Good Choices Party" that the students helped to plan.

In Brené Brown's novel "Daring Greatly," she shares a story of her young daughter, Ellen, coming home from third grade sobbing. Brené was finally able to figure out that Ellen had told some friends something in confidence but by the end of recess, the whole class knew. They were laughing and making fun of her. When her daughter announced, "I will never trust anyone again," Brené was struggling to find a way to help her.

It turns out, her daughter's teacher used a marble jar in her classroom, so she used the concept to explain how trust is built. She told her, "Trust is like a marble jar. You share those hard stories and hard things that are happening to you with friends who over time you've filled up their marble jar." They talked about what marble jar friends look like:

They keep our secrets.

They tell us their secrets.

They remember my birthday!

They know who Omma and Oppa are.

They always make sure I'm included in fun things.

They know when I'm sad and ask me why.

When I miss school because I'm sick, they ask their moms to call and check on me

Wouldn't this be a great conversation to have with your child, youth or even young adult? We can guide our children in making friend choices and understanding the role that trust plays in those relationships. To see the whole Brené Brown TED talk on this, brenebrown.com/videos/anatomy-trust-video/