

## MIRO – A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF FORGIVENESS (KS3 & 4)

### Concept – Forgiveness

*Forgiveness and relief from guilt is at the heart of many faiths, as shown here by this true story where places and names have been changed.*

Hot-seat Miro, his friend and the storyteller.

“When war broke out I was a Serb. I was married to a Croatian, living in Croatia. I couldn’t fight. Not as a Serb, against my own family.”

Miro’s hands trembled, his fingers wrapped round the cup of coffee he was cradling, as words that hurt fell from his lips. I had only met him an hour before. He spoke good English. He needed to talk about things that had happened years before.

“One night the phone rang,” he carried on. “I answered it, knew the voice ... an old school friend. ‘Why aren’t you fighting with us?’ I was asked. I explained I couldn’t. I might be asked to fire on my own family.” My old friend put the phone down on me.

Miro paused as a tram rattled by. Central Zagreb on a Sunday afternoon was bustling with life. In the nearby market, stall holders called out, selling their wares. Miro shifted his body, leaned forward, placed his cup in its pale blue saucer. I, too, leaned forward, straining to hear his softly spoken words.

“The phone rang later that evening. It was him again. ‘I have a bullet and it’s got your name on it.’ That was all he said. He was coming to kill me.”

“What did you do?” I asked. The words slipped out before I could stop them. Miro studied the table. It was a long pause.

“I did nothing,” he eventually said. “We were at war.” His face was etched with emotion. Memories were tumbling in his mind. “There is so much hate, but we must forgive if we are to move on,” he eventually said. “It is what God would want us do. We must show by

example. I survived. He didn’t find me ...”

... Until today, when Miro had taken a new work colleague, a stranger he had just met at the airport, to his favourite coffee shop. And now I understood why, fifteen minutes earlier, Miro’s footsteps had faltered as a man, tall with staring eyes and grey hair, had walked towards us. I had registered Miro’s frozen expression as he stepped towards his old friend, arm outstretched.

The other, too, had paused before accepting the offered hand. Greetings had been exchanged. I understood nothing of their conversation. It was private, between themselves. But I had seen forgiveness in the shape of a hand shake.



Find other examples in people’s lives where forgiveness was important to moving on. Write a story based on your own experience when forgiving someone was really important.

Write the story from the soldier’s point of view – why did he fight? Why did he phone Miro and threaten him? Why did he not carry out his threat? Do you think he had ever thought about Miro since the phone call? How do you think he felt when he recognised him that Sunday afternoon?

Role-play a situation where someone is forgiven and the impact that has on their lives.

Discuss whether there is anything that cannot be forgiven.