

Free Choice Time

Theme: Tizzy and Kezia are the very best of friends, until the fateful day when they are allowed to choose for themselves what they would like to do. In the end, the girls discover that they can be different and still be friends.

Setting: First school

SEAL reference: Problem Solving

Tizzy and Kezia were best of friends, just like their mummies. They were full of life and always laughing – happy as could be. They didn't really need anyone else, because they always had each other.

Although they were only five years old, they had already been on holiday together, joined dance classes together, had birthday parties together, you name it, they had probably done it – together.

When they started school everyone was worried they might be in different classes, but no, they were even put in the same class – together!

At the end of week one, the teacher explained to the children all about 'Free Choice' time. This meant that on Friday afternoons, when all the class were quite weary, Mrs Dumbarton would set out all the different areas with separate activities. The children could then choose to do one, or all of them, as they wished.

Tizzy and Kezzie, as Kezia quickly became known, were excited.

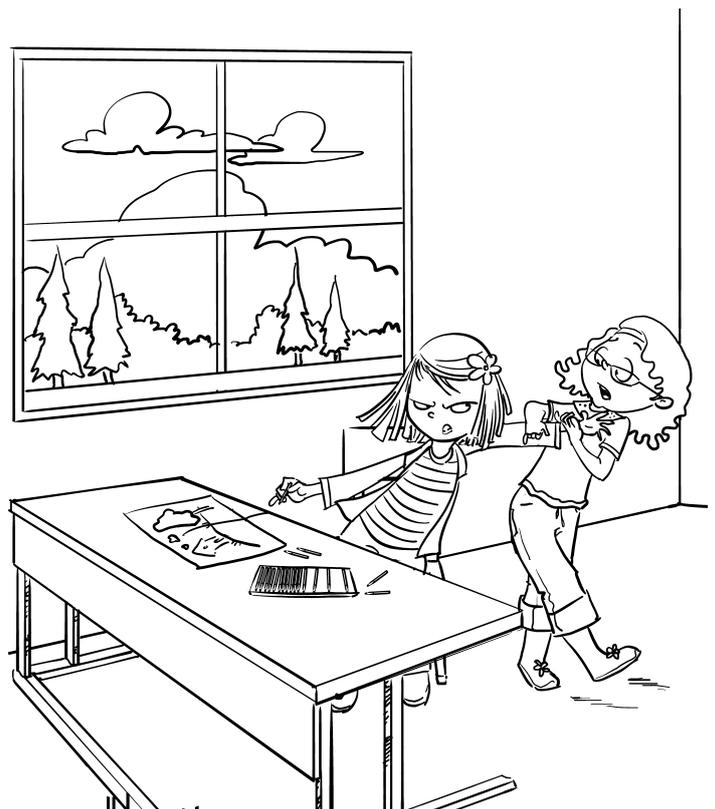
When Mrs Dumbarton opened the classroom door, they both immediately saw what they wanted to do. Tizzy headed straight for the table full of paper, in all shapes and sizes, with

crayons and paints and coloured pens of every hue.

She settled herself down in the chair near the window and began to 'colour in'. She was contented and started to really enjoy herself. But at that moment, Kezzie came over to the table.

'Come on,' she said, pulling Tizzy's jumper. 'Come and work with me at the Science table – it's got lots of water and floaters and sinkers – it's great fun.'

'Uh, huh?' murmured Tizzy, deeply engrossed in her picture.



‘No! Come and play with me,’ whined Kezzie, and she pulled Tizzy’s jumper again. But this time, she did it harder and this made Tizzy’s arm drag her crayon straight across her colouring. This made Tizzy cross with Kezzie and she pushed her away.

Kezzie lost her balance and fell back against a low table and hurt her arm. She began to cry. At once this made Tizzy afraid and sad all at once, she leaped up from her chair and went to comfort her friend. She wondered if Mrs Dumbarton would be angry with her. She had only wanted to do colouring during Free Choice time.

‘She pushed me!’ wailed Kezzie. ‘She pushed me hard!’

‘Oh, Tizzy,’ said Mrs Dumbarton. She sounded disappointed and cross. ‘What have you done?’

Tizzy was unsure and confused. It was Kezzie who’d spoilt *Tizzy’s* picture, she was the naughty one. But no one was asking *her* what had happened. So she too began to cry too.

‘That won’t help you,’ said Mrs Dumbarton. ‘I think you owe Kezia a big apology, don’t you?’

‘No,’ answered Tizzy, truthfully. She was still unsure why everyone thought she was the naughty girl.

‘Oh, Tizzy!’ grumbled Mrs Dumbarton.

‘I want my mummy,’ cried Tizzy.

‘Your mummy won’t be pleased with what you have done,’ said Mrs Dumbarton.

Now Tizzy was even more confused, why would Mummy not be pleased with her. She had been colouring a beautiful picture for her to stick on the fridge, except Kezia had spoilt it, because she wanted Tizzy to do the same as her. She always did!

What a pickle both girls were in.

Not long afterwards, both mummies arrived. They spent time talking to the girls and Mrs Dumbarton and soon they got to the bottom of the problem. It was sort of alright between the girls by the time they went home, but it was difficult for either of them to feel good about each other.

Mrs Dumbarton said, ‘Forgive and forget.’

The mummies said, ‘It’s over now, so not to worry.’

But Tizzy and Kezzie knew deep down that something had changed. They had both learned a hard lesson in thinking about how others feel and not just wanting your own way all the time.

They were still best friends; just a little wiser.

Follow-up questions

- Do you think Tizzy was right to be cross with Kezzie?
 - Was Mrs Dumbarton right to ask the girls to ‘forgive and forget’?
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