**Name**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Homeroom**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***“The Nail in The Fence”: A Story About Saying Things in Anger***

**Directions:** Read the following story and answer the questions that follow.

There once was a little boy named Jonas who had a bad temper. One day, his father gave him a bag of nails and a hammer. The father, then asked Jonas to hammer a nail into the back of the fence every time he lost his temper. If he shouted or sulked, he was to drive one nail to record his reaction. If his father or mother told him he must control his anger he was to drive one nail into the fence.

At breakfast that first day Jonas fumed when he was asked to clean up the dishes and he thought it was his little brother’s turn. His father sent him to drive a nail into the fence and at the end of the day he found that had driven 5 more nails into the fence. He was a bit surprised by this and over the next few weeks, he tried with some success to reduce the number of nails he hammered into the fence. Soon he discovered, it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally, the day came when Jonas didn’t lose his temper. He was thrilled to tell his father about it. As he shared this achievement, the father suggested that he now go ahead and pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and Jonas was finally able to eventually remove all the nails from the fence. He was even more excited this time to share this new achievement with his father. As expected, the father was extremely pleased. He congratulated Jonas and told him how proud he was for this achievement.

However, the father did not immediately take Jonas back inside. Instead he led the boy to the fence and said, “You have done well, my son. I am proud of you for what you have achieved today! But look at the holes in the fence. They will remain there forever. The fence will never be the same. Similarly, when you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one.

‘If you cut someone with a knife,’ the father began, ‘it won’t matter how many times you say I’m sorry. The wound is still there. But, a verbal wound is as bad as a physical one. Friends and loved ones are very rare jewels, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. And an enemy once made is a constant cause of tension and strain. Be careful what you say in anger. You won’t create bad blood and you won’t chase friendships away.” The boy stood silently as he began to understand the value of the lesson his wise father had taught him.

***“The Nail in The Fence”* Reflection Questions**

**Directions:** In your neatest handwriting and in complete sentences, answer the following questions:

1. What is the lesson of the story?

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1. Take a moment to reflect on whether you left any marks recently. Did you leave any marks on others? If so, how?

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1. What does this line “a verbal wound is as bad as a physical one” mean?

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1. Why does the author say, “friends and loved ones are very rare jewels, indeed”? What does that suggest about what the boy used to do when he lost his temper?

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***“The Nail in The Fence”* Reflection Questions (Continued)**

1. What does this story teach you?

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