



CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

SOMMER-TIME STORIES

STONE SOUP

Story Description

When three hungry soldiers enter the village, the selfish villagers hide rather than welcome them. To teach the villagers that sharing brings joy, they announce they are making soup from stones. This idea is so surprising that the soldiers convince the self-centered villagers to add something to their soup for additional flavor. Their contributions to the water and stones becomes a delicious pot of soup.

Soup-making turns into a village-wide celebration and changes the villagers forever. This retelling of the classic folktale demonstrates community spirit and the joy of sharing.



Major Objective

To define and present the following character traits so they can be integrated into the life of each student:

- Citizenship: having the rights, privileges, duties, and responsibilities of where you live
- Cooperation: working or acting together for a common purpose
- Sharing: to take part in jointly; to divide and participate in together

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *Stone Soup*, and then write these three character traits on the interactive whiteboard: citizenship, cooperation, and sharing. Define and discuss these character traits.

Discuss the characters:

John Edward Henry

The villagers The mayor and his wife

Activity Objectives

To use the following activities to reinforce the character traits of citizenship, cooperation, and sharing. To guide students to consider the importance of community service, fairness, friendship, goal setting, kindness, proper work ethic, respect for labor, responsibility, and unselfishness.

Make a Sharing Tree

Discuss why sharing brings happiness. Let students give examples of times when sharing made them happy. Have students identify ways and things that they can share. Encourage them to share with someone this week and tell about it later.

Using green construction paper, have the children trace their hands so that each child has three (or more if you want your tree to have more leaves). On each hand the children write something they will share: food, clothes, toys, games, the TV, pets, parents, teachers, siblings, etc. Encourage them to be specific. Then have them cut out each hand. These hands will be the leaves on a tree. The tree trunk will say, "WE SHARE." Staple the leaves to the tree which will make a nice bulletin board.

Share Your Sharing Experience

Ask students to tell about who they shared with this week and what they shared. Encourage them to be truthful and if they forgot to share, they can tell about what they plan to do later today or over the weekend. Have them tell about how they felt while they were sharing.

Snack Time

Bring in some gold fish or other snack items like pretzels, crackers, etc. Allow a few students to come up and take as much as they want. When there is none left, announce the problem to the class. Say: "Students, I am so sorry, but we ran out of pretzels. What should we do?" Hopefully, someone will think of sharing. Then allow those students who have the snack to distribute with those who have none. You may need to guide them if they are not sharing enough. For example, if a student only gives another student a little bit, ask if that is how much he would want. Remind students of the Golden Rule.

Recycle and Compost

In order to demonstrate community spirit, have students figure out ways to recycle and if possible make compost. They can make their own compost at home and then when it is ready, bring it in for use in the school garden. Have students research how to make compost and then make a plan for how to do it at home.

Learn from Geese

Explain to students that geese can help you learn about working together or teamwork. If possible show a video clip from the internet showing how geese fly in formation. As a goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird behind it. By flying together in a V formation, the flock's flying range is 71% greater than that of any bird flying alone. When you share a common direction and sense of community, you can get where you are going more quickly and easily because you are traveling on the energy of another. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into form to take

advantage of the lifting power of the birds in front. When you have as much sense as a goose, you will stay in formation with those who are headed where you want to go; you will be willing to accept their help as well as give yours to others. The geese in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies out to the point position. When you take turns doing the hard tasks, when you encourage others, you become stronger through shared leadership. When a goose gets sick or wounded, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. They then launch out on their own to find another formation or to catch up with the flock. When you have learned the value of teamwork, you too will stand by another in challenging times. Let us fly in formation and remember to drop back to help those who need it.

How Does Your School Function?

Share the following quote (by Ryunosuke Satoro) with students: “Individually we are one drop. Together we are an ocean.” Have students discuss all the people involved in making their school function. Then have them discuss all the people involved in making a big grocery store work or a newspaper. Guide them along as needed.

Make Soup

Have students bring in the ingredients to make soup. You will want to let the parents know about this at least one week in advance, preferably two. They can bring in canned foods: peas, green beans, carrots, pearl onions, little potatoes, tomatoes, corn, chicken, chicken broth, crackers, etc. You will also need plastic bowls, spoons, napkins, and drinks. As the “mayor” you will bring the salt, pepper, and other seasonings for making the soup. Mix it in one or two large crock pots. Make sure to make enough to share with the principal, assistant principal, librarian, P. E. teacher, computer teacher, etc. You may even want to share with another class. Be sure to make the connection to the story, *Stone Soup*, and emphasize how good it feels to share and do something for others.

Quotes to Remember

Ask students if they have ever heard the quote: “All for one, and one for all.” Explain that this was used in a book about the Three Musketeers who were part of an elite guard that protected King Louis XIII in France in 1644. During their adventures the Three Musketeers, repeated this quote to one another in order to remind themselves of the importance to work together for the good of the king. Also, read and discuss the following quotes:

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”—Mother Theresa

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.”—Stephen R. Covey

“No time is better spent than that spent in the service of your fellow man.”—
Bryan McGill

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”—Helen Keller

Role Play

Have two students act out a role play of one playing with a toy and not sharing and the other child asking to play. Then have two other children pretend to refuse to share food with another. Afterwards talk about how each one feels and how much better it feels to share.

Tying It All Together

When you share with others, you will help them, and it will make you feel good inside. Remembering the Golden Rule will help you remember to share: Treat others as you want to be treated.