



CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

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.



Main Character Traits

Citizenship/Sharing/Cooperation

Other Character Traits

Community Service, Fairness, Friendship, Goal Setting, Kindness, Proper Work Ethic, Respect for Labor, Responsibility, Trust, and Unselfishness

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Respect for Labor/Proper Work Ethic/Responsibility

Long ago in a faraway land was a village where everyone was known for being selfish. One day three hungry soldiers, Edward, Henry, and John, came walking towards their village. When a villager spotted the soldiers who had faithfully protected them, he yelled, "The soldiers are coming to eat!" Upon hearing that, the selfish villagers dashed into their houses and locked their doors.

The soldiers were hard workers who took their responsibilities and duties seriously. However, the selfish villagers did not respect the soldiers and the hard work they were doing.

Unselfishness/Kindness/Sharing

When Edward saw the villagers running into their homes, he exclaimed, "What selfish people! We protect them all day long, and they won't even offer us a piece of bread!"

Henry chimed in, "How ungrateful they are!"

John said, "Selfish people are unhappy. They're miserable. Let's see if we can help the villagers learn that sharing brings happiness."

John wants to teach the villagers that sharing brings happiness. This is very unselfish and kind of him since the villagers won't even share a piece of bread with the ones who protect them.

Fairness

"We shouldn't help those selfish people," grumbled Henry.

"I'm starving," complained Edward. "I need something to eat. Forget about helping them."

"Let's not be like them," suggested John. "Let's try to think of how we can help the villagers."

Even though the villagers were selfish and wouldn't share, John suggests that they not be like them, but instead help them learn that sharing brings happiness. It would have been fair to act like the villagers, but John isn't concerned with being fair; instead he wants to share and help the villagers. Sometimes doing right is more important than being fair.

Friendship and Trust

Suddenly, John jumped up. "I've got a great idea! Let's make stone soup!"

"Stone soup?" said Edward and Henry, laughing. "Are you crazy?"

"Yes, stone soup," insisted John. "We'll make soup with stones. It will teach the villagers that sharing brings happiness."

"How will making stone soup teach villagers that sharing brings happiness?" Edward asked.

"I'll show you," John said.

Henry shrugged. "We have nothing to lose. What do you want us to do?"

"Pick a round stone from the brook."

"It seems so foolish," grumbled Edward. "But I'll do what you say."

"It will work," insisted John. Each soldier picked a stone from the brook.

John's idea of making stone soup seems far-fetched, but Henry and Edward trust their friend, John, so they go along with his idea and help him.

Goal Setting

As the soldiers placed the stones on the table, Henry teased, "Let's see you make soup from these stones."

John never said a word. He walked to the nearest house and knocked on the door. No one answered. He knocked harder—still no answer. He knew someone was home because he had seen him run into the house. "How can I get him to open the door?" he wondered. Suddenly, he exclaimed, "I have an idea!"

John shouted, "Could you lend us a large pot to make stone soup for the villagers?"

The wife roared with laughter. "That's silly. They can't make soup from stones."

"Let's see the foolish soldiers try," said the husband. "Besides, it doesn't cost us anything to loan them our big pot."

The couple took their large pot to the soldiers. The soldiers filled the pot with water and placed it on the fireplace. Then they dropped their stones into the pot. John smiled and said, "From these stones we'll make the most delicious soup you have ever tasted."

John's goal is to make soup and to teach the villagers a lesson. He not only has a goal, but he also has a plan to accomplish his goal. You will never reach your goals unless you have a plan.

Cooperation

"We need some wood to make a fire," John said. "Do you know of anyone with some extra wood?"

"I do," said the man. He went to his neighbor and asked, "Some soldiers are making stone soup. Could you please give us some wood?"

...The husband said, "We have plenty of wood. Let's see the soldiers make fools of themselves."

John put the wood into the fireplace. Soon they had a roaring fire and the water was boiling. "Ohhhhh," groaned John. "If only we had a few onions, the soup would taste so much better."

"I'll ask my neighbor," said one of the villagers.

... "Ohhhhh! If only we had some meat, like a chicken. It would add so much flavor to the soup."

"My neighbor has lots of chickens," said a villager.

...John added the chicken to the soup. He sniffed and sighed, "Too bad we don't have potatoes. Stone soup tastes so much better with some potatoes."

"My next-door neighbor grows potatoes," a villager said. "I'll ask him."

...John dropped the potatoes into the pot, sniffed, and smiled. "Ah, it smells delicious. But if only we had some carrots, it would really improve the flavor."

"My neighbor has lots of carrots," said a villager. "I'll ask her."

...John dropped the carrots into the pot and then tasted the soup. "There's just one thing missing. To make this soup perfect, we need some salt and pepper."

"Let's ask the mayor," shouted someone from the crowd.

Without even realizing it, the villagers cooperate with each other and the soldiers to make the stone soup. By everyone contributing something and each doing his part, the soup gets made. This is true in all of our lives; if we work together we can accomplish more than we could on our own.

Citizenship and Community Service

When the mayor and his wife came, they were shocked. "For years I've been trying to get our people to come together," the mayor said. "Look at them now! They're talking and laughing with one another."

"Isn't that wonderful?" asked the mayor's wife.

The mayor's wife gave John the salt and pepper. After John added the salt and pepper, he tasted the soup and exclaimed, "Delicious!"

Henry said, "The soup is almost done. We need to set the tables."

"I'll get tables," someone called out.

Another yelled, "I'll get chairs."

All the villagers began helping....Everyone talked and laughed and had a happy time together.

After they ate and were full, the mayor stood and said to the soldiers, "We want to thank you for protecting us and for making this delicious stone soup."

"Yes!" shouted the villagers.

John stood and said, "This soup was delicious because everyone shared. If you hadn't shared, we could never have made this tasty soup."

The neighbors now felt ashamed for having lived such selfish lives. The mayor called the soldiers forward. "Thank you for teaching us that sharing brings happiness. Today we had such a good time sharing and being friendly that I say every year we gather together and celebrate Stone Soup Day."

All the happy villagers stood, clapped, and shouted, "Yes!"

Finally, the villagers realized that it is much better to share and work together as a community. They even decided to make it a yearly event. You have more fun when you work together and get more accomplished.

Questions

1. What had the soldiers done for the villagers?

They had protected them.

2. How did the villagers feel at the beginning of the story?

They probably felt miserable because they were being so selfish. (inference)

3. When John suggested helping the people learn to share, what comments did Edward and Henry make?

Henry grumbled, "We shouldn't help those selfish people." Edward complained, "I'm starving. I need something to eat. Forget about helping them."

4. What was John's response?

He suggested, "Let's not be like them. Let's try to think of how we can help them."

5. What did Edward and Henry think about John's idea to make stone soup?

They thought he was crazy.

6. What was the first step in making stone soup?

The three soldiers picked smooth stones from the brook.

7. What were the next three steps?
They borrowed a large pot, put water and the stones in it, and got some extra firewood from a neighbor.
8. What vegetables came next?
People brought onions, potatoes, and carrots.
9. When did the chicken get put in?
It was put in right after the onions.
10. What was the final thing the soup needed and who brought it?
Finally, the soup needed salt and pepper which was brought by the mayor.
11. What surprised the mayor and why?
He was surprised to see the people laughing and talking together because he had been trying for years to get them to work together.
12. Once the soup was finished, what did the people bring?
They brought tables and chairs.
13. After everyone had eaten the soup, what did the mayor say?
He thanked the soldiers for protecting them and making the soup and for teaching them that sharing brings happiness.
14. How did the mayor's speech make the people feel?
They were ashamed for having been so selfish.
15. What did the mayor propose?
He proposed that every year they gather together and celebrate Stone Soup Day.
16. What effect did this event have on the villagers?
They became happy, friendly, and giving.
17. To help the villagers and their children remember that sharing brings happiness, what did they build?
They built a monument of the three soldiers making stone soup.