

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SOCIAL SKILLS LESSON PLAN

CASEL COMPETENCY: SELF-AWARENESS

SOCIAL SKILL: OPTIMISM

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BOOK INFORMATION

Book title: *Beautiful Hands*

Author: Kathryn Otoshi

Publisher and date of publication: Blue Dot Press

ISBN: 978-0-9907993-0-6

Number of pages: 28

Reading level or interest level: K-2, but appropriate for all ages

BOOK SYNOPSIS

The author starts with the question, "What will your beautiful hands do today?" She then answers it with some ideas, both concrete (gardening) and abstract (ideas). The story has questions about what you will touch, lift, stretch, reach, etc. The book demonstrates our personal power to do things that make the world a better place. The book ends with hope for the future, "What will your beautiful hands do...tomorrow?" The pictures are colorful and creative—made of beautiful and brightly colored handprints and finger prints that form a variety of objects.

This book could be used in the classroom or in counseling to address optimism. The story empowers students by focusing on all of the things they are able to do. The book also describes emotions and how these emotions are played out with constructive actions. The story starts by asking, "What will you do today;" and the book ends by asking, "What will you do tomorrow?" The story reassures children that every day is a new day with new opportunities. The book builds optimism.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The basic goal for this lesson is to help students understand that each day offers a new chance to express positive and creative feelings. It is important to see each day as a fresh start with many possibilities and opportunities.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

Select one of the following activities:

(1) Finger painting activity:

- White card stock paper; or fingerpainting paper; or wax coated butcher paper, approx. 8 1/2" X 11 1/2" ---one piece of paper per student
- Purchase (or make) fingerpaint

Recipe for fingerpaint: Stir 4 tablespoons of sugar and 1/2 cup cornstarch together. Add 2 cups of cold water and heat over medium heat until the mixture is slightly thickened (the mixture will further thicken as it cools). Divide into containers, and add food coloring as desired. Double the batch for a large classroom of students.

(2) Handprint activity:

Tracing, cutting out, and coloring handprints, then creating something with everyone's decorated handprints

Note: With younger children you might want to have handprints already cut out.

- One piece of typing paper per child
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Tape
- Poster board or the blackboard to make a creation with the students' handprints

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

This book talks about all of the things our hands can do. Some of these are physical activities, like planting a garden. But some of these are more like expressions. For example, the book says I can lift a spirit. I am not really lifting anything with my hands.

- What do you think it means to lift a spirit?
- What are some examples of ways that you could lift a spirit? (help someone, smile at someone, etc.).

In this book, we learn about how we can express our emotions in a variety of ways.

READ THE BOOK

POST READING DISCUSSION

- What was the first question in the beginning of the book?
- What kind of answers to the question did the book give?
- What is one way we can touch hearts?
- What is one way we can stretch our imagination?
- What was the last question in the book?

The book does not answer the questions in a crystal clear fashion. However, you may be able to figure out the answers to those questions.

- What do you think the answers are to the questions that are asked in this book?
- What kind of feelings do you experience when you realize that today **and** tomorrow you can do these things?
- What if we don't actually do these things today? Possibly we are having a hard day. Maybe we are sick or we are not feeling well.
- What do we get to do tomorrow?

POST READING ACTIVITY

Choose one of the following activities:

(1) Activity for all ages: Finger-painting

Put a teaspoon of each fingerpainting color (three or so colors are sufficient) in the middle of the white sheet of paper (stock card or fingerpainting paper). Have students finger paint something that stretches their imagination and makes them feel happy and hopeful. When completed, ask for a few volunteers to share their paintings. Ask them to explain what their painting means and why it brings them hope. Ask: How did painting stretch your imagination?

(2) Activity for all ages: Give each child a piece of white typing paper; crayons/markers or colored pencils; and scissors. Have each student trace around their hand, cut out, and color their handprint. *For young children you might have handprints precut.* Ask the children to brightly color the handprints. When all the handprints are colored, use all the children's handprints to create something to display in the classroom or hallway (taping the handprints together into an object or design). If there are a small number of students, each student could decorate several handprints. On the blackboard, in the hallway, or on a poster board, you might display the handprints in a big circle, a big heart, or similar to one of the handprint creations in the book. When the creation is done, ask the children how their creation might inspire others. Explain that this creation will make the classroom a brighter and happier place. Explain that what we do with our emotions and with our actions can be a powerful force for good in the world. Take a picture of the creation with a cell phone and send a copy to parents and the principal. You might even place the picture on the school's website, along with an uplifting message from your classroom.

CLOSURE

Each day is a new chance to express our feelings and to create new things. Each day we have a fresh tomorrow, full of new opportunities. Each day we can reach for love, stretch our imaginations, and lift others' spirits up. Today and during this week, pay attention to how you and others do things with your hands and your emotions. Take time to notice small acts of kindness that lift others' spirits. Take time to feel those good feelings that come along with making the world a brighter and happier place.

As a reminder of this lesson, place the following poster in the classroom.

What lies behind us and what lies
in front of us pales in comparison
to what lies within us.

--Henry Stanley Haskins--

