

BIBLIOTHERAPY LESSON PLAN

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SOCIAL SKILL: BEING OPTIMISTIC
CASEL COMPETENCY: SELF-AWARENESS

BOOK INFORMATION

Book Title: The Gardner
Author: Sarah Stewart
Publisher: Farrar Straus Giroux
Year: 1997
ISBN Number: 0-935699-23-6
Number of Pages: 40
Reading Level: 2nd grade +
Interest level: All ages

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Lydia Grace Finch must move to the city and live with her Uncle Jim until things get better. Though it's hard for her to leave her family she has a plan to help keep her life colorful and happy: plant flowers! Every chance she gets she is planting, gardening, and working on her secret place. All the while, friendly and outgoing Lydia Grace is making the lives of those around her brighter, even if she can't quite get Uncle Jim to smile.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Help children recognize their ability and role in being friendly and spreading hope to others.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCED PREPARATION

Review the options for the activities (at the end of the lesson plan). Decide which option is best for your students.

Hopeful Flowers

Materials: Paper, crayons, pencils, markers
Preparation: None needed

Wall of Hope

Materials: Paper, crayons, pencils, markers, scissors, tape
Preparation: Have the drawing supplies ready. If making the flower border for the classroom or hallway, cut white paper in half, giving one half-sheet to each student.

Writing a Poem

Materials: Paper and writing utensils

Preparation: None needed

KEY VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

Hope - a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen; grounds for believing that something good may happen; a person or thing that may help or save someone.

Patience - the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.

Optimistic - hopeful and confident about the future.

Proactive - creating or controlling a situation by causing something to happen rather than responding to it after it has happened.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Show the cover of the book and explain how some situations require us to act in positive ways to help improve our situation. Explain how being friendly and hopeful is often something that we find as we take action to make things better for ourselves and those around us. We can share our friendly and hopeful attitude. Tell the children that this is the story of a girl who did her best to make a tough situation better and that the children should watch for the ways in which Lydia Grace helps those around her, being friendly and spreading her hope and happiness.

POST READING DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions:

- After reading this story, identify how Lydia Grace found things to be hopeful about. How did Lydia Grace spread hope?
- How did those around Lydia Grace respond to her friendly actions?
- What kind of attitude did Lydia Grace need to have in order to do what she did?
- How can we have an attitude like Lydia Grace?
- What kind of things do you think you can do to be more outgoing with others, offering friendship and hope?
- How can you be friendly to others, even when others may not be friendly and happy?

POST READING ACTIVITY: CHOOSE ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES

Hopeful Flowers (grades K-2)

Have the students imagine what the happiest, most hopeful flower in the world would look like and then draw it on a piece of paper. Have them carefully cut it out and write a word like "hope," "happy," or "love" on the back of the flower (write these words on the board for students to copy). Challenge them to put their flower somewhere where they will see it and remember to be friendly, spread a happy

attitude, and make the best of a challenging situation (e.g. on the refrigerator, in the family car, on their backpack, in their school cubby or lunchbox).

Hopeful Flowers (all grades)

Create a row of flowers. Cut typing paper in half, so that each student has ½ sheet of paper. Ask the students to draw and color a beautiful flower. When students are done with their drawing, tape the flowers in a long row around the classroom, on the classroom door, or down the hallway. Tell them that these flowers will remind us to smile and be friendly with others---spreading hope and friendship.

Hopeful Poem (grades 3-6)

Ask the students to think of someone who needs some happiness and a friendly smile in their life. Instruct children to write a poem for that person that will help them smile. This may include writing a poem for themselves or, if they can't think of anyone, suggest students write a poem for "Uncle Jim." For their poem, students may consider using a theme, such as gardening, flowers, or baking. If there is time, students may want to illustrate their poem. If there is enough time, ask the students to "pair and share" their poem with a partner. Challenge the students to hang the poem somewhere where the intended recipient can read it. Students may want to be friendly and cheer up one person at the school, such as the custodian, cafeteria worker, bus driver, principal, librarian, etc. Remind students that a friendly smile and conversation help others feel a bit of the happiness you have in your life. Friendliness and happiness are contagious and can spread joy to those we meet.

CLOSURE

Hang the poster (provided) in the room.

"Plant seeds of happiness, hope, success, and love; it will all come back to you in abundance. This is the law of nature."


— Steve Maraboli

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/oBzcWmUGiz3VINGdDc2tEQXVmaTg/view?usp=sharing>

"The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope."

— Barack Obama

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