

Annie and the Old One

Miska Miles
1971
Boston: Little, Brown

LOVE

U.S.A /Native American
Fiction

Reading Time: 14 minutes

CONCEPTS

Love
Respect
Compassion

SUMMARY

In this Navajo tale, weaving represents life. Facing death, Grandmother passes her understanding and love on to Annie as the cycle of life on earth is explored and respected. Peter Parnall's pen and ink illustrations of the desert and bluffs of the Navajo landscape enhance this touching story.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to identify, define, and discuss love, respect, and compassion as they relate to this story, and will have opportunities to express these attributes to family members or older friends.

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

Write a summary of the story. Use crayons or colored pencils to identify parts of speech. For example, lightly color all nouns red, verbs blue, etc. Make a key for your summary. Look at the story to see the "weaving" effect.

MATH

In pairs, make word problems about weaving for the class to solve. Example: If 2000 strands are needed to make a rug, and Grandmother weaves 20 strands each morning and Annie removes 10 each night, how long will it take to complete the rug?

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. In small groups, investigate the Navajo Nation. (Keyword: Native Americans Navajo) Write a research paper with various topics such as Navajo history, food, traditional clothing, celebrations, cultural events, and arts and crafts. (For each topic, use the keyword Navajo and the topic.) Add drawings, photographs, and maps to your paper. Compile pages, make copies, add a table of contents, and make a cover (see Art #1). Place on a display table in the classroom or hallway.
2. With a partner, investigate Navajo hogans, traditional and contemporary. (Keyword: photos Navajo hogans) Make a poster with information and pictures.

ART

1. Look at Navajo rugs online (Keyword: Canyon art Navajo rugs). On heavy paper or cardboard, draw and color a Navajo rug design. Use it for the cover of your research paper in Social Studies #1.
 2. Make a Navajo sand painting* using a Navajo rug design from Art #1 or other Navajo symbols or designs. (Keyword: Navajo symbols)
- * Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Intermediate Activities, for Navajo sand painting instructions. Culture Keys offer cultural information

After the Story

Annie and the Old One

DISCUSSION

1. What does Annie enjoy most about spending evenings with Grandmother? What activities do you enjoy with grandparents or older friends?
2. Talk about why Grandmother asks her family to choose the things of hers they wish to have. Why does Annie choose the weaving stick?
3. Why is Annie trying to prevent the weaving from being completed? What does she do to stop it?
4. Reread page 41. How does Grandmother's explanation show compassion for Annie? What does Annie begin to understand about the cycle of life? How does this understanding help her become ready to weave?
5. How do Annie and her mother show respect for Grandmother? How do you show respect for your grandparents, older friends, or neighbors?
6. What do you think Annie's mother means when she says, "Your grandmother is one of those who live in harmony with nature..."? Do you or does someone you know live in harmony with nature? Explain.

ACTIVITIES

1. Locate the Four Corners area of the southwestern U.S.A., where many Native American reservations are located. Identify the states and physical features in this area. (Keyword: four corners states map)
2. Write a letter to grandparents, another older family member, or a friend telling about events in your life and recalling pleasant times you have shared. Bring addresses from home and mail or deliver your letters.
3. Make a cardboard loom and weave a mug mat to give as a gift of love to a grandparent or other family member. (Keyword: cardboard loom weaving)
4. Hold a Grandparents' Day. Invite grandparents to class to share skills, stories, and/or family albums. Together read *Grandparents Day* by Sheila Hamanaka.

WRAP-UP

1. In *My Heartwood Journal* write a response to the story that tells what it makes you think about, such as a special relationship you have with an older adult.
2. With a partner, read and discuss the illustrated story "Peter and his Grandmother" by Joseph M. Strayhorn, Jr. (see *Teacher's Guide*). Share your thoughts with the class.

EXTENSION

1. Ask family members about items, stories, skills, and/or recipes grandparents have passed on to them. With permission, share with the class.
2. Discuss family traditions that show love for one another or make up a new tradition that expresses caring for each other or your extended family.

VOCABULARY

hogan
loom
warp

weft
mesa
gnarled

solemn
timid
trudge