

Crow Boy

Tara Yoshima
1955
New York: Viking

RESPECT

Japan
Fiction
Reading Time: 8 minutes

CONCEPTS

Respect
Compassion
Perseverance

SUMMARY

A young Japanese boy nicknamed "Chibi" (tiny boy) perseveres for six long years to win respect and understanding from insensitive classmates. The author's gentle illustrations in traditional Japanese style capture Chibi's dilemma and its resolution, which comes through the encouragement and compassion of his teacher.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to identify, define, and discuss respect, compassion, and perseverance as they apply to the story. The student will explore ways to be kind to others.

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Choose a favorite teacher to interview. Send email or write a note to request an interview. Meet at the designated time, take notes on the "Teacher Interview Page."* use your notes to write a brief biography, and post on a bulletin board. Be sure to thank the teacher.
2. Write a daydream poem. Begin with the words "When I look out my window I see..." List what you see (nouns), and add adjectives describing each noun.

* Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Intermediate Activities, for Poem in Two Voices and Teacher Interview Page. Culture Keys offer cultural information.

SCIENCE

1. In pairs, investigate the history of charcoal, how charcoal is made, and uses of charcoal today. (Keyword: charcoal Japan) Take notes, write mini-reports, and present to the class.
2. In small groups, investigate crows. (Keyword: crows) Find facts such as physical characteristics, habitat, life expectancy, diet, family life, geographic distribution, predators, and intelligence. Compile facts into a booklet, add pictures from the Internet (Keyword: crows images) or magazines, make a cover, and display.

ART

Make a charcoal drawing of what you see when you look out the window at home or at school. Spray your paper with a charcoal fixative, color it with crayons, markers, or colored pencils, and post on a bulletin board with the poem you wrote in Language Arts #2.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Find out about non-verbal communication as it relates to respect in Japanese culture. Share findings with the class. (Keyword: Japan non-verbal communication)

After the Story

Crow Boy

DISCUSSION

1. Talk about ways Chibi is different from the other children. How is he the same? How is he treated at school? What would you do if you saw someone treated that way?
2. In what ways does Chibi persevere? Tell about a time you didn't give up in spite of difficulties.
3. What does Mr. Isobe do that shows compassion for Chibi? How does he discover Chibi's talents? How does he help others to appreciate Chibi's talents?
4. What does it mean to earn respect? How do you think Chibi could have earned respect during those long years? How do you think classmates could have helped him? How would you have helped him if you were his classmate? Discuss.
5. At the end of the story, why do people respect Crow Boy? Does respect always have to be earned? Explain.

ACTIVITIES

1. Locate Japan on the world map. Post a large map of Japan on a bulletin board. (Keyword: large map Japan) Investigate and write facts about Japan on individual pieces of paper and post around the map. (Keyword: kids Japan Mt. Fuji)
2. In small groups find out about bullying: how to identify it, what you can do to stop it, and who can help. (Keyword: bullying) Prepare an oral presentation for the class. Present the information on a chart and/or role-play a bullying situation and a strategy for stopping it.
3. Pair with someone in the classroom you don't know very well. Together write a "Poem in Two Voices"* and read it to the class.
4. Discuss the word "discrimination." Together agree on a definition for the word. Brainstorm and list types of discrimination. Talk about what you can do about it.

EXTENSION

1. Tell the story of Crow Boy to your family. Discuss ways to show respect for each other and ways to gain the respect of friends and neighbors. Try out some of the ways.
2. Ask family members to tell about times when they didn't understand or respect someone, but changed their minds after they got to know the person. With permission, share with the class.

WRAP-UP

1. In *My Heartwood Journal* write about a time a teacher helped you or write about how Mr. Isobe helped Crow Boy.
2. With a partner, discuss this quote (from the website www.bullying.org): "Everyone has the right to be respected and the responsibility to respect others." Share examples and interpretations with the class.

VOCABULARY

compassion
perseverance
trudge

forlorn
imitate
honored

admired
grubs