

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Make fan-shaped booklets summarizing the story. Together list 7 main events on the chalkboard chronologically and in complete sentences. Make copies of fan-shaped story paper* (four pages per student), cut on the dotted lines, and staple pages together on the left side. Write "The Empty Pot, a Summary by" on the covers, and number pages. Write events (one sentence to a page) and illustrate with crayon or colored pencils. Attach paper handles to the front and back pages to complete the fan-shaped booklets.

Note: For sturdier booklets use tongue depressors or Popsicle sticks for handles and construction paper front and back pages.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Discuss how new leaders are chosen in our country. (Keyword: Ben's Guide (3-5) election process)
2. Investigate to find out how to play Nim, a game that originated in China. (Keyword: Chinese game Nim) In small groups, agree on ground rules, and play the game.

* Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Activities, Primary, for fan-shaped story paper.

ART

1. Make decorative flowerpots to give as gifts to family and friends. With acrylic paint, paint designs on small clay flowerpots. Place seed packets inside and wrap in cellophane.
2. Make seed collages. (Keyword: seed collage)

SCIENCE

1. Experiment by planting both cooked and uncooked flower seeds. Make a chart showing the results.
2. Discuss the changing of seasons as shown in Demi's illustrations of trees. Make drawings of how trees look in each season.

The Empty Pot

Demi
1990
New York: Henry Holt and Company

HONESTY

China
Folktale
Reading Time: 6 minutes

CONCEPTS

Honesty
Hope
Persistence
Courage

SUMMARY

A wise emperor begins his search for an heir by distributing special flower seeds to the children in the land, asking each to return in a year's time with the best flower they can grow. One child, Ping, displays honesty, hope, and courage as he works persistently on the task. This beautiful story is enhanced by Demi's delicate illustrations of landscapes, lively children, and traditional Chinese architecture inside rounded fan shapes.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to identify, define, and discuss honesty, hope, persistence, and courage as they apply to this story. The student will become aware of ways courage is related to being honest.

After the Story

The Empty Pot

DISCUSSION

1. Why is Ping chosen to be the next emperor? Would you want to be friends with someone like Ping? Why or why not?
2. Persistence means to keep trying. How did Ping show persistence? How do you show persistence?
3. Talk about the method of choosing a new emperor portrayed in this story. What character trait does the Emperor value most? Why? In your opinion, did the Emperor model honesty? Explain.
4. Discuss Ping's father's advice, "You did your best, and your best is good enough to present to the Emperor." Why does it take courage for Ping to be honest before the Emperor? Discuss times when you showed courage by being honest.

ACTIVITIES

1. Locate China on the world map.
2. Brainstorm ways of expressing honesty in the classroom. Write these thoughts on paper flower petals or leaves to create flowers that will fill an "empty pot" with honest ideas.
3. Invite your principal to talk to the class about how honesty helps the school.
4. As a class create an "Honesty Proclamation." Make a "scroll" from a large sheet of paper. List ways you show honesty, such as "We tell the truth," "We do our own work," or "We return items we find." Post for all to see.

EXTENSION

1. Complete Home Connection Pages and take home to share with families.
2. Discuss how the following honesty quotes apply to the story: "Honesty is the best policy" and "Sooner or later the truth comes to light." Copy one of the quotes, write and/or illustrate how it applies to the story or to your own life, and take home to share with families.

WRAP-UP

1. In *My Heartwood Journal* write and/or draw about a time when you, like Ping, showed honesty or showed courage by being honest.
2. Write your own ideas about how honesty helps your school.

VOCABULARY

Emperor
proclamation
successor

throne
swarmed
persistence

transferred