

## Interdisciplinary Ideas

### LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Write a personal narrative about something you haven't seen but would like to see just once. Use your imagination and your senses to describe it. Illustrate your story.
2. Write a list poem titled "Just Once." Begin with the lines "Like Sang-Hee, just once, I would like to see" and list all the things you would like to see (real or imaginary). Add descriptive adjectives to your list, revise and edit, make a final copy, and draw illustrations around your poem.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

1. In pairs, research the fire signal system used in Korea. (Keyword: signal fire system, Korea). Take notes and share findings with the class.
2. In small groups find out about Korean culture. Choose a topic such as Korean village life, home and family life, celebrations, or food. Make posters with written information, illustrations, and/or photographs. Post on a bulletin board titled, "All About Korea."

### MATH

In partners, research the Korean number system. (Keyword: Korean numbers) Find out the difference between pure Korean numbers and Sino-Korean numbers. Report findings to the class.

### ART

1. Make a toy for yourself or a younger child out of recycled materials such as cardboard tubes, paper and fabric scraps, and/or parts of old toys.
2. Make clay soldiers, horses, or other figures similar to the ones Sang-Hee played with in the story. Create a diorama by placing clay figures in a shoebox, adding scenery, and writing a paragraph explaining the scene. Staple or paste the paragraph to the outside of the box.

\*Visit [www.heartwoodethics.org](http://www.heartwoodethics.org) and choose Teaching Heartwood, Classroom Activities, 3/4 for dilemmas, "Jeff and the Broken Cup", and dialogue bubbles.

## The Firekeeper's Son

Linda Sue Park  
2004  
New York: Clarion Books

### HONESTY

Korea  
Fiction  
Reading Time: 9 minutes

### CONCEPTS

Honesty  
Respect  
Loyalty  
Trust  
Responsibility

### SUMMARY

Every night, Sang-Hee's father climbs the mountain to light the first fire, setting in motion a chain of signals to let the king know there is peace in the land. When his father is injured, Sang-Hee is given this task. Wishing to see the army, Sang-Hee struggles with the strong temptation to summon the king's soldiers by failing to light the fire. Julie Downing's warm pastel and watercolor illustrations illuminate the story.

Note: This tale is set in the early 1800's when the fire signal system was used for communication. Before reading, explain the "Author's Note" at the back of the book.

### OBJECTIVE

The student will be able to define and discuss honesty, respect, loyalty, trust, and responsibility as they apply to this story. The student will learn strategies for making good choices.

## After the Story The Firekeeper's Son

### DISCUSSION

1. Why does Sang-Hee's father have the responsibility of lighting a fire on the mountaintop every night?
2. Why doesn't Sang-Hee's village seem important to him? What does his father explain about their part of Korea?
3. Talk about Sang-Hee's dilemma. What does he think about as he holds the second coal in the tongs? Does his father expect him to light the fire? How is an expectation like a promise? How does honesty prevail?
4. How does the author let you know that Sang-Hee's father understands his son's conflict? What examples of love do you see in the story?
5. How is Sang-Hee's decision related to respect and loyalty for his father? For his village and his country? For himself?
6. Do you agree with the father when he says, "It is good to live in a time of peace."? Explain.
7. How does Sang-Hee feel when his father says, "The village will be pleased to hear that another trustworthy firekeeper has been born to our family."? How do you feel when a family member recognizes your good choices? Sang-Hee earns his father's trust through his actions. What do you do to earn your family's trust?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Locate Korea on the world map. Find mountain ranges, bordering countries, and surrounding oceans on a physical map of Korea. (Keyword: physical map Korea)
2. Discuss what might have happened if Sang-Hee had not lit the fire. Read the fable *The Shepard's Boy and the Wolf* (Keyword: Aesop's fables). On a Venn diagram (see *Teacher's Guide*) compare and contrast Sang-Hee with the shepherd boy. Use Heartwood attributes on the diagram.
3. Together list dilemmas\* you or your friends have faced, such as accepting an invitation and then getting another (more preferable) invitation for the same time. In small groups, choose one of the dilemmas, list consequences for each choice, make a group decision based on honesty, and explain it to the class.
4. Read "Jeff and the Broken Cup"\* from *Illustrated Stories That Model Psychological Skills* by Joseph M. Strayhorn, Jr. Discuss thinking things through and honesty related to the illustrated story. In pairs draw and write your own illustrated story portraying honesty. Use dialogue think bubbles\* to show main characters thinking through options.

### EXTENSION

1. Complete Creative Response pages and take home to share with families.
2. Talk about making good choices at home. Hold family meetings to discuss dilemmas and help each other solve them.

### WRAP-UP

1. Find as many examples of Heartwood attributes as you can in the story and write about them in *My Heartwood Journal*.
2. Role play one of the dilemmas listed in Activity #3.

### VOCABULARY

**barrel**  
**glance**  
**lash**

**brass**  
**tongs**  
**smoldered**

**tinder**  
**bonfires**