

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

Ask students to share names they call their grandmothers. List. Find names from other languages, dialects, and cultures.

SCIENCE

1. Research the meaning of "dormant" as it applies to seeds. Estimate how long Bà's seed was dormant.
2. Test a variety of seeds to determine sprouting time. Graph the results.
3. Research flowers of the lily family.* Find pictures (in seed catalogues or gardening magazines) and make a collage. Post.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Research Vietnamese culture. Find out about artifacts shown in the book such as hats, wedding dress, and family altar:*
2. Vietnam is a tropical country where children eat fruits such as leechee, mango, and papaya. Visit an Asian food store to see and possibly purchase some of these tropical fruits.

MATH

Create a bar graph using the names for grandmother listed by the students in your class (see Language Arts).

ART

1. Make pastel drawings of the lotus bloom.
2. Draw one or more precious objects you would pack if you had to leave your home in an emergency. (See Journal #2)

* Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Culture Keys, for more on the history, culture, and geography of this book.

The Lotus Seed

Sherry Garland
1993
New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

LOYALTY

Vietnam/USA
Historical Fiction
Reading Time: 6 minutes

CONCEPTS

Loyalty
Hope
Love

SUMMARY

Set against a background of historical events, this story thoughtfully portrays refugees who have adapted to different ways of life in a new country while maintaining loyalty to their cultural heritage. The story is about change, loss, and remembering. The delicate oil paintings create gentle scenes and lend continuity to the story.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to define and discuss loyalty, hope, and love as they apply to this story. The student will look at family loyalties and identify what makes him/her feel close to another person.

After the Story

The Lotus Seed

DISCUSSION

1. What is a remembrance? Why did Bà want to remember the emperor? Why do you think she chose a seed?
2. This story begins in Vietnam and ends in America. What made Bà leave her country? How would you feel if you had to leave your neighborhood? Your town? Your country? Why would it be important to remember these places?
3. If you were moving away from your school, what remembrances would you take?
4. Why was the seed so precious to Bà? Describe Bà's feelings when the seed grew.
5. Talk about the granddaughter's loyalties. If you were Bà's grandchild and she gave you a seed, what would you do with it? Explain.
6. If you are loyal to someone, you feel close to him/her. How could an object help you feel loyalty? Do you have something you are saving to remember someone special in your life? Tell about it.

ACTIVITIES

1. Find Vietnam on the world map. Mark your town and connect the two with yarn.
2. The beautiful lotus flowered in Vietnamese gardens. For Bà, the seed represented her country. In small groups, talk about what symbols represent our country. List national symbols of loyalty. Report to the class and post a combined list.
3. Remembrance activity—Listen/Think/Pair/Share. Think of an object you have saved because it helps you remember a special person or time in your life. Take time to reflect on this memory. Then pair with another student, share your remembrance objects and stories, and, if you choose to, share with the whole class.

HOME CONNECTION

1. Retell the story at home and find out what special keepsakes have been handed down in your family as reminders of loved ones. With permission, share with the class.
2. Talk to your family about loyalty. Ask family members to tell about times when they were loyal to someone or something.

JOURNAL

1. Write a paragraph about someone to whom you are loyal. Begin with the sentence, "I will never forget _____ because _____."
2. Imagine you had to leave your home quickly in an emergency and could pack only a small bag. Besides food and clothing, what things of value would you take? Write about these objects and give reasons and explanations for each treasure you mention.

VOCABULARY

emperor
refugee
dormant

ao dai
Bà
clamored