

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Compare and contrast the emperor in this story with the emperor in *The Empty Pot*. On a large Venn diagram label the left side "Emperor, The Seven Chinese Brothers" and the right side "Emperor, The Empty Pot." Talk about how the emperors are alike and different. Write different character traits in the side spaces and similarities in the intersecting oval. Take turns presenting orally to the class.
2. Reread dialogue sections of the story to find verbs other than "said", such as cried or roared. List on a chart. Practice reading spoken parts with expression suggested by the words. Use words from the chart when you write your own stories with dialogue.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Examine the illustrations in the book and compare them with photographs of people who live in China today. Note similarities and differences. Discuss the stereotypes that are evident in the book's illustrations.
2. Together make a list of questions about China and/or the Great Wall such as "How big is China?" or "Which has more people, China or the U.S.?" Research to find information and photographs in books and online to answer your questions. (Keyword: Great Wall China kids) Post questions, answers, a map of China, and photographs on a bulletin board.

* Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Activities, Primary, for a Chinese brother pattern and instructions.

ART

Make seven Chinese brothers cutouts and give each Chinese brother a Heartwood attribute. Download the Chinese brother pattern, make copies, cut out, and fill in Heartwood attributes and examples.* Tape brothers together in sets of seven and hang around the classroom.

MATH

Work in pairs to list equations that equal "7". Use a calculator or manipulatives such as beans or seeds to help discover number facts.

The Seven Chinese Brothers

Margaret Mahy
1990
New York: Scholastic

LOYALTY

China
Folktale
Reading Time: 13 minutes

CONCEPTS

Loyalty
Courage
Compassion
Cooperation
Justice

SUMMARY

This classic folktale conveys the attribute of filial loyalty in Chinese folklore. The brothers, each empowered with an amazing ability, help free one another and trick the cruel Emperor by working together. Jean and Mou-sien Tseng's detailed watercolor illustrations capture the period when a Chinese Emperor began the Great Wall.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to identify, define, and discuss the attributes of loyalty, courage, compassion, cooperation, and justice as they relate to the story. The student will develop an awareness of the importance of cooperation at home and at school.

After the Story

The Seven Chinese Brothers

DISCUSSION

1. What amazing powers do the seven Chinese brothers possess? How do they use their powers to help people? Which Heartwood attributes do they show? Give examples.
2. When second brother tells the others that he hears crying, third brother shows compassion by going to help. Talk about how you show compassion when you hear someone crying.
3. How are the brothers loyal to the men building the wall? How are they loyal to each other? How are you loyal to people in your family?
4. The brothers cooperate by using their special powers to free each other. How do they work together to make dinner at the end of the story? Give examples of how you cooperate to get jobs done.
5. Was justice served in the story? Explain. If you were Emperor, how would you be fair to the workers? Why?

ACTIVITIES

1. Locate China on the world map. Find mountains, rivers, and bordering countries on a physical map of China. (Keyword: physical map China)
2. List cooperative activities at home and school such as sharing chores and playing games. In small groups, make "Cooperation" posters. Divide poster board in half. Title one half "Cooperation at School" and the other half "Cooperation at Home." Draw, color, and label cooperative activities. Share with the class and post for all to see.
3. Prepare "Loyalty Lunches" for the lunchroom staff or bus drivers. Work in small cooperative groups in assembly line fashion making sandwiches, bagging fruit and/or vegetable slices, adding cookies or chips, and placing in decorated lunch bags. Write notes of appreciation, place in the bags, and present to the staff.

WRAP-UP

1. In My Heartwood Journal write about how the brothers show loyalty to each other or how you show loyalty to someone in your family.
2. Together make a chart titled "Loyalty in Literature." Write sentences about characters who showed loyalty in stories from your basal reader or other classroom books.
3. Role play the story with the seven brothers, the emperor, and a narrator.

EXTENSION

1. Complete Home Connection pages and take home to share with families.
2. At home talk about how you are loyal to each other. With permission share with the class.

VOCABULARY

emperor
remarkable
enormous

dazzling
reunited
noble

splendid