

Classroom Connections & Additional Activities

1. Find a recipe for tamales and make some. (Or find a parent volunteer to make them at home.)
Have a Mexican Food Fair. **SS**
2. Play Follow the Leader, emphasizing how much fun it is to work together as a group. **PE**
3. Make a thank you card for someone who has been loyal to you. **ART**
4. Read Shel Silverstein's poem "Hug O'War" (*The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*, Jack Prelutsky, ed., Arnold Lobel, Illustrator. New York: Random House, 1983). Try playing tug of war and hug of war. Who likes which game better?
Discuss. **PE**

Too Many Tamales

Gary Soto
Illustrated by Ed Martinez
1993
New York.: G. P. Putnam's Sons

LOYALTY
Mexican American
Reading Time: 7 minutes

CONCEPTS

Loyalty
Love
Honesty

SUMMARY

While making tamales with her family on Christmas Eve, Maria tries on her mother's diamond ring. Later, Maria misses the ring and believes she has cooked it into the food. She enlists her loyal cousins to eat through the batch of tamales in search of the ring. When they are unsuccessful, she confesses her actions to her mother. Family loyalty provides a supportive atmosphere for telling the truth. Martinez's oil paintings show a loving contemporary Mexican American family.

OBJECTIVE

The student will be able to define and discuss loyalty, love and honesty as they apply to this story. The student will recognize family loyalty.

After the Story

Too Many Tamales

DISCUSSION

1. What was Maria's problem in Too Many Tamales? How did she try to solve it?
2. Why did her cousins agree to help Maria find the ring? Why didn't they want her to get in trouble?
3. We use the word loyalty when family members help each other solve problems. How did other people in the story show loyalty? What other ways could the cousins have helped Maria?
4. Our classroom is like a family — how can we show loyalty to each other? Share a time when you have been loyal to someone.

ACTIVITIES

1. Act out eating too many tamales. Help and encourage each other as you begin to feel full.
2. Loyalty includes doing jobs to help family or friends. Plan a classroom party, inviting guests from the school (principal, custodian, playground assistants, counselor, music teacher). Focus on the group effort, with everyone taking some part in the preparation. Some tasks might be making invitations, planning and preparing food, cleaning the room, learning a song to share.
3. List ways each child is loyal at home: helping family members, sticking up for a sibling, maintaining friendships. Give children individual time throughout the day to illustrate.
4. Make a classroom banner or flag that symbolizes loyalty.

WRAP-UP

In My Heartwood Journal, draw a picture of your family working together.

EXTENSION

1. Make a "helping hands" banner at home with each family member's handprints. Students may trace hands with crayons.
2. Work with your family to make a family flag. Divide it into four parts and draw family loyalties or things that are important to your family. They could be ancestors, pets, places, or favorite activities.

VOCABULARY

tamales
masa
husks