

Audience: Grade 1 Students

This activity will be done with 17 students in grade 1. This is a whole-class activity. It is the second day of school.

Goal: Classroom expectations

The purpose of this lesson is to help children consider what expectations or rules of the classroom we should develop as a group. It could be done sometime within the first week of school. This activity will be done in the morning and the formal establishment of rules / expectations will be part of the afternoon lesson.

Rational: Curricular Connections

This activity is connected with the Grade 1 Social Studies Curriculum in Manitoba:

Conflict Resolution Outcomes:

1-KP-025: Give examples of causes of interpersonal conflict and solutions to interpersonal conflict in the school (and community).

1-VP-012: Be willing to help resolve interpersonal conflicts peacefully.

Description**Materials / Learning Resources:**

- Chart paper
- Annette Harrison's book "Easy to Tell Stories for Young Children" (National Storytelling Network, 1992)

Activating Strategies: Listening to story content; Participating in improvisational parts of the story;

Acquiring Strategies: Discussion to determine as a group what we want our classroom to look like, sound like and feel like.

Applying Strategies: Within the classroom, the school and the community.

Different Ways of Learning: Through storytelling, drama, active listening, interactive discussion and visual aids.

The lesson will begin with me, the teacher, telling the story of “The Gossipy Child” as it is told in Annette Harrison’s book. The students will be asked to act out parts of the story with the teacher.

After the story, we will turn to the chart paper, where a large peace sign is drawn in the centre. Each section of the peace sign will represent one of the following: What should our classroom look like, what should our classroom sound like, what should our classroom feel like (i.e. feelings such as happy, excited etc.) and what should our classroom physically feel like (i.e. what they can feel, how their body feels). Together we will determine how we would like our classroom to be – the teacher will facilitate this and write the children’s answers on the paper. The peace sign will be affixed in the classroom all year for the children to see.

Reflection

I had the students join me on the carpet, and I proceeded to tell the story of Harold, the Gossipy Child. I found that once I got into storytelling mode, the children seemed intrigued, captivated by my new demeanor; it seemed I had everyone’s full attention. I moved back and forth in front of the room while I told the story, and gestured a lot with my hands and arms. My voice was expressive; I changed the speed at which I spoke, i.e. faster during exciting parts, slower and more dramatically during other parts. I had a lot of fun with this!

The children were captivated throughout the storytelling process, and part way through I decided I needed to involve them more. When it got to the point in the story where Harold’s classmates were confessing that he had said mean things to them, I asked my students if Harold had said anything mean to them. The first child I asked was shy about role-playing, but then I asked the whole group, “Has Harold said anything to any of you?” One student raised her hand and said, “He told me I was mean.” Another hand went up and the student said “He told me I was stupid and dumb.” It wasn’t long before many hands were going up and the students were eager to share the unkind things that Harold had said to them. My first reaction was “oh no, they aren’t ‘into’ it!” but as their parts of the story began to unfold, it became evident that they were all ‘into’ it.

At the part where Harold shook out the feathers in the school yard, and the part where he tried to collect them, we shook out our pretend pillow cases and then wandered around our classroom

pretending to pick out feathers from the grass and trees. Some children were convinced we could get them all back – I mentioned to them that some had flown out of the schoolyard, and I asked “should we leave the schoolyard to get them?” This brought up a side topic regarding safety and a discussion as to why children should never leave the schoolyard at recess.

We spent about 5-10 minutes on the discussion at the end, and I filled in the peace sign with their answers. I wish that I had drawn a better peace sign, perhaps on poster paper rather than chart paper – the chart paper ripped after a few days of being flipped back and forth on the chart stand. Also, it wasn't as aesthetically pleasing as I would have liked. Maybe I will make a better, neater copy in the future. I also realize that I have an exceptional group of students this year; in the future, there may be a greater need to set ground rules for safety before we begin this kind of activity.

Overall, I was very pleased with how this lesson unfolded and ever since we completed this activity, my students have been excited for story time and are eager to participate in the storytelling process. I feel like I have discovered a whole new realm of teaching, and I am excited to continue to experiment with storytelling in all curricular subjects!