

## ***Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio – Tony Johnston***

### **CHARACTER CONNECTIONS AND THEMES**

**GRADE: 5**

Primary Character Trait:

Kindness “Thinking and acting in ways that show you care”

Theme:

Social Responsibility - is an ethical ideology or theory that an entity, be it an organization or individual, has an obligation to act to benefit society at large.

### **OBJECTIVES**

#### **Academic Objectives**

*Students will:*

- Make connections and understand how the characters and events in the novel develop the theme(s) of kindness and social responsibility.
- Make connections between events and characters in *Any Small Goodness* to their own lives, and articulate those connections through speaking and writing.
- Write a first-person non-fiction narrative relating to one of the topics or themes in *Any Small Goodness*, which include both internal and external conflicts.
- Use effective communication and social skills in a class meeting format.

#### **Character Objectives**

*Students will:*

- Understand that in life, as in literature, our choices determine our character and our destiny.
- Understand that one person’s choices can profoundly affect many others.
- Understand the connection between positive character and personal happiness.
- Practice perspective-taking (viewing the same incident, information, etc from different perspectives).

### **MICHIGAN GRADE LEVEL CONTENT EXPECTATIONS**

#### **Reading**

**R.NT.05.01** Analyze how characters and communities reflect life (in positive and negative ways) in classic, multicultural, and contemporary literature recognized for quality and literary merit.

**R.NT.05.04** Explain how authors use literary devices including exaggeration and metaphors to develop characters, themes, plot, and functions of heroes, anti-heroes, and narrators, and abstract themes.

#### **Writing**

**W.GN.05.04** Use the writing process to produce and present a research project; use a variety of resources to gather and organize relevant information into central ideas and supporting details for a teacher-approved narrowed focus question and hypothesis.

## RESOURCES

**Novel:** *Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio* by Tony Johnston

**Other trade books:**

Cisneros, S. (1994). *The House on Mango Street* New York City: Knopf

Garza, C. L. (2000). *In My Family/En mi familia* Children's Book Press; Bilingual edition

Mora, P. (2000). *Tomas and the Library Lady* Dragonfly books

Munoz Ryan, P. (2002). *Esperanza Rising* Scholastic

Perez, A. I. (2002). *My Diary from Here to There/Mi diario de aqui hasta alla* Children's Book Press; Bilingual edition

## ESTIMATED TIME PARAMETERS

One day

More than one day

Mini-unit

## PREREQUISITES

Students have a working understanding of the Smart Six character traits: kindness and social responsibility, specifically.

## PREPARATION

- You may want to expose students to Spanish letter patterns and pronunciations prior to reading this book. Also, making copies of the “A Selected Glossary” for each student may be a time-saver.
- Mixed-ability literature circle groups need to be arranged and specified by the teacher before novel study begins.
  - NOTE: It may be to your benefit to assign, define, model, and practice roles of students within literature circle group format in order to make each meeting successful; students should be informed and given time to practice the expectations and duties of respective roles. (Documents are attached)
- Create a schedule when you will meet with each group; use this as part of your assessment.
- Create copies of the writing/discussion prompts for each chapter for every student to use in correlation with their planning sheet during group work time.
- Designate a bulletin board or wall space in your classroom to be the “Random Acts of Kindness Wall.”

## INTRODUCTION

### Lesson One

1. Anticipation Guide (attached)

*Students may need assistance with certain vocabulary found in the prompts; consider differentiating the assignment by reading aloud the prompts for all students and clarifying as needed.*

2. To prepare for a class meeting, share with students the passage below:

# SmartCharacterChoices

Everyone has values. A value is an idea. It is something that is important to people such as friendship, family, work, or fairness. Your values help you decide what to do and how to act every day. The novel that we are going to read is about a young boy who discovers what's important in life and how good values determine who one becomes in the future.

3. Reading Log/Journal Entry #1: *Think about what is important to you. Make a list of your three most important values. Should this be a numbered item too?*
4. Class Meeting:
  - Go around the circle, asking students to volunteer their most important values.
  - Why do you have these values? (Answers may include: family, friends, etc.)
  - Do you know of any fictional characters that share your values?
  - How do your values affect the people and world around you?

## Lesson Two

1. Introduce the novel, *Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio*, explaining that the day after tomorrow, they will be reading a book in which the main character is faced with many obstacles that make him question his values.
2. Further activation of prior knowledge/exposure activity

### Fictional Book Walk:

- Distribute individual copies of the book to each student.
- Ask students to look at the front cover.
- Ask students to read the summary on the back cover and make one prediction about what kind of character Arturo will be in their reading logs/journals.
- Draw student attention to the glossary of Spanish phrases found in the back of the book.
- Read page five aloud to students. (Model using the “Selected Glossary” in the back to find the meaning of *taqueria*.)
- Ask students where Los Angeles is. Next, ask students for other information they already know about Los Angeles.
- Ask students to spend some independent time with the book by skimming the pages and then writing down anything they notice about the text and pictures found throughout in their reading logs/journals.
- Briefly discuss what they noticed.

## INSTRUCTION

### Lesson Three

1. Ask students to record in their reading logs/journals anything they know about their respective names (e.g. family history, cultural meaning, etc.)
2. Distribute the attached copies of the “My Name” essay to each student.
3. Distribute the attached copies of the Collaborative Listening-Viewing Guide to each student.
4. Play the following video of “My Name” twice for students:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZEuOM0TRjY&feature=related>

(Note: If your school does not allow YouTube through your network, please read the text aloud to students.)

First play: Ask students to listen and follow along with the text you provided.

Second Play: Ask students to individually record their thinking in the left column of the Collaborative Listening-Viewing Guide. Instruct the class to write down significant ideas, concepts, phrases, etc. on the left-hand side of their paper. Students should be instructed to be brief and use abbreviations as needed. Notes should be recorded in sequential order.

5. Expand on information in small groups. After viewing the video, have the students get into groups to elaborate on their individual notes. Here, they can recall details, extend ideas, add personal anecdotes, etc. Then they record this information on the right hand side of their forms.
6. Synthesize with Whole Class. Tell the students to contribute what they learned from their group recollections and then record their responses on the board, chart paper, or transparency. This information can then be reorganized as a chart or in outline form, if appropriate.
7. Read chapter one, "American Names" pages 5-18 as a whole group.
8. Ask students to reflect on the concept of names in the Hispanic culture based on both texts. Use a Venn diagram, if time allows.

#### Lesson Four

1. Introduce the Character Map form (attached) to students; explain that as they read *Any Small Goodness*, they can fill in the character map to show who influences Arturo in the barrio and what he learns from each experience. Have students add to their maps after they finish reading each chapter. Model that in chapter one, "American Names," Abuelita influences Arturo because to her, giving up a family name is giving up on the family heritage.
2. Reintroduce the literature circle groups. Introduce the planning page call this *Reading Schedule?* (attached) for each group. This resource will serve as a means for each group to take ownership and also be held accountable for their readings.
3. Ask students to read chapter two "Corn Fungus" on pages 19-33
4. Prompts for discussion and/or reading log/journal entries:
  - *Arturo uses a lot of Spanish words. What does this tell about him?*
  - *How does Arturo's family feel about Huitla? How do you know? Find examples in the book.*
  - *Abuelita tells Leo Love that she is going to prepare corn fungus for him. Do you think that this is a good enough reward for his good deed?*
  - *Why does Papi call Leo Love a brave man?*
  - *What do you like best about this story? What do you like the least?*

#### Lesson Five

1. Class Meeting

*What does Papi mean when he says, "When no eyes are upon him, that is a person's true test"?*

# SmartCharacterChoices

*Personalize:*

- Have you ever been involved in a situation where you made a good choice even if no one was aware of it? Have you witnessed someone making a good choice regardless of anyone noticing? Discuss.

*Challenge:*

- What are some important things to consider when faced with the option of making good choices vs. bad choices?
  - What conflicts might result from a person being faced with the decision to make a good choice that will positively affect others?
2. Allow students to work in groups. Prompts for chapters three through nine can be found on an attached page.
  3. Meet and read with individual groups on days that you decide. Do informal observations between meetings.
  4. Remind students to keep entering information about Arturo on their character maps as well.

*Reading log/journal prompt:* Write about a time you experienced (or performed) an act of kindness. What other choices might that person (or you) have made? How did it feel to be on the receiving (or giving) end of a kind action? What were the results or consequences of the kind act? What might have been the results or consequences if the person (or you) made a different choice?

## Lesson Six

1. Introduce the Random Acts of Kindness wall. Students will anonymously write and post random acts of kindness they witness in real life from this day forward. It is up to the teacher when students may post their pieces.
2. Allow students to work in groups. Prompts for chapters three through nine can be found on an attached page.
3. Meet and read with individual groups on days that you decide. Do informal observations between meetings.
4. Remind students to keep entering information about Arturo on their character maps as well.

## Typical lesson format for Lesson Seven until end of reading

1. Allow students to work in groups. Use the prompts for chapters four through nine found on the attached page.
2. Meet and read with individual groups on days that you decide in order to monitor efficiency and progress. Do informal observations between meetings.
3. Remind students to keep entering information about Arturo on their character maps as well.
4. Reading log/journal Writing: Examples of kindness, meanness, selfishness or selflessness in yesterday's and last night's reading.
5. Reading quizzes (optional)
6. Class meeting summarizing last night's reading, focusing on kindness, meanness, etc.
7. Inquiring Minds quad-reading strategy (*Classroom of Choice*, pp. 86 – 88), focusing not only on plot, but also on themes of kindness vs. meanness and selfishness vs. selflessness, helping others anonymously.

## ***CULMINATING PERFORMANCE TASK***

Below, I have listed four options for culminating performance tasks. It is up to you as the teacher to decide which project your students are prepared to do.

1. Students' completion of the Student Choice Board projects will be the culminating project that will assess students' complete understanding of concepts and themes based on how well they can apply them to real-life situations.
2. You are a social rights activist, and your task is to inform younger students of an issue involving how and why people should make good choices. Therefore, your task is to identify an example of a good choice that was made and has affected our society in a positive way. You must gather research about your example. You must also plan a presentation to inform the students of the concept, demonstrate how the choice is a good one, and then provide an action plan for individuals to counter the attraction of making bad choices.
3. Hold a class meeting or a fishbowl, and try to come to a consensus as a whole class on the continuum of the book. What does this mean? A sequel?
4. Revisit Anticipation Guide. Would you change any of your responses after reading?

## ***EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT***

1. Students' reading log/journal entries share their memories, thoughts, and feelings about the text and how it connects to their lives. These entries will confirm their understanding and serve as one type of assessment.
2. The children's oral responses to the questions posed in the activities as a whole group and with peers are the evaluation of whether they understand ways of kindness and social responsibility.
3. Random Acts of Kindness are genuine and show an understanding of kindness.
4. Student Choice Board activities.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Anticipation Guide for Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio

Directions: Read the following statements and decide if they are always true, sometimes true, or never true. Think carefully about each statement. Your answers will not be graded and will be respected as long as they are honest. Write the corresponding letter in the blank before each statement: ALWAYS true (A), SOMETIMES true (S), and NEVER true (N).

\_\_\_\_\_ People are more alike than they are different.

\_\_\_\_\_ We fear those who are different from ourselves.

\_\_\_\_\_ Differences lead to mistrust, dislike, and even hatred between people.

\_\_\_\_\_ Physical divisions between people who are different better society.

\_\_\_\_\_ Low self-confidence and fear lead to mistrust, dislike, and sometimes even hatred of those who are different from us.

\_\_\_\_\_ To be human is to have strengths and weaknesses.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Good-looking" people are of more worth/value than those who are less so.

\_\_\_\_\_ Educated people are of more worth/value than those who are uneducated.

\_\_\_\_\_ The heart of a person makes him (or her) what he (or she) is.

\_\_\_\_\_ Kind people are of more worth/value than those who are often mean.

\_\_\_\_\_ I, \_\_\_\_\_, have the ability now to better the world in which I live.



## “My Name” by Sandra Cisneros from *The House on Mango Street*

In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing. It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse--which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female-but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong.

My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild, horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it.

And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window.

At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name Magdalena--which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least- -can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza.

I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.

Borrowed from: Cisneros, S. (1994). *The House on Mango Street*. New York City: Knopf.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Collaborative Listening-Viewing Guide

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Preview/Review

Record (on your own)

Combine & Elaborate (with your group)

Synthesize (with the class)

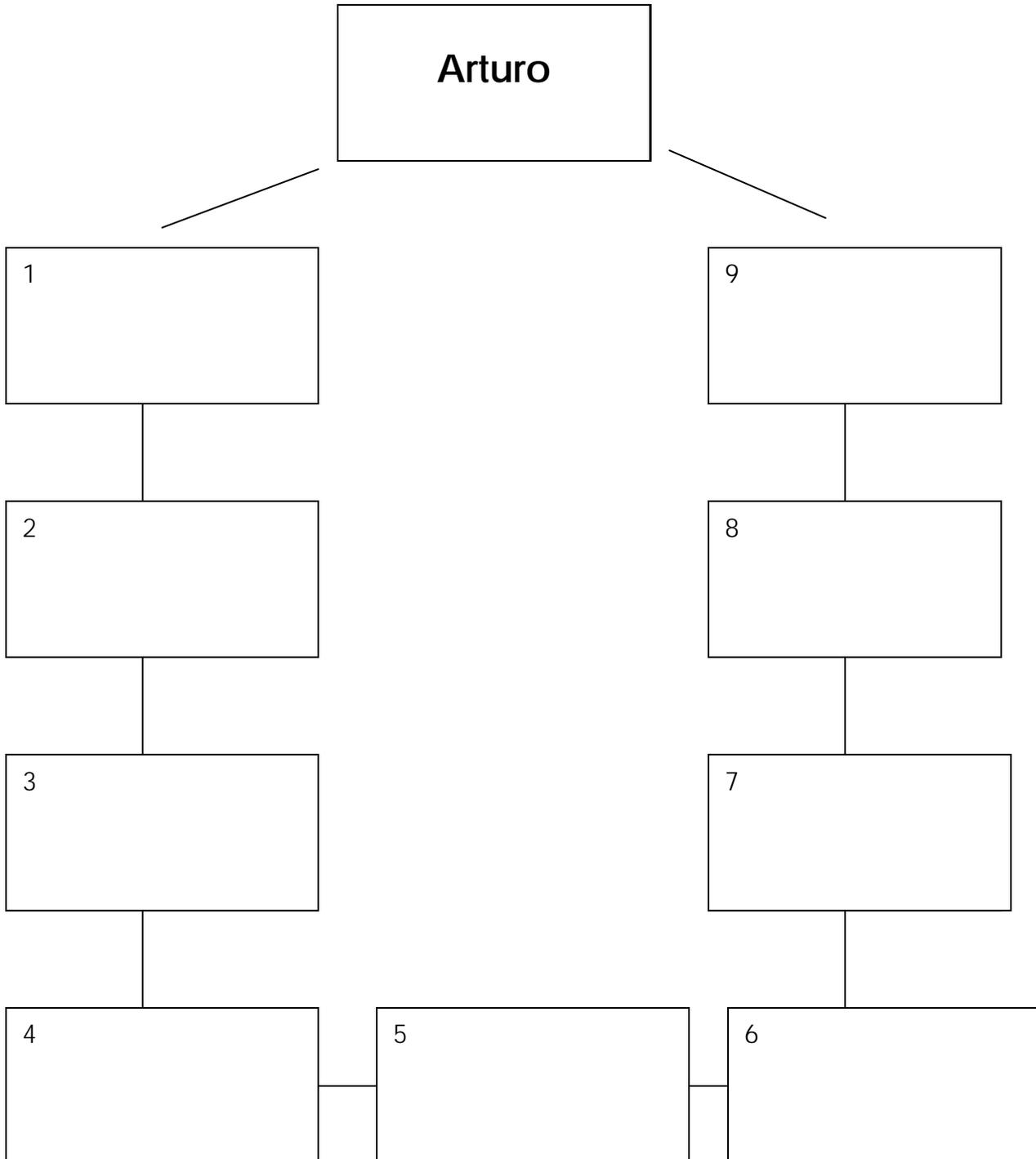
What I found the most interesting



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Character Map

As we read *Any Small Goodness*, fill in the character map below to show who influences Arturo in the barrio and what he learns from each experience. Be sure to add to your maps after you finish reading each chapter.





Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Schedule

My group members are:

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We plan to read and discuss the novel on the following dates:

Chapters	Dates we will finish reading	Dates we will discuss what we've read
American Names		
Corn Fungus		
The Coach		
Piano Lessons		
The River		
The Band		
The Lunch Box		
The Green Needle Gang		
Christmas Presents		



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter Prompts

Remind students to refer to “A Selected Glossary” for help in understanding the Spanish words.

### Chapter three: “The Coach”

- Reread pages 36–37. Why does Arturo join the basketball team?
- Why does Arturo name the new coach “Coach Tree?” Is that a good name?
- Reread page 43. Why did the new coach come to Arturo’s school?
- How does Coach Tree affect that basketball team?
- Why do you think Jose steals from Coach Tree? Explain.
- What does Coach Tree do with Jose?
- How are Leo Love and Coach Tree alike?

### Chapter four: “Piano Lessons”

- Mama Dulce said, “Love each other, help each other.” What other characters might say this? (This may be a wonderful topic for a class meeting.)
- Why do you think so many people admired Mama Dulce? Give reasons.
- Papi has been planning his surprise for months. What does this show about him?
- Mama Dulce chose not to be famous. What does Arturo think of her choice?
- How are Coach Tree and Mama Dulce alike?

### Chapter five: “The River”

- What are some ways that Ms. Cloud raises money for the library?
- What traits make Ms. Cloud a “warrior” and a “bulldog deluxe?”
- How does Arturo discover that Ms. Cloud was the person who donated books to the library?
- Although Arturo is angry that Ms. Cloud was fired, he is still able to laugh. What does this say about him?
- Which part of this chapter most surprised you? Why did it surprise you?
- If you were on the school board, would you fight to get Ms. Cloud rehired? Why or why not?

### Chapter six: “The Band”

- Arturo learns that Papi is macho. How?
- Reread page 78. How does the author show that Arturo and his friends were scared?
- How does the mood change when the vagos come to the dance?
- What does one of the vagos say to Luis? What do you think will happen as a result?
- Which part of this chapter angered you? Made you proud? Made you sad?
- Arturo thinks that it’s a waste of time to start a band because the “lowlifes” will just “turn it ugly.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
- Do you think Papi has experienced conflicts with “troublemakers” before? What makes you think so?

### Chapter 7: "The Lunch Box"

- Reread pages 89–91. What is Rosa like? Give examples.
- How do you think Arturo feels about his sister? Why?
- What happens after Papi sets the lunch box above the sink? Explain.
- How does the mood of the story change after what happens to Rosa's lunch box?
- Why does Officer Pastor do such a good deed? (This may be a wonderful topic for a class meeting.)
- Why does Arturo say that life in the barrio makes people angry and untrusting?
- Reread what Papi tells Arturo on page 100. Why do you think he does this?

### Chapter 8: "The Green Needle Gang"

- Arturo wants his own type of revenge. Who helps him and why?
- Does it sound like the gang will make bad choices? Why or why not?
- The gang wants their work to remain anonymous. Why?
- How does the gang feel after doing their work? How do you know?
- Do you think Arturo has been listening to his father? Why or why not?
- Why doesn't the officer arrest the boys?

### Chapter 9: "Christmas Presents"

- Reread pages 113-115. What is the Rodriguez house like at Christmas time?
- Which gift did you like most and why?
- Is it better to give a homemade gift or a purchased gift? Why?
- Does your family have a tradition like the "Tamale-thon"? Explain. (This may be a wonderful topic for a class meeting.)
- What does Arturo mean by "you have to give a part of your heart?" Explain.
- How does Arturo feel on page 122? Explain with examples from the text.
- What does "holy" mean to Arturo?

# SmartCharacterChoices

## Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio Student Choice Board

<p>Create a dialogue between Arturo Rodriguez and another character. Be sure to include elements of their growing friendships, and how they have come to accept one another's differences. Dialogues may be performed!</p> 	<p>Showing <i>kindness</i> is a prominent theme in <i>Any Small Goodness</i>. In memoir form, tell about a time when someone showed you anonymous kindness. Include your feelings, reactions, etc. in your piece.</p>	<p>Author Tony Johnston often uses symbols to represent abstract concepts (the painted stone wall may represent the strength of the Rodriguez family). Choose three symbols from the book, and then define and represent them in a visually appealing way. Be creative!</p> 
<p>Have partners choose a role: Arturo or one of the "lizardbrained" <i>vagos</i>. Have them role-play a scene in which Arturo tries to convince the gang member to do good things instead of bad.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>FREE CHOICE</u></b></p> <p>Fill-out your proposal form prior to beginning the <i>free choice</i>!</p>	<p>Each chapter in <i>Any Small Goodness</i> has a quote located on the first page. Create a collection of the quotes found in this book; collections may be in the form of a book, Power Point Presentation, or other approved format. Within the collection you must include a definition and graphics that help to support the meaning.</p>
<p>Choose a favorite character (aside from Arturo) from this book. Take on his or her point-of-view and create a narrative based on experiences that were had as a result of their situation. Include how he or she feels, struggles, is motivated, etc.</p>	<p>Arturo made a difference in the barrio by giving a poor family a Christmas tree and gifts. Have partners make a poster to list other ways people can make a difference and share it with the class. Invite volunteers to choose and implement an idea!</p>	<p>Create a video, picture book, or other approved teaching tool that contains the theme of <i>human values</i>. Your piece will be performed for/shared with younger students in our school!</p> 