SmartCharacterChoices

Big Al - Andrew Clements

CHARACTER TRAITS AND THEMES	KINDERGARTEN

Primary Character trait:

Kindness - Thinking and acting in ways that show you care

Basic Need:

Love and belonging – The need for relationships, social connections, to give and receive affection and to feel part of a group.

OBJECTIVES

The learner will:

- Introduce and begin to develop an understanding of kindness
- Introduce and begin to develop an understanding of our need for love and belonging, and how that relates to our classroom.
- Understand the expression: "Don't judge a book by its cover."
- Learn a social skill: How to introduce yourself appropriately.

GRADE LEVEL CONTENT EXPECTATIONS

Kindergarten

R.NT.00.03 Discuss setting, characters, and events in narrative text.

R.NT.00.04 Identify how authors/illustrators use literary devices including pictures and illustrations to support the understanding of settings and characters.

R.NT.00.05 Respond to individual and multiple texts by finding evidence, discussing, illustrating and/or writing to reflect, make meaning, and make connections.

R.CM.00.01 Begin to make text-to-self and text-to-text connections and comparisons by activating prior knowledge and connecting personal knowledge and experience to ideas in text through oral and written responses.

S.DS.00.01 Engage in substantive conversations, remaining focused on subject matter, with interchanges beginning to build on prior responses in literature discussions, paired conversations or other interactions.

L.RP.00.02 Listen to or view knowledgeably and respond thoughtfully to both classic and contemporary texts recognized for quality and literary merit.

S.CN.00.04 Understand, providing examples of how language differs from playground and classroom as a function of linguistic and cultural group membership (appropriateness).

RESOURCES

Trade Book: *Big Al* by Andrew Clements

Other Trade Books:

Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids Carol McCloud

I Like Being Me: Poems for Children About Feeling Special, Appreciating Others, and Getting Along Judy Lalli, M.S.

Peace Week in Miss Fox's Class Eileen Spinelli

ESTIMATED TIME PARAMETERS

☐ One day   ☒ More than one day   ☐ Mini-unit

INTRODUCTION

Introduce the book by showing students the picture of Big Al on pages 3 and 4. Ask, "How would you describe Al?" Allow time for responses, and then list them on a chart.

Tell students you are going to read and find out what Big Al is like.

INSTRUCTION

Read aloud *Big Al*. Discuss the setting, characters and events in the story. As you are looking at these elements, make sure you are calling attention to the pictures and discuss how they relate to the words on the page.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

- Kindness: Big Al was kind when he helped the other fish. Think about a time when you were kind, or someone was kind to you. How did that feel? Why is it important to be kind? How does it help us when we are kind in the classroom?

- Big Al wants to make friends, but the other fish are afraid of him. What are some ways that he tried to make friends? In what ways have you tried to make friends? How does it feel to make a new friend? Explain that having friends gives us a sense of belonging, a basic need we all have.

- After reading, look back at the responses to Big Al's appearance made by the students. Ask, "How many responses to Big Al turned out not to be correct?" Introduce the expression "Don't judge a book by its cover." How did the other fish do that to Big Al? How did that make him feel? Can you think of a time you made a decision about someone based on their looks, and were wrong?

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Kindness Interpretation Activity
Materials needed: 4x6 index cards

Give students a 4 x 6 index card, and have them draw a picture that shows kindness. During a morning meeting or in pairs, have students share their cards.

Random Acts of Kindness Activity

Assign homework: Random acts of kindness: ask students to think of something nice they have done for someone else, and then be prepared to share what they did during a morning meeting.

Social Etiquette Activity

Teach students how to introduce themselves to someone appropriately. It is important that the teacher models with a few students, pointing out that he or she makes eye contact, speaks clearly, says "Hi, my name is…" and then shakes hands.

Form an inside/outside circle and let students practice introducing themselves to several people. Practice greetings during morning meeting. Enlist other staff members to visit the classroom and introduce themselves to a few students. Stopping students out on the playground or in the hallway could be a great way to practice and assess students' abilities to appropriately interact with adults.

"Different Hellos for Different Fellows" Activity
Materials needed: appropriate paper to make signs or nametags, 3x5 index cards

Ask for several student volunteers. Give them signs or nametags to wear: buddy from the neighborhood, principal, classmate, a friend's parents, the President of the US, etc.

Have the remaining students pull 3 x 5 cards out of a hat telling them which person to greet.

In front of the class, have each student greet the person whose card they pulled and give feedback on how they did.

Kindness Mural Activity
Materials needed: drawing paper, pencils, crayons

Create a classroom mural, with each student drawing a picture of kindness in the classroom. Display in a visible area.

Read other books about kindness; compare to *Big Al* (text-to-text connections).

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

1. Students' pictures of kindness will assess student understanding of the character trait.

2. Students' reporting of a random act of kindness: is it truly a kind act? Can they apply the definition?

3. Students' ability to introduce themselves appropriately will assess that their learning is authentic and can be transferred outside of the classroom.

4. Student responses during discussions will help you determine if more time spent on kindness is needed.