



**Character Infused
After-School Lessons**

A Chair for My Mother

<p>Grade Levels: 2-4</p> <p>Character Focus: Responsibility</p> <p>Academic Content Area: English-Language Arts</p> <p>Lesson Duration: This lesson is set up for an after-school program. Implementation in 30-minute blocks is suggested. The lesson can also be modified to fit each program schedule and is designed to be extended with several activities.</p>	<p>Book Title and Author: <i>A Chair for My Mother</i> by Vera B. Williams, Mulberry Books, New York, ISBN: 0-688-04074-8</p> <p>Materials needed: Book, paper and pencil, crayons or markers, as applicable.</p> <p>Implementation Strategies Used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Academic content-based discussion (e.g., literature-based) ✓ Character-related written reflection ✓ Collaboration and cooperative learning
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Lesson Summary

A Chair for My Mother is a story about a family and their community working together to meet a need. The family does not have a comfortable chair as their furniture burned in a fire. The young girl telling the story responds to the need through contributing to the family savings towards the goal of buying a comfortable chair for her mother. The various acts of caring that occur after the fire are retold in a story in which a family and community come together to respond to a need. They demonstrate responsibility for each other by collaborating to reach a goal. Students will learn through the story and follow up the activities, ways to be responsible for each other and for the community.

Academic-Character Objectives

1. After hearing the story and responding to its lessons, students will have a greater knowledge of the character trait, *responsibility*.
2. As a result of having to listen for character traits and vocabulary, students will become more attentive listeners.
3. As a result of completing *People Profiles*, students will be able to follow two- and three-step written and oral directions.
4. As a result of completing the *Cooperation Chart*, students will increase their understanding of charts and chart reading.

Into (Motivation and setting the standard)

1. Begin the lesson by asking the students if they are responsible for anyone at home (e.g., helping a younger sister or brother get ready for school.)
2. Ask them to describe how they are responsible for chores or jobs at home or school.
3. Ask them to tell about a time they did something good without being asked.
4. Tell them they are going to hear a story about taking the responsibility to do good for others.
5. Describe taking *responsibility* for helping out as a *character traits*.
6. Vocabulary: Introduce students to vocabulary: *waitress, money jar, tulip, "charcoal and ashes," neighbor, aunt* (mother's sister), *bank, exchange, furniture store*. Write the words on the board and ask students to listen for the words in the story.
7. Remind students to also listen attentively to find the *character attributes* of the story characters.
8. Ask them to figure out who is telling the story (a little girl).

Through (Lesson continues)

9. Begin reading the story.
10. Ask students questions concerning the story as you proceed.
11. Pause occasionally to identify new vocabulary for clarification.
12. Review the concept of [character traits](#).
13. Vocabulary: After the story, ask students to point out any new vocabulary words they remember from the story. Ask them to tell the context in which the words were found.
14. Questions for Discussion:
 - a. What was the occupation of the girl's mother? What was her job?
 - b. What jobs did Josephine, the restaurant boss, give the girl? (Wash salt and pepper shakers, fill the ketchup bottles, and peel the onions)
 - c. What is the family saving for? Describe the armchair (a beautiful, fat, soft armchair)
 - d. Do you think this is a worthwhile goal for the family? Why?
 - e. What does the girl do with the money she earns?
 - f. How does Mama contribute to the jar? (She gives the change from her tips.)
 - g. How does Grandma contribute (She gives whatever she saves from things on sale when she shops for groceries.)

- h. What happens when many people contribute to get a job done?
- i. What happened to the family's old chair? (It burned in a fire.)
- j. What did the neighbors do when the family moved into the new apartment? (Brought them food and furniture) Why do you think they did this?
- k. Why did they need a soft chair? (Mama's feet hurt; Grandma had to do her work sitting on a hard kitchen chair)
- l. Where did the family bring the coins? Explain what happens when you bring a lot of coins to the bank. (You have to roll the coins in paper and *exchange* them for bills.)
- m. Would you have brought all the coins to the furniture store instead of exchanging the coins at the bank? Why or why not?

Beyond: (*Application, Extensions, and Assessment*)

You may select one or more of the following activities to do on subsequent days as a follow up lesson. Briefly review the story before you start any of the activities.

- Reflection and Journal Prompts to Support Lesson:
 - a. How does the young girl show she is responsible in *A Chair for My Mother*?
 - b. If your mother asked you to contribute for a new telephone, would you be able to help? Why or why not?
 - c. If the neighbors had not cooperated after the fire, and donated food and furniture, what might have happened to the family?
- People of Character: *See People Profiles Worksheet.*
- Cooperation Chart: Teacher Directions
 You may re-read the story to the students. Show them a blank chart. Ask students to determine what each person listed in the chart did to help the family. They may write the answer or draw a picture. The group needs a recorder and a reporter. You may have the groups report on one or two story characters each.

The little girl	(Put the money Josephine gave her for chores in the money jar)
The mother	(Put the change she made from tips in the money jar)
The grandmother	(Put her savings from grocery sales in the money jar)
Neighbors	(Brought pizza and ice cream after the fire)
Family across the street	(Brought a table and three kitchen chairs)
Very old man next door	(Bought a bed from when his children were little)
Other grandpa	(A beautiful rug)
Aunt Sally	(Red and white curtains)
Josephine, Mama's boss	(Pots and pans, silverware and dishes)
Aunt Ida & Uncle Sandy	(Brought the red pickup truck to pick up the chair)

- **Chore List:** When the children have the idea of charting, you can have them make a chart for the class. List the students' names. Next to each name, have them list a chore they do at home or school. Then have them make an "X" for whether the chore is done at home or at school.

Name	Chore	Home	School
Maria	Washes dishes	x	
Sam	Erases the board		x
Etc....			

- **Writing a Letter:** Students will write a legible five-part friendly letter, with correct punctuation, to the fire department mentioned in the story. The letter will thank the fire department.

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