



Character Infused After-School Lessons

The Birthday Swamp

<p>Grade Levels: 2</p> <p>Character Focus: Respect</p> <p>Academic Content Area: English-Language Arts</p> <p>Lesson Duration: 40-50 minutes units; may be used over several days</p>	<p>Book Title and Author: <i>The Birthday Swamp</i> by Loretta Lopez, Lee & Low Books, Inc., ISBN: 1-88-0000-89-X</p> <p>Materials needed: Paper, pencil, & crayons, People Profiles Worksheet, Perspective Taking: Role Playing Guidelines</p> <p>Implementation Strategies Used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Academic content-based discussion (e.g., literature-based) ✓ Character-related written reflection ✓ Role-playing
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Lesson Summary

Lori six-years old, and her family plan their annual trip to Mexico to visit relatives and to celebrate Lori’s older sister’s birthday. This summer, Lori tries hard to get an extra special gift for her sister’s birthday party. The party, however, takes on a different flavor, and Lori is pleasantly surprised. Respect for others is emphasized, as consideration and honoring the feelings of others. In this story, Lori’s sister shows great *empathy* for Lori, which is evident in the outcome of the story.

Academic-Character Objectives

1. Students will understand what it means to have respect for family, cultures and traditions, as measured by extended activities.
2. Students will show the ability to empathize, as measured by discussion and extended activities. Students will be able to answer clarifying questions (how, why) related to contextual elements of a story, as measured by teacher judgment.

Into (*Motivation and setting the standard*)

1. Ask students if they know what *respect* means. Teacher will give a few examples, and ask students for a few examples.
2. Explain the meaning of *empathy* (being able to feel or think like someone) and provide students with examples, e.g., feeling sorry for someone who has fallen off his bike, hugging a child who is crying.
3. Introduce vocabulary: *reunion, hopefully, responsibility, errand, curio shop trinkets, marionettes, sombreros, pinata, incredible, mariachi band.*

Through (*Lesson continues*)

4. Read the story to the class.
5. Request that students attentively listen to the story to find examples of *respect*, including *empathy*.
6. Ask them to listen for the vocabulary words, too. Occasionally pause to identify words, make clarifications and comments, but do not veer from the story.
7. Discuss the story and its lessons. Use as many questions as time permits.
 - Describe what Lori and her family do each year. Why do you think they do this?
 - What is good about going to visit family members who live far away, for example, in Mexico?
 - What could Lori have done before she went shopping at the Mercado to help her find the perfect birthday present? (Ask Cookie what she wanted, ask her mother what Cookie wanted, make a list of things she would look for at the market, etc.)
 - Why is what Cookie did a kind act? (She gave up her birthday party, and her sister received all the presents.) Why did Cookie do this?
 - Explain how Cookie showed empathy for Lori.
 - Would you give up your birthday party for someone? Who? Why?
 - Explain how a child who has empathy can help someone with a problem.
 - Review the story, checking for student understanding of *respect* and *empathy*.

Extended Learning Activities and Assessments

- Create the *Birthday Wish Activity* worksheet for students. Remind students to write in complete sentences and to use legible handwriting.

Birthday Wish Activity

Name: _____	Date: _____
Instructions:	
1. Please answer this question, If you could make one wish for someone else come true on your birthday, for <u>whom</u> would it be and <u>what</u> would it be?	
2. Use the space on the bottom of the page to draw a picture of your wish.	

Beyond (*Application, Extensions, and Assessment*)

- **Sharing:** Students present ideas (worksheet results) to the class.
- **Creating:** Students create a small “Coupon Book.” On each coupon, the student promises to do a specific nice thing for a family member or friend.
- **Arts and Crafts:** Students create a pinata out of arts and crafts supplies.
- **Planning:** Students plan their next birthday party. They list all the things they will buy, the costs, and the total cost of the party. Make sure they figure out how many guests will be invited!
- **Perspective Taking and Role Play:** See Perspective Taking: Role-Play Guidelines.
 - a) Have someone play Lori and someone her sister, Cookie. It is time for the birthday party. Cookie surprises Lori by telling her it is her party, not Cookie’s. What does Cookie say? What does Cookie do? What does Lori say? What does Lori do?
 - b) Have someone play Lori and her mother shopping at the Mercado. The things they see at the Mercado are marionettes, maracas, glass animals, and big sombreros. Role players make believe they are picking up the different items, looking at them, and demonstrating whether or not they would like to buy the article. Ask the students to use lots of action!
- **Trading Card Activity:** See Character Trading Cards.
- **Character Profiles Worksheet:** See People Profiles Worksheet

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People Profiles

Name _____ Date _____ Story _____

Character name from the story	Which character trait best describes this person?	Example of positive character
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

List characters from the story in the first column. In the second column, choose a trait that best describes the character in the story. In the third column, give an example from the story describing how the character showed this trait.



Perspective Taking: Role-Play Guidelines

“Perspective taking or role taking—the cognitive ability to discern another person’s point of view or emotional state—is a key ingredient of empathy, a sensitivity to the plight of others” (Beland 2003).

Because empathy sets the standard for our relationship with others it is a core skill in developing ethical values and bringing them to life. Empathy inspires one to act with care and justice. Perspective taking includes the cognitive ability to:

- Recognize others’ feelings through physical, verbal, and behavioral cues
- Infer how others may be feeling by imagining oneself in their shoes (Beland 2003, p 10)
- Identify facial expressions and situational cues associated with different emotions
- Recognize different emotions within themselves
- Listen to others when they express their thoughts and feelings
- Practice taking the roles of others in the same or different situations
- Look for similarities between themselves and others.

The strategies to provide these opportunities are wide ranging and differ with the age and developmental stages of students. They include but are not limited to:

- Using literary characters and character analysis to have students put themselves in the character’s situation
- Reflecting on their own thoughts and feelings through journaling and pair share
- Using visual art to interpret thoughts and feelings
- Cooperative or collaborative learning activities where students practice the behaviors of respect and responsibility
- Using authentic problem-solving activities where students have to look at different perspectives, interviewing others to identify similarities
- Moral dilemma discussions
- Class meetings
- Role play (some versions of role play are called simulation).

Using brief role play in the classroom supports the development of the behaviors associated with empathy, respect, responsibility, and integrity. Role play develops perspective taking and appeals to the kinesthetic learner as well. Linked to perspective

taking, role play helps students understand social behavior, their roles in social interaction, and ways to solve problems more effectively. (Joyce & Calhoun 1996).

Role play situations can be generated from content area studies such as role playing a literary character, an historical person or event, as well as authentic issues of students. While there are many variations of the components of a role play the following is a basic guide.

Elements of a Role Play

1. Set the context and the situation or scene.

Keep in mind the students needs, interests, and developmental level.

Use situations that are authentic for the students; ask students for suggestions.

It can be a problem, a conflict, or an open-ended situation.

For younger students, identify or predict any language that may be needed.

To encourage role taking, ask students to remember how they felt and what they thought in a similar situation.

Start with simple situations and then move to more complex situations.

2. Identify roles.

Consider the abilities and personalities of the students.

Roles can be developed and suggestions made or roles can be open ended and allowed to evolve.

3. Identify audience focus.

To encourage active listening among the audience, a question or prompt may be given to the observers. Students can discuss, talk about, or write responses.

Norms of behavior for the audience may be reviewed.

3. Follow up.

After the role play, ask key questions of the role players as well as the audience that tap into the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the role play. To develop perspective taking use questions such as:

Did you feel the same as ____? Why or why not?

What questions do you have for ____ about what happened?

What would you have done or said differently?

What would you have done or said the same?

What were you thinking or feeling about when you _____?

How do you know that ____ was feeling _____?

4. Debrief the students.

Review the different roles, the audience reaction, and remind children this is a role play.

Finally, the role of the teacher in role play is one of “traffic controller” helping the flow

of traffic and avoiding bottlenecks, but not telling individuals which way to go (Jones 1982 cited in Thompkins, p.5).