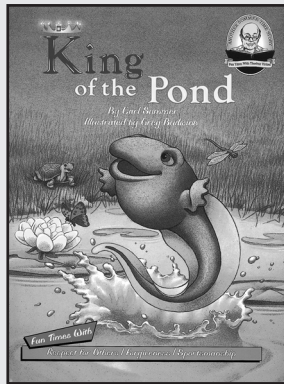


Character Education Activities

7. King of the Pond

Story Description



Tombo the tadpole thinks he is the king of the pond. He brags that he is the biggest, the fastest, and the strongest tadpole, and teases and chases all the other tadpoles. However, while Tombo is showing off doing a triple flip, a boy catches him. The boy puts him into a fish tank and gives him fish flakes to eat, a food Tombo despises.

When Tombo turns into a frog, the boy releases him back into his pond. Then Tombo discovers that he is no longer the biggest and fastest, but he does learn the value of friendship.

In this superbly illustrated book, Carl Sommer reveals the importance of respect for others, forgiveness, and sportsmanship. .

Major Objective

To define and present the following virtues so they can be integrated into the life of each student:

- **Respect for others:** valuing other people's differences and similarities by giving them the time and space to be who they are
- **Forgiveness:** choosing to overlook an offense and treat the offender as not guilty
- **Sportsmanship:** showing the qualities or conduct of one who plays fair

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *King of the Pond*, and then write these three virtues on the board: respect for others, forgiveness, and sportsmanship. Define and discuss these virtues:

Respect for others

Saying such words as please, excuse me, thank you,
Letting others go first
Sharing
Calling adults "Mr." or "Mrs."

Forgiveness:

Willingness to say, "I am sorry." (Some believe these are the three hardest words to say.)
Willingness to forgive others when they say, "I am sorry."
The fruits of forgiveness are inner peace and joy.

Sportsmanship

Playing by the rules

Being kind even when you don't win
Congratulating others on a good job
Not boasting or bullying

Activities

Objective: To use the following activities to help reinforce the virtues of respect for others, forgiveness, and good sportsmanship.

So What's a Tadpole Anyway?

Goal: To provide students a basic understanding of what a tadpole is and its stage in the overall development of a frog. The book gives some details about the life cycle of a frog.

To obtain further information, go online and search for "life cycle of a frog."

Project: Aquarium

- Prepare an aquarium for live tadpole observation
- Review stages of development
- Have students:
 - Keep a journal of tadpole observations
 - Make sketches of changes and record length for each stage to graph later
 - Read other books about frogs and write short reports to share with class
 - Research how frogs fit into the environment

Discuss:

At what stage of development was Tombo first introduced in the story?
What stages are mentioned in *King of the Pond*?

Eating Properly

Goal: To teach students that it is important to eat properly, and if they do not eat properly there are unpleasant consequences in the future.

Preparation: Get a recommended food chart that shows the foods that should be part of a healthy diet.

Class discussion:

- Why did Tombo not like the dried fish food?
- What was the result of Tombo not eating properly?
- As you discuss the consequences of Tombo not eating right, show the food chart and teach the students about eating properly.

Playing It Safe

Goal: To stress the importance of safety

Class discussion—Tombo: What things did Tombo do that were unsafe?

- He repeatedly teased the big fish.
- He would jump high out of the water.

Class Discussion: What are some unsafe activities that children can do.

- Smoking, drinking, unnecessary pills, and drugs
- Playing with matches, knives, guns, and fire hazards such as gasoline
- Not looking both ways when crossing the street
- Riding a bike too fast down a hill

Not obeying signs and light signals
Listening to strangers
Swimming without adult supervision
Climbing on unsafe objects

Who Does This Frog Think He Is?

Goal: To provide students an opportunity to look closely at Tombo's actions and the response he received from others.

Ask students their reactions to Tombo concerning respect for others and sportsmanship. List the bad traits Tombo exhibited in the book along with the response of others:

Tombo's action

Barged in uninvited
Bragged, showed off—"They'll never catch me!"
Bullied and chased others/nipped their tails
Ate first before the others/never shared
Was careless/unsafe—jumped out of water

Response to his action

Tilly complained about his bad behavior
Tilly warned him about danger
The tadpoles swam away from him
Others had to wait
Alex caught him

Discuss the Consequences of Tombo's Behavior

Goal: To recognize the way we treat others often affects the way we get treated

Class Discussion: Discuss Tilly's comment to Freddy, "Don't worry about Tombo. What goes around, comes around."

Another famous comment is, "You reap what you sow."

Results from Tombo's behavior:

Being a boaster and bully caused others to not want to be around him.

Being disrespectful made the larger fish angry with him.

His careless, unsafe attitude got him caught and put in a fishbowl.

Once he was caught, he:

- Lost his home
- Had to eat food he hated
- Was called, "little"
- Was teased in the fish bowl
- Was laughed at

Tombo's behavior change: What caused Tombo to change his attitude?

He ate little and grew little. When he went back to the pond, he realized how small and weak he was. He felt ashamed for the way he had treated his friends and apologized.

Friend's behavior change: What happened after Tombo changed his attitude?

The frogs forgave him.

They wanted him to play with them.

Tombo realized it was more fun to have friends and treat them right than to be king of the pond.

Playing Junk Yard

Game: Place a long line of items in the middle of a room. Have two teams line up on opposite sides of the room. At the signal both teams run to the center and begin picking up one item at a time and putting it into a box until all the items are removed. Count the number of items on each side. The side with the most items wins.

Role Playing: Junk Yard With a Bully

Game: Play the same game, but have one student protect a group of items for his box.

Class discussion: Ask the students how they feel about the bully. Talk about the characteristics of a bully:

Bullies are selfish—they care only about themselves.

Bullies pick on smaller children.

Bullies push and often want to fight those who are smaller.

Bullies are often boasters. They like to think that they are better than others.

Role Play Golden Rule

Goal: To treat others with respect

Class discussion: Write the Golden Rule on the board, “Treat others as you would want others to treat you.” Ask the students what it means.

Role Play: Choose two boys, two girls, or a boy and a girl and have one be a pest by poking the other.

Have a bigger student push the books out of another student’s hands.

Have some students line up, and have a bigger student cut in the line.

Ask the class for other examples of bullying.

Class discussion: What is the basic problem with bullying? The bully cares about only HIMSELF! So long as he or she is happy, it doesn’t matter how others feel.

End result: What is the end result of bullying? Bullies have few real friends. They need to learn from Tombo: “Having friends and treating them right is much more fun than being King of the Pond.”

Tying It All Together

Treating others the way you want to be treated is a much happier way to live. The treatment that Tombo dished to others was exactly what he got in return. You earn respect by treating others with respect. And don’t forget, what one sows one reaps.