

# JOURNEY IN... YEAR ONE ENDINGS STORY

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- Change—a mix of beginnings and endings—is an inevitable part of existing in this universe.
- Change brings big feelings: sometimes it feels good, sometimes it's painful.
- Change is necessary for growth.

Lesson Materials

- 4-6 copies of *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf* by Lois Ehlert and *Water Dance* by Thomas Lockert
- Paper cutouts of leaves on red, yellow and green paper and drops of water on various shades of blue paper, all large enough to write a haiku on
- Copies of the attached poem 'worksheet'
- Blank paper for drafting
- Copy of *A Lamp in Every Corner*

## TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time, for your reflection

When I was green, everyone loved me. Bees crooned my sweetness: butterflies made me their own. But then something called time began to drag me away and I became curled up and brittle and brown.

These lines you read are what an oak leaf wrote, following a storm that dragged it over the snow—complaining and kicking. "I don't want to forsake my tree. Help! Where did my sisters go?"

When spring comes, a whole new cast will have the stage and I will huddle where winter threw me away, but wherever I am the soil will be bitter because I remember how lonely it was when I tried to stay.

This farewell comes from a forgiving leaf that skipped with the others and then found a lucky storm that brought me here. Listen—hold on as long as you can, then thrust forth: make truth your home.

— William Stafford

One day as I was about to step on a dry leaf, I saw the leaf in the ultimate dimension. I saw that it was not really dead, but that it was merging with the moist soil in order to appear on the tree the following spring in another form. I smiled at the leaf and said, "You are pretending." Everything is pretending to be born and pretending to die, including that leaf.

— Thich Nhat Hanh

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON**

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**YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES**

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To every thing there is a season,  
and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die;

A time to plant and a time to reap;

A time to kill and a time to heal;

A time to destroy and a time to rebuild;

A time to cry and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones and

a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get and a time to lose;

A time to keep and a time to cast away;

A time to rend and a time to sew;

A time to be quiet and a time to speak;

A time to love and a time to hate;

A time of war and a time of peace.

- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

**GATHERING AND FOCUSING**

⌚ 2-3 minutes

Go around the circle and invite everyone to share one change that's happened in their life lately and whether that was a happy, positive change or a difficult, sad one.

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE  
STORY: "AND IT IS GOOD"**

⌚ 10 minutes

This story will be the basis for the Drama Workshop's puppet show. Repetition and reinforcement are always helpful.

Have the kids sit or lie down comfortably. Encourage them to really use their imaginations to envision this story, "And It Is Good", found in the book *A Lamp in Every Corner*.

Follow up with additional questions about change:

- Is this story happy? Sad? Neither? In between?
- In your experience has change usually been a good thing or a bad thing? Easy or hard?
- Is there anything in the universe that will never change?
- Are there things that need to change? Are there changes that make us happy?
- How do you deal with the big feelings that change brings?

## **PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO**

### **LEAF HAIKU: POEMS ABOUT CHANGE**

🕒 10-15 minutes

- Invite the children to write short poems about a change in their lives. Most of the children will know about the haiku form; ask them to find out if they've read or written some. Older kids might be challenged to conform to the 5-7-5 syllable pattern if they're up to it!
- A recipe that you might offer:
  - Line One: Name the change
  - Line Two: Name your feelings about it
  - Line Three: What new things did change bring?

Example:

*I changed schools again  
nervous, excited, sad, mad  
new friends, new teachers*

- Allow each child to draft on a plain sheet of paper, then write a final draft on a colored leaf cut-out. Help each child tape or tack the leaf onto the tree trunk form on the wall. You'll create a growing, leafy tree of changes!

## **PRIMARY ACTIVITY THREE**

### **SCROLL POEMS**

🕒 10-15 minutes

- First and Second Graders might feel more comfortable using the attached 'worksheet' with the skeleton of the poem written out and the crucial words left blank. Encourage emerging writers to create their poem without worrying about spelling; they can ask for help if they want it, but the most important part is that *they* can read their own poem aloud for someone. Older kids will be able to write their poems from scratch.
- The way we make books has changed. A long time ago, people wrote poems, stories and laws on scrolls. We'll make another poem about change that we can give as a gift.
- The theme of our poems will be about the gifts that changes bring. Each line will echo the others:  
"If \_\_\_\_\_ were forever, there would be no more  
\_\_\_\_\_"

Here are some ideas to get you started:

If acorns were forever, there would be no more oak trees.  
If summer were forever, there would be no more snowmen.  
If school were forever, there would be no more treehouses.

- What about flowers? seeds? babies? fights? puppies? rain? clouds? tears? 5th grade? football season? church? snowflakes? dentist appointments?
- When your poem seems complete, roll it up like a scroll, select a ribbon and tie it up. You can give your poem as a gift, a little bit of yourself and your ideas, to someone you care about.

## **PRIMARY ACTIVITY FOUR**

### **SHARING STORYBOOKS**

🕒 10-15 minutes

For 1st & 2nd Graders

- Read aloud the books, *Red Leaf*, *Yellow Leaf* and *Water Dance*. They're both easy book. Give trios a copy of their own, if they'd like.
- Invite comment by asking an open ended question, such as:
  - I wonder which part you liked best...?
  - I wonder if you've ever seen a tree change like this...?
  - Have you ever felt uprooted? Taken care of? Loved?
  - If you were water, which of these forms would you want to be most?
  - How are people like trees? Like water?

For 3rd through 6th Graders

Make arrangements in advance to have the 6-8 children from preschool classes attend part of the story session near the 45-minute mark of your time together. Encourage them to think of one open-ended question that they might ask of their young listeners after the story is over.

Pair 5th and 6th graders up with their choice of a copy of *Red Leaf*, *Yellow Leaf* or *Water Dance* and have them read to one or two preschool buddies.

After the preschoolers head back to their class, reflect with your "big kids".

- How have you changed since when you were in preschool?
- Did you notice some changes happening? Did any changes happen that you didn't really feel changing?
- Did you choose these changes?
- Did you need help dealing with any of the changes?

## **CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING**

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, take each other's hands and speak these words:

As the seed holds the beauty that the flower later shares,  
as the acorn holds the strength that the tree later provides,  
so do we hold in our hearts the growth of our many gifts.  
May we offer our gifts to each other and everyone,  
changing the world with our kindness,  
blessing each other with compassion,  
and growing with all in love.

Amen.

- Bill Neely

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**BY \_\_\_\_\_**