

The Power of Words

Wilton Manors Elementary School

Grade Level:

K-5

Estimated Time:

Three 45-minute sessions

Connections to CEP's Eleven Principles:

Creates a caring school community (Principle 4)

Connections to Core Values:

Respect

Empathy (Caring)

Tolerance

Overview

The children's classic *The Ugly Duckling* is an excellent read aloud to prompt discussions on caring, empathy, tolerance, and respect. Throughout the story, the main character (ugly duckling) is treated poorly by the other animals he encounters. As the duckling continues on his journey, he finds one character (the farmer) that accepts him for who he is. With time, caring, and respect the duckling develops into a swan proving that there is something beautiful in everyone.

 [Printer Friendly](#)

Lesson Objectives

Students will identify story elements

Students will identify and discuss character traits (attitudes) that are and are not demonstrated by the characters throughout the story

Students will discuss how words leave a lasting imprint on a person

Students will identify ways to treat others with kindness

Students will use problem-solving strategies to brainstorm how the main character could have handled the negative comments of the other characters

Materials Needed

- The Ugly Duckling*
- drawing paper
- markers
- scissors
- journals (these are needed if you choose to have children problem solve or reflect in writing)

Procedures

Session 1:

1. Begin the lesson by having students draw and color likenesses of their faces on drawing paper.
2. Have the students cut out their faces.
3. Discuss how the faces look focusing on how each is unique yet still beautiful.

Session 2:

1. Explain to the students that they will be listening to *The Ugly Duckling* read aloud.
2. As the story is read aloud, have the students listen for story elements (characters, setting, problem,

solution). Chart story elements as they are discussed.

3. As the story is read, discuss the character traits (attitudes) demonstrated by the characters in the story. At this time, you may also discuss the character traits that are not demonstrated. For younger students, you may record their responses in a t-chart. The older students may record their own responses in a reading journal.

Session 3:

1. Explain to the students that they will be listening to the story *The Ugly Duckling* for a second time. This time they will be holding their faces created in session 1.
2. Each time the students hear the characters in the story using “hurtful words” they are to crumple their faces.
3. As you continue to read the story, stop periodically to ask the students to describe what is happening to their faces.
4. When you have finished reading the story, have the students unfold their faces.
5. Discuss how their faces have changed. Have the students try to get the wrinkles and folds out of their faces. Discuss whether or not they are able to “undo” the damage they have done to their faces.
6. Discuss how the damage caused to their faces is similar to the “hurt” they feel inside when someone uses hurtful words.

Assesment

Use student responses from the discussions to assess learning and understanding. You may wish to have students write or draw in their journal about what they learned from this lesson.

Extensions and Adaptations

Adapt the lesson as needed according to the grade level of the students.

Credit

Teachers from Wilton Manors Elementary School, a 2008 National School of Character, wrote this lesson.