

The Golden Thread of Truth Presents:

Interfaith Programs for Kids & Teens



A Twelve Month Program Volume 2

Welcome to The Golden Thread of Truth Annual Curriculum, Volume 2! The intention of this material is to teach our children that all the world's religions support a consistent message about the truth of who we are. Stories from Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Native American traditions and contemporary authors support the same underlying messages and values. Love thy neighbor. You reap what you sow. We are stewards of the earth and each other. Treat others as you would like to be treated. Parents around the world, from all religious beliefs, cultures and lifestyles, teach these values to their children through timeless stories.

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For permission requests, contact:

The Karish Group, Inc.

Marjorie Helms-Karish

Littleton, CO 80127

Phone: 303-475-6169

marjorie.helms@gmail.com

Month #4: Springtime Folktales

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April 2016 Springtime Folktales

Spring is always a great time to use lessons from Nature! Nature is abundant, beautiful and continually in rebirth. Nature is forever circulating between light and dark, birth and death. We can trust in the brilliance of the world around us and live in joyful anticipation of what surprises it has in store for us. This month's lessons come from favorite Japanese Springtime Folktales.

Week #1: The Importance of Integrity

Main Message: Integrity is a value that encompasses wisdom, courage and truth. With integrity, you have the wisdom to listen to your internal guidance, the courage to follow this guidance. and the truth of knowing you are always guided from your Divine Soul. As we strengthen that muscle which hears our Divine truth and guidance, we can more clearly know its whisper.

Readings

“An interior man will make more impressions on hearts by a single word animated by the Spirit than another by a whole discourse which has cost him much labor and in which he has exhausted all his power of reasoning.” ~ Louis Lallement 1587 - 1634

Lesson: The old man who made the dead trees blossom (Japanese Folklore)

This is the story of Old Man Hanaska - In Japanese, Hana means flower and Saka means hill.

Old Man Hanasaka has a greedy neighbor who frequently steals from him. One day, Mr. Hanasaka finds a white dog, injured and starving. Taking pity on the wretched animal, Mr. Hanasaka feeds the dog and nurses it back to health. When the dog is healthy enough, Old Man Hanasaka lets it play outside. After digging around for a bit, the dog bounds back to Mr. Hanasaki, a nugget of gold in its jaws! The greedy neighbor, upon seeing this, seizes the dog and orders it to dig up gold for him too. The neighbor turns the dog loose again, but this time it brings back only garbage. Furious, the greedy neighbor kills the dog on the spot. Saddened, the Old Man Hanasaka buries the dog behind his house. The very next day, he find that a tree had sprouted from the dog's

grave! The old man makes a mortar from the tree and grinds up some rice to make rice cakes, in honor of the dog. The rice turns to gold even as Mr. Hanasaki is grinding it!

Once again, the greedy neighbor sees what happens and takes the mortar for himself. But, when he uses it, the rice turns to mud instead of gold. Enraged, the greedy neighbor burns the mortar and dumps the ashes outside. Old Man Hanasaki gathers up the ashes and spreads them in his yard once again, to honor the special dog. But, as the ashes settle on a dead tree, it bursts into beautiful cherry blossoms! Old Man Hanasaka's efforts at bringing dead trees to life bring him to the attention of the local Daimyo, who honors the old man.

Activity: Rice Shapes

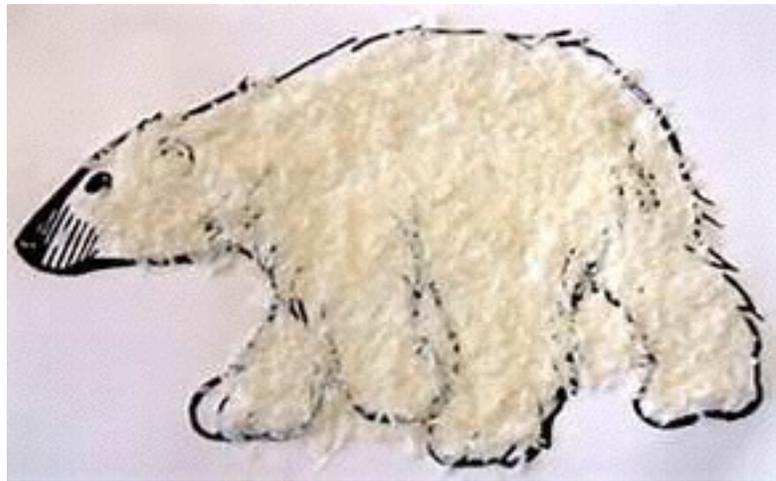
Meaning of Craft: Even humble rice can become something beautiful when seen in the right perspective.

Materials:

Brown paper bags
Pen
Glue
Rice

Directions:

trace an outline of an animal
Fill the outline with glue
Cover the glue with rice
Dry



Advanced Material for 4th & 5th grade:

There is an old saying "Its not what you think you don't know that will hurt you, its what you are sure you know that just aint so."

The quote above is captures the story of the greedy neighbor and Old Man Hanasaki. If we take the story literally, that means the greedy neighbor believed if he killed the dog, it would not give good to anyone. Not only was he greedy collecting riches for himself, he was triple greedy because he didn't want Old Man Hanasaki to have any more riches.

Why would the greedy neighbor not want Old Man Hanasaki to have any more money?

Example responses -

The greedy neighbor thought if the Old Man had more money, it would be that the greedy neighbor had less.

The greedy neighbor thought if he was not happy with the dog, he wanted the Old Man to be even more unhappy than he was.

Answer: In many fairy tales, you will hear nonsensical activities such as this. And many times these are repeated over with more good coming from each subsequent bad.

The moral is that your sadness or anger cannot be lessened if you try to make someone else sad or angry in your wake. What you put out is what you receive back.

Tween & Teen Activity

This is a story which answers the age old question, “What is important in life?” Ask your teens this question before and after the story and see if their answer changes.

Japanese Fairy Tales

by *Yei Theodora Ozaki*

THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO DID NOT WISH TO DIE

Long, long ago there lived a man called Sentaro. His surname meant “Millionaire,” but although he was not so rich as all that, he was still very far removed from being poor. He had inherited a small fortune from his father and lived on this, spending his time carelessly, without any serious thoughts of work, till he was about thirty-two years of age.

One day, without any reason whatsoever, the thought of death and sickness came to him. The idea of falling ill or dying made him very wretched.

“I should like to live,” he said to himself, “till I am five or six hundred years old at least, free from all sickness. The ordinary span of a man’s life is very short.”

He wondered whether it were possible, by living simply and frugally henceforth, to prolong his life as long as he wished.

He knew there were many stories in ancient history of emperors who had lived a thousand years, and there was a Princess of Yamato, who, it was said, lived to the age of five hundred. This was the latest story of a very long life record.

Sentaro had often heard the tale of the Chinese King named Shin-no-Shiko. He was one of the most able and powerful rulers in Chinese history. He built all the large palaces, and also the famous great wall of China. He had everything in the world he could wish for, but in spite of all his happiness and the luxury and the splendor of his Court, the wisdom of his councilors and the glory of his reign, he was miserable because he knew that one day he must die and leave it all.

When Shin-no-Shiko went to bed at night, when he rose in the morning, as he went through his day, the thought of death was always with him. He could not get away from it. Ah—if only he could find the “Elixir of Life,” he would be happy.

The Emperor at last called a meeting of his courtiers and asked them all if they could not find for him the “Elixir of Life” of which he had so often read and heard.

One old courtier, Jofuku by name, said that far away across the seas there was a country called Horaizan, and that certain hermits lived there who possessed the secret of the "Elixir of Life." Whoever drank of this wonderful draught lived forever.

The Emperor ordered Jofuku to set out for the land of Horaizan, to find the hermits, and to bring him back a phial of the magic elixir. He gave Jofuku one of his best junks, fitted it out for him, and loaded it with great quantities of treasures and precious stones for Jofuku to take as presents to the hermits.

Jofuku sailed for the land of Horaizan, but he never returned to the waiting Emperor; but ever since that time Mount Fuji has been said to be the fabled Horaizan and the home of hermits who had the secret of the elixir, and Jofuku has been worshiped as their patron god.

Now Sentaro determined to set out to find the hermits, and if he could, to become one, so that he might obtain the water of perpetual life. He remembered that as a child he had been told that not only did these hermits live on Mount Fuji, but that they were said to inhabit all the very high peaks.

So he left his old home to the care of his relatives, and started out on his quest. He traveled through all the mountainous regions of the land, climbing to the tops of the highest peaks, but never a hermit did he find.

At last, after wandering in a region for many days, he met a hunter.

"Can you tell me," asked Sentaro, "where the hermits live who have the Elixir of Life?"

"No," said the hunter; "I can't tell you where such hermits live, but there is a notorious robber living in these parts. It is said that he is chief of a band of two hundred followers."

This odd answer irritated Sentaro very much, and he thought how foolish it was to waste more time in looking for the hermits in this way, so he decided to go at once to the shrine of Jofuku, who is worshiped as the patron god of the hermits in the south of Japan.

Sentaro reached the shrine and prayed for seven days, entreating Jofuku to show him the way to a hermit who could give him what he wanted so much to find.

At midnight of the seventh day, as Sentaro knelt in the temple, the door of the innermost shrine flew open, and Jofuku appeared in a luminous cloud, and calling to Sentaro to come nearer, spoke thus:

"Your desire is a very selfish one and cannot be easily granted. You think that you would like to become a hermit so as to find the Elixir of Life. Do you know how hard a hermit's life is? A hermit is only allowed to eat fruit and berries and the bark of pine trees; a hermit must cut himself off from the world so that his heart may become as pure as gold and free from every earthly desire. Gradually after following these strict rules, the hermit ceases to feel hunger or cold or heat, and his body becomes so light that he can ride on a crane or a carp, and can walk on water without getting his feet wet."

"You, Sentaro, are fond of good living and of every comfort. You are not even like an ordinary man, for you are exceptionally idle, and more sensitive to heat and cold than most people. You would never be able to go barefoot or to wear only one thin dress in the winter time! Do you think that you would ever have the patience or the endurance to live a hermit's life?"

"In answer to your prayer, however, I will help you in another way. I will send you to the country of Perpetual Life, where death never comes—where the people live forever!"

Saying this, Jofuku put into Sentaro's hand a little crane made of paper, telling him to sit on its back and it would carry him there.

Sentaro obeyed wonderingly. The crane grew large enough for him to ride on it with comfort. It then spread its wings, rose high in the air, and flew away over the mountains right out to sea.

Sentaro was at first quite frightened; but by degrees he grew accustomed to the swift flight through the air. On and on they went for thousands of miles. The bird never stopped for rest or food, but as it was a paper bird it doubtless did not require any nourishment, and strange to say, neither did Sentaro.

After several days they reached an island. The crane flew some distance inland and then alighted.

As soon as Sentaro got down from the bird's back, the crane folded up of its own accord and flew into his pocket.

Now Sentaro began to look about him wonderingly, curious to see what the country of Perpetual Life was like. He walked first round about the country and then through the town. Everything was, of course, quite strange, and different from his own land. But both the land and the people seemed prosperous, so he decided that it would be good for him to stay there and took up lodgings at one of the hotels.

The proprietor was a kind man, and when Sentaro told him that he was a stranger and had come to live there, he promised to arrange everything that was necessary with the governor of the city concerning Sentaro's sojourn there. He even found a house for his guest, and in this way Sentaro obtained his great wish and became a resident in the country of Perpetual Life.

Within the memory of all the islanders no man had ever died there, and sickness was a thing . Priests had come over from India and China and told them of a beautiful country called Paradise, where happiness and bliss and contentment fill all men's hearts, but its gates could only be reached by dying. This tradition was handed down for ages from generation to generation—but none knew exactly what death was except that it led to Paradise.

Quite unlike Sentaro and other ordinary people, instead of having a great dread of death, they all, both rich and poor, longed for it as something good and desirable. They were all tired of their long, long lives, and longed to go to the happy land of contentment called Paradise of which the priests had told them centuries ago.

All this Sentaro soon found out by talking to the islanders. He found himself, according to his ideas, in the land of Topsy-turvydom. Everything was upside down. He had wished to escape from dying. He had come to the land of Perpetual Life with great relief and joy, only to find that the inhabitants themselves, doomed never to die, would consider it bliss to find death.

What he had hitherto considered poison these people ate as good food, and all the things to which he had been accustomed as food they rejected. Whenever any merchants from other countries arrived, the rich people rushed to them eager to buy poisons. These they swallowed eagerly, hoping for death to come so that they might go to Paradise.

But what were deadly poisons in other lands were without effect in this strange place, and people who swallowed them with the hope of dying, only found that in a short time they felt better in health instead of worse.

Vainly they tried to imagine what death could be like. The wealthy would have given all their money and all their goods if they could but shorten their lives to two or three hundred years even. Without any change to live on forever seemed to this people wearisome and sad.

In the chemist shops there was a drug which was in constant demand, because after using it for a hundred years, it was supposed to turn the hair slightly gray and to bring about disorders of the stomach.

Sentaro was astonished to find that the poisonous globe-fish was served up in restaurants as a delectable dish, and hawkers in the streets went about selling sauces made of Spanish flies. He never saw any one ill after eating these horrible things, nor did he ever see any one with as much as a cold.

Sentaro was delighted. He said to himself that he would never grow tired of living, and that he considered it profane to wish for death. He was the only happy man on the island. For his part he wished to live thousands of years and to enjoy life. He set himself up in business, and for the present never even dreamed of going back to his native land.

As years went by, however, things did not go as smoothly as at first. He had heavy losses in business, and several times some affairs went wrong with his neighbors. This caused him great annoyance.

Time passed like the flight of an arrow for him, for he was busy from morning till night. Three hundred years went by in this monotonous way, and then at last he began to grow tired of life in this country, and he longed to see his own land and his old home. However long he lived here, life would always be the game, so was it not foolish and wearisome to stay on here forever?

Sentaro, in his wish to escape from the country of Perpetual Life, recollected Jofuku, who had helped him before when he was wishing to escape from death—and he prayed to the saint to bring him back to his own land again.

No sooner did he pray than the paper crane popped out of his pocket. Sentaro was amazed to see that it had remained undamaged after all these years. Once more the bird grew and grew till it was large enough for him to mount it. As he did so, the bird spread its wings and flew, swiftly out across the sea in the direction of Japan.

Such was the willfulness of the man's nature that he looked back and regretted all he had left behind. He tried to stop the bird in vain. The crane held on its way for thousands of miles across the ocean.

Then a storm came on, and the wonderful paper crane got damp, crumpled up, and fell into the sea. Sentaro fell with it. Very much frightened at the thought of being drowned, he cried out loudly to Jofuku to save him. He looked round, but there was no ship in sight. He swallowed a quantity of sea-water, which only increased his miserable plight. While he was thus struggling to keep himself afloat, he saw a monstrous shark swimming towards him. As it came nearer it opened its huge mouth ready to devour him. Sentaro was all but paralyzed with fear now that he felt his end so near, and screamed out as loudly as ever he could to Jofuku to come and rescue him.

Lo, and behold, Sentaro was awakened by his own screams, to find that during his long prayer he had fallen asleep before the shrine, and that all his extraordinary and frightful adventures had been only a wild dream. He was in a cold perspiration with fright, and utterly bewildered.

Suddenly a bright light came towards him, and in the light stood a messenger. The messenger held a book in his hand, and spoke to Sentaro:

“I am sent to you by Jofuku, who in answer to your prayer, has permitted you in a dream to see the land of Perpetual Life. But you grew weary of living there, and begged to be allowed to return to your native land so that you might die. Jofuku, so that he might try you, allowed you to drop into the sea, and then sent a shark to swallow you up. Your desire for death was not real, for even at that moment you cried out loudly and shouted for help.”

“It is also vain for you to wish to become a hermit, or to find the Elixir of Life. These things are not for such as you—your life is not austere enough. It is best for you to go back to your paternal home, and to live a good and industrious life. Never neglect to keep the anniversaries of your ancestors, and make it your duty to provide for your children’s future. Thus will you live to a good old age and be happy, but give up the vain desire to escape death, for no man can do that, and by this time you have surely found out that even when selfish desires are granted they do not bring happiness.”

“In this book I give you there are many precepts good for you to know—if you study them, you will be guided in the way I have pointed out to you.”

The angel disappeared as soon as he had finished speaking, and Sentaro took the lesson to heart. With the book in his hand he returned to his old home, and giving up all his old vain wishes, tried to live a good and useful life and to observe the lessons taught him in the book, and he and his house prospered henceforth.

Week #2: Leadership

Main Message: “Live in such a way that if anyone should speak badly of you no one would believe it.” There are many expressions of leadership. The main thing to remember is a leader lives with integrity. A leader puts others before herself. And a leader looks at the long term effects of a decision.

Readings:

If you love men, and they are unfriendly, look into your love; if you rule men and they are unruly, look into your wisdom; if you are courteous to them, and they do not respond, look into your respect. If what you do is vain, always seek within. Mencius (the second most famous Confucian Philosopher after Confucius himself.

And we shall be made truly wise if we be made content; content, too, not only with what we can understand, but content with what we do not understand — the habit of mind which theologians call — and right — faith in God, ~ Charles Kingsley

Lesson: ONE FROGGY EVENING

This is a favorite cartoon of a man who finds a singing frog - wishes to become rich and then finds he cannot get the frog to sing when he wishes him to sing. A leader does not force another to do something for his own personal gain. A leader loves the abilities of another without need to control.

This week’s lesson is a video found here: <https://vimeo.com/50941741>

Activity: Froggy Tube

Materials You Will Need

- Paper Roll
- Green Construction Paper
- Pen/writing utensil
- Glue
- Scissors
- Googly Eyes





Cut the paper to fit the tube and glue it on.
 Cut legs with a little 'extra' on the side to be glued to the paper roll.
 Fold the legs so they can stick straight out of the paper roll.

Draw on smile and glue on google eyes.

Advanced Material for 4th & 5th grade:

When we do not learn to be governed by Laws of God and rebel against them, it does not change the law. Support one doesn't like round worlds and blue skies. There really is nothing one can do to change it, for the world is round, and the skies are blue. The farmer leans the laws of the seasons, and he becomes governed by them. His knowledge causes him to plant his crops when they should be planted and he reaps when he should be reaping. Should be rebel and plant his crop out of season, it would not change Gods law concerning the proper time to plant and to reap; it would only mean crop failure for the farmer. The plan for the farmer is good and is within the farm'er's reach.

One of the greatest examples in history of surrender is found in the life of Mahatma Gandhi. A small man in a loin cloth, he set out March 12, 1930 from Sabarmati with a bamboo walking stick on a "salt march." it seemed absurd for this little man to go against the British Empire to free his people to make salt against the government monopoly, but as he understood it, the truth for the people of India was to be free. he committed to this truth and had no fear. Seventeen years later he had won independence for his people without committing violence. Strong faith, plus courage to be patient, won him his goal. Do you think this is the meaning Jesus had in mind when he said "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth?"

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." ~ Mahatma Gandhi

Tween & Teen Activity

Lesson: The Tea Kettle

Long ago, as I've heard tell, there dwelt at the temple of Morinji, in the Province of Kotsuke, a holy priest.

Now there were three things about this reverend man. First, he was wrapped up in meditations and observances and forms and doctrines. He was a great one for the

Sacred Sutras, and knew strange and mystical things. Then he had a fine exquisite taste of his own, and nothing pleased him so much as the ancient tea ceremony of the *Cha-no-yu*; and for the third thing about him, he knew both sides of a copper coin well enough and loved a bargain.

None so pleased as he when he happened upon an ancient tea-kettle, lying rusty and dirty and half-forgotten in a corner of a poor shop in a back street of his town.

“An ugly bit of old metal,” says the holy man to the shopkeeper; “but it will do well enough to boil my humble drop of water of an evening. I’ll give you three *rin* for it.” This he did and took the kettle home, rejoicing; for it was of bronze, fine work, the very thing for the *Cha-no-yu*.

A novice cleaned and scoured the tea-kettle, and it came out as pretty as you please. The priest turned it this way and that, and upside down, looked into it, tapped it with his finger-nail. He smiled. “A bargain,” he cried, “a bargain!” and rubbed his hands. He set the kettle upon a box covered over with a purple cloth, and looked at it so long that first he was fain to rub his eyes many times, and then to close them altogether. His head dropped forward and he slept.

And then, believe me, the wonderful thing happened. The tea-kettle moved, though no hand was near it. A hairy head, with two bright eyes, looked out of the spout. The lid jumped up and down. Four brown and hairy paws appeared, and a fine bushy tail. In a minute the kettle was down from the box and going round and round looking at things.

“A very comfortable room, to be sure,” says the tea-kettle.

Pleased enough to find itself so well lodged, it soon began to dance and to caper nimbly and to sing at the top of its voice. Three or four novices were studying in the next room. “The old man is lively,” they said; “only hark to him. What can he be at?” And they laughed in their sleeves.

Heaven’s mercy, the noise that the tea-kettle made! Bang! bang! Thud! thud! thud!

The novices soon stopped laughing. One of them slid aside the *kara-kami* and peeped through.

“Arah, the devil and all’s in it!” he cried. “Here’s the master’s old tea-kettle turned into a sort of a badger. The gods protect us from witchcraft, or for certain we shall be lost!”

“And I scoured it not an hour since,” said another novice, and he fell to reciting the Holy Sutras on his knees.

A third laughed. “I’m for a nearer view of the hobgoblin,” he said.

So the lot of them left their books in a twinkling, and gave chase to the tea-kettle to catch it. But could they come up with the tea-kettle? Not a bit of it. It danced and it leapt and it flew up into the air. The novices rushed here and there, slipping upon the mats. They grew hot. They grew breathless.

“Ha, ha! Ha, ha!” laughed the tea-kettle; and “Catch me if you can!” laughed the wonderful tea-kettle.

Presently the priest awoke, all rosy, the holy man.

“And what’s the meaning of this racket,” he says, “disturbing me at my holy meditations and all?”

“Master, master,” cry the novices, panting and mopping their brows, “your tea-kettle is bewitched. It was a badger, no less. And the dance it has been giving us, you’d never believe!”

“Stuff and nonsense,” says the priest; “bewitched? Not a bit of it. There it rests on its box, good quiet thing, just where I put it.”

Sure enough, so it did, looking as hard and cold and innocent as you please. There was not a hair of a badger near it. It was the novices that looked foolish.

“A likely story indeed,” says the priest. “I have heard of the pestle that took wings to itself and flew away, parting company with the mortar. That is easily to be understood by any man. But a kettle that turned into a badger—no, no! To your books, my sons, and pray to be preserved from the perils of illusion.”

That very night the holy man filled the kettle with water from the spring and set it on the *hibachi* to boil for his cup of tea. When the water began to boil—

“Ai! Ai!” the kettle cried; “Ai! Ai! The heat of the Great Hell!” And it lost no time at all, but hopped off the fire as quick as you please.

“Sorcery!” cried the priest. “Black magic! A devil! A devil! A devil! Mercy on me! Help! Help! Help!” He was frightened out of his wits, the dear good man. All the novices came running to see what was the matter.

“The tea-kettle is bewitched,” he gasped; “it was a badger, assuredly it was a badger ... it both speaks and leaps about the room.”

“Nay, master,” said a novice, “see where it rests upon its box, good quiet thing.” And sure enough, so it did.

“Most reverend sir,” said the novice, “let us all pray to be preserved from the perils of illusion.”

The priest sold the tea-kettle to a tinker and got for it twenty copper coins.

“It’s a mighty fine bit of bronze,” says the priest. “Mind, I’m giving it away to you, I’m sure I cannot tell what for.” Ah, he was the one for a bargain! The tinker was a happy man and carried home the kettle. He turned it this way and that, and upside down, and looked into it.

“A pretty piece,” says the tinker; “a very good bargain.” And when he went to bed that night he put the kettle by him, to see it first thing in the morning.

He awoke at midnight and fell to looking at the kettle by the bright light of the moon.

Presently it moved, though there was no hand near it.

“Strange,” said the tinker; but he was a man who took things as they came.

A hairy head, with two bright eyes, looked out of the kettle’s spout. The lid jumped up and down. Four brown and hairy paws appeared, and a fine bushy tail. It came quite close to the tinker and laid a paw upon him.

“Well?” says the tinker.

“I am not wicked,” says the tea-kettle.

“No,” says the tinker.

“But I like to be well treated. I am a badger tea-kettle.”

“So it seems,” says the tinker.

“At the temple they called me names, and beat me and set me on the fire. I couldn’t stand it, you know.”

“I like your spirit,” says the tinker.

“I think I shall settle down with you.”

“Shall I keep you in a lacquer box?” says the tinker.

“Not a bit of it, keep me with you; let us have a talk now and again. I am very fond of a pipe. I like rice to eat, and beans and sweet things.”

“A cup of *saké* sometimes?” says the tinker.

“Well, yes, now you mention it.”

“I’m willing,” says the tinker.

“Thank you kindly,” says the tea-kettle; “and, as a beginning, would you object to my sharing your bed? The night has turned a little chilly.”

“Not the least in the world,” says the tinker.

The tinker and the tea-kettle became the best of friends. They ate and talked together. The kettle knew a thing or two and was very good company.

One day: “Are you poor?” says the kettle.

“Yes,” says the tinker, “middling poor.”

“Well, I have a happy thought. For a tea-kettle, I am out-of-the-way—really very accomplished.”

“I believe you,” says the tinker.

“My name is *Bumbuku-Chagama*; I am the very prince of Badger Tea-Kettles.”

“Your servant, my lord,” says the tinker.

“If you’ll take my advice,” says the tea-kettle, “you’ll carry me round as a show; I really am out-of-the-way, and it’s my opinion you’d make a mint of money.”

“That would be hard work for you, my dear *Bumbuku*,” says the tinker.

“Not at all; let us start forthwith,” says the tea-kettle.

So they did. The tinker bought hangings for a theatre, and he called the show *Bumbuku-Chagama*. How the people flocked to see the fun! For the wonderful and most accomplished tea-kettle danced and sang, and walked the tight rope as to the manner born. It played such tricks and had such droll ways that the people laughed till their sides ached. It was a treat to see the tea-kettle bow as gracefully as a lord and thank the people for their patience.

The *Bumbuku-Chagama* was the talk of the country-side, and all the gentry came to see it as well as the commonalty. As for the tinker, he waved a fan and took the money. You may believe that he grew fat and rich. He even went to Court, where the great ladies and the royal princesses made much of the wonderful tea-kettle.

At last the tinker retired from business, and to him the tea-kettle came with tears in its bright eyes.

“I’m much afraid it’s time to leave you,” it says.

“Now, don’t say that, *Bumbuku*, dear,” says the tinker. “We’ll be so happy together now we are rich.”

“I’ve come to the end of my time,” says the tea-kettle. “You’ll not see old *Bumbuku* any more; henceforth I shall be an ordinary kettle, nothing more or less.”

“Oh, my dear *Bumbuku*, what shall I do?” cried the poor tinker in tears.

“I think I should like to be given to the temple of Morinji, as a very sacred treasure,” says the tea-kettle.

It never spoke or moved again. So the tinker presented it as a very sacred treasure to the temple, and the half of his wealth with it.

And the tea-kettle was held in wondrous fame for many a long year. Some persons even worshipped it as a saint.

Affirmation: The truth for me and for all people is “abundant life.” I choose my thoughts and actions with this achievement in mind.

Week #3: The Power of Love

Main Message: Love of family, love of friends, love of community, love of work. Everything starts from Love of Self. Love attracts everything to itself. Love ensure you are pure of heart and pure of spirit in your actions and words. When you are rooted in love, you can act without fear.

Readings:

We need love's tender lessons taught
As only weakness can;
God hath His small interpreters;
The Child must teach the man. ~ Whittier

The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace. ~ Mahatma Gandhi

Lesson: The Five Chinese Brothers

Long ago in China lived a family with five brothers who resembled each other very closely. They each possessed a special talent. One can swallow the sea; one has an iron neck; one can stretch his legs; one can survive fire; and the last can hold his breath forever. When one of the brothers, a somehow very successful fisherman, agrees to let a young boy accompany him on his fishing trip, trouble results. This brother holds the entire sea in his mouth so that the boy can retrieve fish and treasures. When the man can no longer hold in the sea, he frantically signals to the boy, but the boy ignores him and drowns when the man releases the water.

The man is accused of murder and sentenced to death. However, one by one, his four brothers assume his place when subjected to execution, and each uses his own superhuman ability to survive (one cannot be beheaded, one cannot be drowned, one cannot be burned, and one cannot be smothered). At the end of the story, a judge decides that the brother accused of murder must have been innocent, since he could not be executed, and the five brothers return home.

Craft: Love Attracts

Material:

Paper clips (lots)
Strong magnet
Glass jar

Directions:

One thing Love does is to attract. Lets see what it means to attract. Put a paperclip inside a glass of water - close to the edge (depending on the strength of your magnet) Show how the attraction moves the paperclip toward the magnet.



Give each child several paperclips to make a string to take home.

Love is somewhat like the magnet, but not exactly. Can I hold love in my hand? (no) But I can hold love in my heart. And when I do hold love in my heart, that love attracts more love. This is law and we cannot change this law.

Advanced Material for 4th & 5th Grade

To love is to care. There are many, many ways we express our love. Let's see how many ways we can name right off without giving it much thought. (let the class members name all the kinds of love they can.) How can a child express love for a puppy? (hug it) How can a brother express love for his sister? (show her how to set the DVR) How can a father express love? (teach them how to be safe around fire)

There is another way to show love. If we are to learn, we must love to learn. And we do love to learn. We also use love to form habits. We love an idea when we think it worthwhile. For instance we say 'please' and 'thank you' to show our consideration for others. When 'please' and 'thank you' become a habit, it becomes known that we are for others. We consider others.

Remember: An idea planted in mind is brought forth into form through love.

Tween & Teen Additional Interactive Activity

Brene Brown teaches in *Rising Strong* that the bravest of us are not afraid to experience heartbreak. That the truth of being vulnerable is to lean into difficult emotional times. It is not ours to fix, avoid, ignore or justify another's pain. It is ours to sit in acceptance and love.

You already know that the exact same situation can happen to two people and the two people can create something completely different from the situation.

Roll-play Exercise: Have one teen take each side of the situation and 'justify' why they feel the way they do.

- Two girls are cut from the basketball team, one is angry and bitter and the other is grateful - why or why not?
- A boy drops his phone or tablet and shatters the screen. Why would he laugh? Why would he be glad?
- A girl is walking down the hall at school and another person runs by and knocks off her hat. What are different ways she could respond?

Jesus taught that God is Love and that we should love each other. Jesus taught, also, that we should change in mind. A word 'metanoia' (pronounced met a noy ya), in the New Testament, was wrongly translated from the Greek language. The true meaning of the word is 'to turn around in mind' instead of 'to repent', as it was wrongly translated. Jesus said we must be born again, and that in order to be born again we must 'turn in mind.' this has to do with thinking - with consciousness. So, to be born again, in consciousness, as Jesus meant, we must 'turn in mind,' think in a different direction.

Affirmation: God in me as me is Love - love of life, love of learning and love of self and love of others. Love within me helps me to grow.

Week #4: Giving

Main Message: Many times we do not know all the beautiful ways that we give. Our gift is ourselves and the greatest gifts we give are usually the ones that are easiest for us to give.

Readings:

"It's always seemed like a big mystery how nature, seemingly so effortlessly, manages to produce so much that seems to us so complex. — Stephen Wolfram

"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lesson: Cracked Vessels

By Chaya Sarah Silberberg

An old Chinese woman had two water cans which were attached to a yoke. Each day she put the yoke over her shoulders and went down to the river, filled the cans, and walked back to her modest hut. The water can on the right side of the yoke was fine and sturdy; when she arrived home it was always full. But the can on the left had a crack in it. By the time the woman arrived home, half the water was usually gone.

The water can always felt inferior to his partner. He was ashamed that he was cracked and wasn't pulling his weight. One day he turned to the woman and apologized for being defective. The woman smiled gently and said, "Did you think I didn't know that you had a crack, and water dripped from you? Look at the path from the river to my hut. Do you see all the beautiful flowers that are growing on the one side of the path? Those are the flowers that I planted there, that you watered every day as I walked home from the river."

Craft: Cracked Pot

Materials:

Clay

Directions:

Form into the shape of a pot.

Dry

Fill with marbles or beads or buttons



Advanced Material for 4th & 5th grade:

Vessels and pots are used often in ritual. They are a collection point to have our gifts merge together and be available for the greater good. We look at the story of the cracked pot from an older perspective. The title of the story 'for anyone who is not quite perfect' fits everyone. No one is everything to everybody and it is our unique differences which are the magic of our perfection.

THE CRACKED POT: A STORY FOR ANYONE WHO'S NOT QUITE PERFECT

A waterbearer in India had two large pots, one hung on each end of a pole, which she carried across her neck.

One of the pots had a crack in it. While the other pot was perfect, and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the mistress's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to her master's house.

The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream: "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your mistress's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in her compassion she said, "As we return to the mistress's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some.

But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side?"

"That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them.

"For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my mistress's table. Without you being just the way you are, she would not have this beauty to grace her house."

Moral: Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots.

But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. We've just got to take each person for what they are, and look for the good in them.

There's a lot of good out there.

Tween & Teen Activity

20 Ways to Give without Expectations

1. Give money you can spare to someone who needs it and then pretend you never had it.
2. Let someone tell a story without feeling the need to one-up them or tell your own.
3. Let someone vent, even if you can't offer a solution, just to be an ear—without considering how well they listened to you last week.
4. Help someone who is struggling with difficult feelings by admitting you've felt the same thing—without considering whether they'd be as open with you.
5. Ask, "What can I do to help you today?" Then let it go after following through.
6. Tell someone how you feel about them, even if it makes you feel vulnerable, just to let them know they're loved and not alone.
7. Apologize when you've acted selfishly, even if you don't like feeling wrong, because it will remind the other person they deserve to be treated with respect.
8. Let someone else educate you, even if you're tempted to stay closed minded, because you value their knowledge and appreciate their willingness to share it.
9. Forgive someone who wronged you because you have compassion for them, not because you know they'll owe you.
10. Hold someone's hand when they feel vulnerable to let them know you haven't judged them.
11. Give your full attention to the person in front of you when you're tempted to let your thoughts wander just to show them their words are valuable.

12. Assume the best when you're tempted to suspect someone for no valid reason—even if they haven't always given you the benefit of the doubt.
13. Accompany someone to an appointment or drive them to an interview when they need support just to help them feel strong.
14. Change your plans for someone you love if yours weren't too important without questioning whether they'd do the same for you.
15. Teach someone how to do something without taking a superior position because they've likely taught you many things, whether they were obvious or not.
16. Leave a thoughtful comment on someone's blog, not to build your readership but rather to show them how they affected you.
17. Tell someone you believe in their potential, even if they haven't always shown you the same support.
18. Say no when it would make you feel good to say yes, because sometimes being kind means pushing someone to step up and try harder.
19. Tell someone you know they meant well instead of using their mistake as an opportunity to manipulate their guilt.
20. I've left this one open for you to write. How do you give just to show you care?

Affirmation: I embrace the gift of giving unconditionally