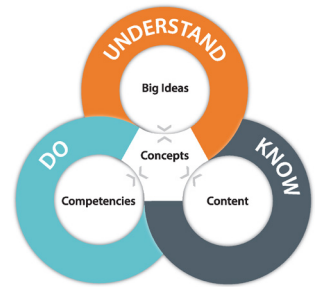


Wanting and Giving: Greed and The Giving Tree

This lesson uses Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* to expose students to important life concepts such as greed, wanting, and giving. *The Giving Tree* is a story about a lifelong relationship between a boy and a tree. Over the years the boy continues to take and take from the tree, and the tree, in an effort to make the boy happy, willingly gives and gives. This continues until the tree has nothing left and the boy is an old man.

In the lesson, students will have an opportunity to discuss underlying themes of the story while exploring their own thoughts and feelings about the topics with each other. Afterwards, they have a chance to further express themselves by creating group drama skits about the topics.



Instructional strategies

1. Read the story *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein to the class. (Or watch a YouTube clip at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFQZfeHq9wo>) Part way through the book (perhaps after the boy takes the tree's branches to build a house) ask the class a few questions.
 - a. How do you think the boy feels? Why?
 - b. How about the tree? Explain.
2. After you finish the book, engage the class in a discussion about wanting, giving, and greed.
 - a. How do you see the relationship between the boy and the tree from the beginning to the end (as a young boy, a young man, a young adult, and an older adult)? How did it change?
 - b. Toward the end of the story, after the boy had cut down the tree's trunk and all that was left was a stump, why do you think the tree "was happy, but not really"?
 - c. Can you think of a time when you wanted more and more? Or when someone wanted more and more from you? What happened? How did it feel?
 - d. Do you think 'having things' can make us happy? Why or why not?
 - e. Do you need a reason to be happy, or can you be happy for no reason at all?
 - f. At the beginning of the story, the boy tells the tree that he wants some money so that he can buy things. The tree cannot give him money, but gives him apples to sell instead. How important do you think money is? Do you think you can live without money? If yes, how? If no, why not, and how much money do you think you need to live?



- g. Have you heard of the word 'greed' or 'greedy' before? (Ask students for a definition or an example of greed. If students do not come up with anything, explain to them what it is.)
 - i. Do you think that the boy was greedy? Why or why not?
 - ii. Some people lose their way and get too caught up in always wanting and buying more and more. Why do you think this is?
- 3. Drama activity. Have students get into groups of three or four and create a skit about greed and what it feels like to take and take and always want more, or what it feels like when someone keeps taking from you. Suggest that they explore and show their thoughts on the relationship between greed/giving and happiness or a lack thereof in their skits.

Gambling literacy

Big ideas

- ✓ We can learn how to control gambling by examining the different ways people have thought about it, engaging in critical self-reflection and listening to each other

Competencies

- ✓ Explore and appreciate the diverse cognitive, social, emotional and physical factors that impact gambling behaviour
- ✓ Develop personal and social skills to reflect on and manage personal behaviour and choices related to gambling

For a complete look at the gambling literacy competencies, as defined by the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, see: <http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/assets/docs/iminds/hs-gambling-curriculum.pdf>

Links to curriculum

First Peoples' principles of learning

- ✓ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors
- ✓ Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- ✓ Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions
- ✓ Learning requires exploration of one's identity
- ✓ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story

English Language Arts K/1

Big ideas

- ✓ Stories and other texts help us learn about ourselves and our families
- ✓ Stories and other texts can be shared through pictures and words
- ✓ Through listening and speaking, we connect with others and share our world

Competencies

- ✓ Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to stories and other texts to make meaning
- ✓ Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers, as appropriate, to develop understanding of self, identity, and community
- ✓ Recognize the importance of story in personal, family, and community identity
- ✓ Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding



Art Education K/1/2/3

Big ideas

- ✓ People create art to express who they are as individuals and community
- ✓ Dance, drama, music, and visual arts express meaning in unique ways
- ✓ People connect to others and share ideas through the arts
- ✓ Engagement in the arts creates opportunities for inquiry through purposeful play

Competencies

- ✓ Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play
- ✓ Reflect on creative processes and make connections to other experiences
- ✓ Express feelings, ideas, stories, observations, and experiences through the arts
- ✓ Explore artistic expressions of themselves and community through creative processes

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