

OPTIMISM

Objective: *To understand that good results can arise out of a seemingly bad situation*

Key Words: *optimism, dexterity, enthusiasm, machete, specimen, dismount, experience, growth, puberty*

QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK

EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING



ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL *Shakespeare*

Brainstorm and discuss meanings of these quotations.

SILENT SITTING

Step 1 *(See page 40 of the introduction)*

Steps 2, 4 *(optional)*

Step 5: Think of a time when something unpleasant happened to you, but from it came good things later ...

Think of something good that you have that would not have happened if something bad had not happened first ...

Or someone you like very much that you would not have met if something bad had not happened first ...

Step 6.

STORY TELLING

THE KING AND THE MINISTER

by Carole Alderman (adapted from a traditional story)

Once there lived a king who had a wise minister who advised him about everything. The king was very pleased with him, except when the minister used to say, “Everything turns out for the best”, which the king didn’t think could really be true.

One day they were both out riding when they passed a farmer cutting sugar cane with such dexterity and enthusiasm that they stopped to watch him.

The king, who was feeling a little bored, thought it would be fun to try it himself and asked the farmer to give him the machete. The blade was very sharp and the farmer was loath to hand it over, but the king insisted. Neither would he listen to his minister’s pleadings.

Taking the machete, the king began to cut the sugar cane very carefully at first, but as he got into the swing of it, he glanced up at his minister.

“See. It’s not so difficult,” laughed the king. As his attention wavered, he accidentally cut off one of his fingers. “Aaaa...!” he cried out in pain.

The two servants who had accompanied them, ran to his aid. They bound up his hand, but the finger was lost.

“Why has this awful thing happened?” moaned the bewildered king.

“Your Highness, it will turn out for the best,” replied his minister.

The king, enraged by the pain of his hand, felt he could not put up with the minister any longer and ordered his servants to arrest him. He told them to take the minister and throw him down a nearby pit with nothing but bread and water to live on. The king would decide what to do with him in a couple of days when he was in less pain.

“That will teach him what is for the best and what isn’t,” thought the king as he rode off alone towards the palace.

The accident had delayed them and it was nearly nightfall. A minute later the king found himself set upon by some strangers who lived in the next kingdom. These people used their prisoners as slave labour, and this time they were looking for a perfect slave to be a gift for their queen’s birthday. The king looked a promising specimen, they thought.

The king was so afraid that he forgot the pain in his hand. He was made to dismount and was stripped of his fine clothes and carefully examined.

When it was seen that he had a finger missing, the strangers were disappointed. He would not be a perfect present for the queen's birthday, so they decided to leave him tied to a tree while they went off to find someone else.

Half-an-hour later the poor king was relieved to see his two servants riding along the track on their way back to the palace, having dealt with the minister. The servants quickly untied the king and gave him a cloak as he was shivering with cold, then they quickly made their way back to the palace.

The next day, the king feeling better after a night's sleep, was recalling his lucky escape of the day before and realised that by losing his finger, he had retained his freedom. How strange it was that things had turned out for the best in that way. He suddenly remembered his minister left in the pit and sent a servant to release him.

When the minister was brought back, the king told him his story and apologised to him for being so disbelieving. He asked the minister whether he had learnt anything from *his* experience in the pit.

"Your Highness," replied the minister. "By being thrown into the pit, I escaped capture by the strangers. Because of Your Highness's decision to arrest me, I am still alive and free."

"I am glad I have such a wise minister and friend," replied the king smiling.

QUESTIONS:

1. What name would you give this story?
2. What thoughts and feelings do you think the king had just before he cut himself on the machete?
3. Why did the king dismiss his friend, the minister?
4. Do you think the minister was right in saying that everything turns out for the best?
5. What did the king learn from his experience?
6. What did the minister learn from his experience?
7. Mention some human values the story contains.
8. What did you feel when you heard the story?
9. Does it remind you of anything in your own life?

GROUP SINGING

OPTIMISM

(music and lyrics by Sara John)

*Chorus: Optimism is a way of life
You'll give yourself
No trouble and strife
Look on the bright side
Stay on the right side
And don't get down in the dumps.*

Push out the bad thoughts that get in the way,
Giving us headaches, or a very rough day.
And bring in the good thoughts, breezy and bright.
There's fun around the corner, so hold on tight.

Chorus: Optimism is a way of life

See how the world works positively,
If you don't look at your life miserably.
It really works if you're in a mess,
Everything turns out for the best

Chorus: Optimism is a way of life

*(Repeat chorus)
Look on the bright side
Stay on the right side
And don't get down
in the dumps.*

GROUP ACTIVITY

1. Did something unpleasant ever happen to you, and then you later found you had learnt a valuable lesson from it?

*Sally believes that nothing in life happens without a reason.
Sandy believes that nothing in life happens with a reason.*

Discuss how these beliefs might affect their lives.
Which belief makes the most sense to you as a guide for your own life?

2. Discuss with the children the values related to truth
(see the picture on page 19 and the list on page 28 of the introduction)

Ask the children to imagine what values we need to practise to spread truth throughout the world.

Give each child a copy of the Mountain picture on the next page.

Ask them to write values related to truth on the milestones.

Then colour the picture.

Extension exercise/Links to Other Subjects:

Science link: Growing up and adapting to change can be difficult. The class is invited to compare the ups and downs of growing up and physical change (especially at puberty). The teacher leads the discussion to a conclusion where the children can observe the process as a beneficial and necessary one.

The children can then look into the biological changes they undergo. This can be visually represented by a picture time-line. The children bring in photos of themselves at different stages of life, from being born to the present day. They draw pictures of how they think they will be in five, ten and fifteen years' time.