

APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

Objective: *To realise happiness comes from within us, not from external things, and it is not dependent on acquiring possessions, but rather on enjoying what we have*

Key Words: *appreciation, gratitude, harbour, picturesque, moored, quay, gangplank, crew, ashore, watchman, fascinated, fragrance, pine, tranquillity, hospitality, accustomed, luxury, disappear, drabber, deceive, shabby*

QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK

THE GRASS OFTEN SEEMS GREENER ...



... ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE

Brainstorm and discuss what this means and give real life examples.

SILENT SITTING

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

Steps 2, 4 (*optional*)

Step 5: As you listen to the music imagine you are strolling on the seashore ...

It is very beautiful and you feel happy and contented ...

Look at the waves as they gently lap against the beach ...

A cloud drifts across the blue sky ...

Slowly the sky darkens. It begins to rain,
but you don't mind ...

You put up your umbrella. Listen to the drops of rain
falling on it ...

Everything around you is beautiful ...

Think of all the things you have that make you happy ...

Think of all the things that make you happy that don't cost money, or use up the
world's resources.

Think of something that does cost money that you could do without.

Imagine yourself using less of it, yet still having all you need (though not necessarily
all you want!)

Step 6.

STORY TELLING

AMY

by Winifred Matthews

Once upon a time a man and his wife were strolling by a harbour when they noticed a very picturesque little ship moored at the end of the quay. A notice above the gangway invitingly said, "Welcome aboard". Eager to explore the charming little vessel, they crossed the gangplank.

"I wonder where everyone is? Perhaps the crew have gone ashore," said the man. "But let's look round anyway. It does seem a bit odd that they haven't left a watchman in charge."

They went below to look around. It was a strange old boat and they were so fascinated examining everything that they did not notice that the boat had gently started to move until they returned again to the deck.

"Oh dear! What have we done? Where can we be going?" wailed the woman.

"As soon as she docks, we'll get off. Don't worry," replied her husband reassuringly, trying not to sound worried himself.

Within a couple of hours, seagulls began circling the boat and, yes, there was land ahead. They felt relieved as the little boat sailed into a small harbour and obligingly stopped gently next to some stone steps on the quay.

The couple quickly climbed ashore. The day was still sunny, and the fragrance of pine leaves and scented flowers wafted down to them. There was an atmosphere of tranquillity about the place so they didn't feel at all afraid. They hurried up the steps and along the stone pier. There didn't seem to be anyone about as they made their way down a pretty lane shaded by blossom laden trees. Everywhere was humming with the sound of bees and various insects.

Then they saw a little girl coming towards them, holding some flowers. She came over to them smiling.

"I'm glad you've come," she said. "My name's Amy. I live over there," she pointed to a big stone house. "Would you like some refreshments?"

The surprised couple, reassured by her calm, gentle manners, thankfully agreed to the welcome hospitality. The house was comfortable with soft carpets and bright furniture and the garden was filled with flowers and there were a lot of pets running about playing together.

"You can stay here as long as you wish," said the little girl. "We are all friends here. We share whatever we have. There is a boat along every few days which will take you home whenever you want to go back."

The couple stayed for a while and at first were happy. Amy was generous and always seemed to have just what they wanted. They were given a room which was exactly how they would have wished it to be.

At first they were delighted, but as time went on they grew accustomed to the luxury. Then they noticed something strange! The more they took things for granted, the more things that they had been given seemed to disappear; and the more they became discontented, the more drab the paint work and furniture appeared to become.

“There is something very funny here,” said the wife to her husband one morning. “Last night I was looking at the silver hairbrush that Amy gave me. I really liked it when we first came, but I was thinking that there was nothing special about it really. And this morning, I can’t find it at all. And it’s not the first time this sort of thing has happened since we’ve been here.”

“Yes. It’s odd. I’ve noticed the same thing,” agreed her husband. “A hole has appeared in the new jacket Amy gave me. I was so pleased with it when I first got it, but I was wondering whether it was really the colour that I wanted and whether I ought to change it, when I saw it had a hole in the sleeve. I know it wasn’t there when I wore it.”

“It seems as if when we get tired of things, they wear out or disappear,” said the wife thoughtfully. “The other day I remembered I had not seen the cassette player that we’d had such fun with when Amy gave it to us the day after we arrived. I asked her if she had seen it and she just laughed and said she was sorry I no longer liked it. I hadn’t told her that. Although, I suppose it was true because, a few days earlier, I had been thinking I would like a better one.”

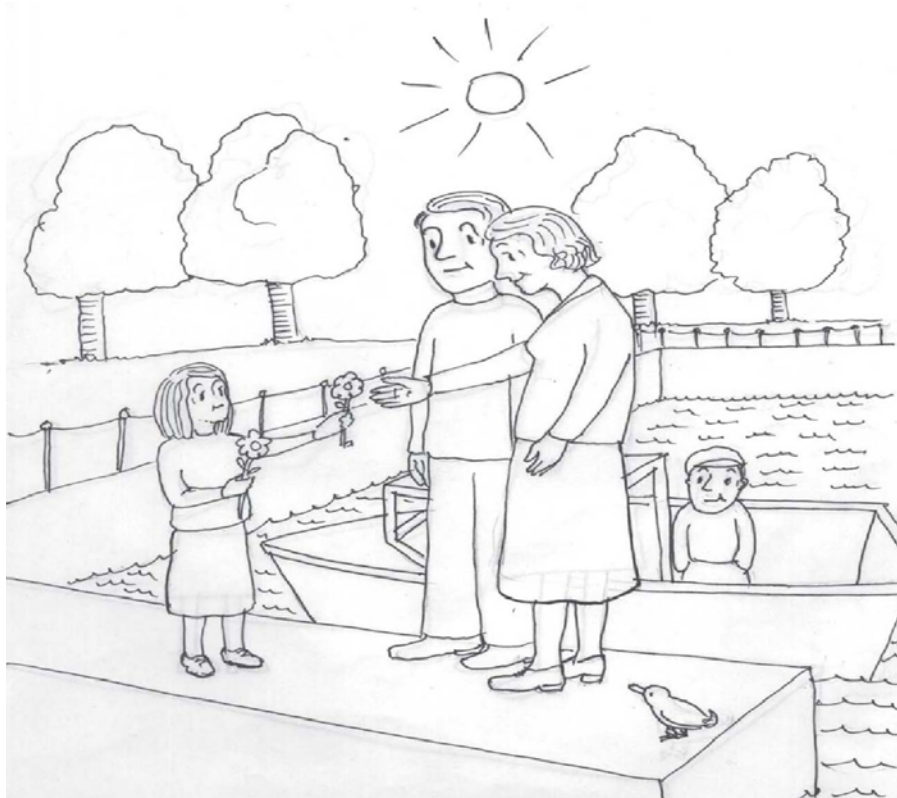
“Amy told me this morning that there would be a boat by here tomorrow that could drop us back if we were ready to go. I said we ought to go,” replied her husband, a touch of sorrow in his voice.

The next day the couple said goodbye to Amy and boarded the boat home. The friendly captain who knew Amy well, had agreed to drop them off. They felt quite sorry saying goodbye as Amy handed them each a flower.

“Amy, what happened to the things you gave us. We seemed to lose them? Did you take them back and deceive us?” asked the puzzled wife as she leaned over the boat’s rail.

“No, I gave you everything with love. It was your outlook that deceived you. Look within and you will find love. Be contented with what you have and you will find peace and happiness. Always looking for something better makes what you have, appear shabby and worn out. Here things disappear if you don’t appreciate them anymore. That’s how you were deceived. I love you both. You are my friends. Come back and stay whenever you want to,” replied Amy, smiling brightly and waving to them.

“We will,” they replied, smiling as they waved back at her.



QUESTIONS:

- 1 What name shall we give this story?
- 2 What happened to the man and woman when they were exploring the empty boat?
- 3 What was Amy like?
- 4 Which things disappeared in the story?
- 5 Why did things disappear?
- 6 What did you feel when you heard this story?
- 7 Can you give an example of when you had something you really loved and later you became bored with it, or wanted a more fashionable or expensive one?
- 8 What does this story mean to you?

GROUP ACTIVITY

- A. Make or draw an umbrella.
List on a piece of paper the things you need to have a satisfying life.
Divide the list into two - those that cost money and those that are free.
Write the things which cost money on the flaps of one side of the umbrella, and the things which are free on the other side.
Or alternate them on the different sections of the umbrella.
Colour in the umbrella, making the free things one colour and the things you must pay for, another colour.
- B. Get into groups of three or four and discuss your choices.

C. Individually reflect on the things you have that do **not** cost money:

I am grateful for ...

because ...

Extension exercise/Links to Other Subjects:

Appreciation Tree

Ask the children as a class to design an Appreciation Tree, using leaf-shaped paper.

The children can then write on the leaves various things that they appreciate in their lives. The leaves are stuck on to the tree. The more leaves they have, the healthier the tree will look.

For things which are particularly special to them, the children may choose to stick Appreciation Flowers on the tree.

The Appreciation Tree can be kept on display, near a pile of leaves / trees, and children are invited to add to it as and when they feel necessary.