

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Objective: To stimulate an understanding about the importance of developing inner peace as a basis for personal problem solving and as a basis for understanding and acceptance of differences in people

Key Words: positive attitude, Maori, India, temple, scribe, insolent, solution, problem, imprint, proud, recognition, encourage

QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK

TURN YOUR FACE TO THE SUN ...



... AND THE SHADOWS FALL BEHIND YOU
Maori Proverb

Brainstorm and discuss how this saying can make life better.

SILENT SITTING

Step 1 (See page 40 of the introduction)

Steps 2, 3 (optional)

Step 5: Imagine a large cinema screen in front of you.

See a picture of yourself on it, walking in the countryside.

The sun is shining and everything is quiet and peaceful ...

You feel at one with yourself and nature around you ...

You notice that you are walking along a path ...

This path leads to a walled garden, entered by a door, at the top of a stone stairway.

As you silently climb up the steps you feel a sense of heightened emotions and expectancy ... Effortlessly open the door and go into a beautiful garden ...

See the many bright colours and smell the beautiful flowers ...

A paved path leads to a stone fountain with a bench around it.

Hear the splashing of the water. Feel how refreshing it is.

Go and sit there if you wish ... Now think of something about yourself which you would like to change for the better ...

Imagine yourself carrying out this change. How strong and happy you feel ...

Quietly leave the garden, giving thanks for its peace and beauty ...

Walk back down the steps into the countryside ...

Return to your seat feeling wide awake and better than ever before.

Step 6.

STORY TELLING

FATHER THINKS IT THROUGH

by Tessa Hillman

One day, when I was a child in India, my father who used to work in the temple came rushing home. Normally he was a very placid man, very calm and controlled. It was a great surprise to us to see him in such a state. I saw my mother go pale and clutch at her apron. My sister was so frightened she burst into tears!

“Whatever is the matter, my dear?” asked mother, anxiously taking his bag and his books from him.

“Oh dear! Oh dear!” said my father, unable to speak properly for lack of breath.

“Just sit down, my dear, and get your breath back,” said mother patting his shoulder to calm him down a little.

Father sat down and looked round at all of us. “I don’t think I can work in the temple any longer,” he exclaimed. “I am having a terrible time with that new scribe. He just will not do what I ask him. His work is a mess and he is insolent. He is not the sort of person to be working in a holy place. I think I shall have to leave.”

“But, my dear, surely it is he that should leave, and not you. He is only a young man and you are now a senior scribe. The others work under you, don’t they?”

“Indeed they do, but this young man has a father in a very important position in the town and he thinks he can do anything he wants,” father replied

“But you can’t leave your job just like that. We need the money. What else could you do? Surely there must be another solution to this problem,” said mother, a tinge of worry creeping into her voice.

“Well, if there is, I can’t think of it!” said father emphatically.

“I think you need to have your meal and reflect quietly on the subject, then sleep on it. If there is another solution then surely the Lord will provide it,” mother replied gently.

“You are right. I must calm down and think quietly,” said father, feeling slightly better already.

The subject was dropped while we all had dinner together. After the meal father went off to his study and I went to bed.

The next day at breakfast I tiptoed downstairs wondering whether father

would still be feeling upset and not wanting to disturb him. I wanted to know what had been the outcome of his prayers for help.

He beamed round at us from the breakfast table and suddenly we all felt better. "I've been thinking," said he. "That young scribe, What's-his-name? I've been letting him get under my skin! There really is no need to do that," he continued, a gentle smile shining in his eyes. "I've decided to give him a special task and let him put his own imprint on the work at the end. Usually we don't make our marks on our work, but when there is good reason we can. I think he needs to feel proud of what he has done and wants recognition for it. Well, many of us consider that a weakness, but a young man such as he, needs praise to encourage him on to better things. He surely will make more effort if he signs his work and if it is posted in the entrance to the temple for all the world to see. Yes. Ummm... Good! I can continue to work there after all. I'm glad. I really do enjoy it most of the time." So saying, he wiped the crumbs off his chin, got up and patted us all on the head before he went off to work.

"Your father is very good at solving problems when he is positive," said mother, smiling. "See how happy he is now."

QUESTIONS:

- 1 What name shall we give this story?
- 2 How did you feel when you heard this story?
- 3 Why was father upset?
- 4 Did mother have a positive attitude towards the problem? How do you know that?
- 5 Why did father decide to meditate on the subject and sleep on it?
- 6 How did father feel in the morning?
- 7 Describe father's positive attitude towards the young scribe.
- 8 Do you remember a time when you chose to be positive in a situation, instead of being negative?

GROUP SINGING

PEACE IS FLOWING LIKE A RIVER

Peace is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me,
Spreading out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

*Chorus: Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,
Let the mighty love of God flow out through me.
Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,
Let the mighty love of God flow out through me.*

Love is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me,
Spreading out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

*Chorus: Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,
Let the mighty love of God flow out through me.
Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,
Let the mighty love of God flow out through me.*

Joy is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me,
Spreading out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

*Chorus: Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,
Let the mighty love of God flow out through me.
Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,
Let the mighty love of God flow out through me.*

Hope is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me,
Spreading out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

*Chorus: Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,
Let the mighty love of God flow out through me.
Let it flow through me, let it flow through me,
Let the mighty love of God
flow out through me.*

GROUP ACTIVITY

1. GAME: FEELINGS MACHINES

Children get into groups of 5 or 6.

Each group then chooses among themselves an emotion to mime.

Using imagination they then create and mime a moving machine which symbolises or represents that emotion.

Suggest that the children use contrasting movements in their machines to portray a range of contrasting feelings.

When the machine is working, the children each then add sound effects.

Ask each group to create a 'super feelings machine', using a sequence of harmonious movements to portray several emotions.

Again sound effects can be added to enhance the feelings suggested.

Encourage them to refine and rehearse.

Each group then performs to the rest of the class.

2. Give the children a copy of the picture on the next page of the Peace Tree.

Discuss with the children the values related to peace

(see the picture on page 23 and the list on page 28 of the introduction)

Ask the children to imagine that this is their own Peace Tree.

Say how the peace in the heart of the tree can be spread throughout the world if we practise certain ways of behaving. Consider:

What values do we need for there to be peace in ourselves and in the world?

What might make it difficult to practise these values?

What would make it possible to practise these values?

Ask them to write on the leaves of the tree, or around the edge of the tree some of the values related to peace.

Extension exercise/Links to Other Subjects: From the story the children are invited to list the differences and similarities between father and the young scribe.

This exercise is extended to the classroom. A child chooses five members of the class and makes a note of what things they all have in common, and what things they have which are special or different.

Note: the teacher needs to steer the discussion and exercise so that, despite diversity, the children can observe an underlying unity.

THE PEACE TREE

