

SEL Book Bag: Friendship Pots

Title: The Empty Pot

Author: Demi

Grade Levels: 2nd Grade

SEL Competency: Responsible Decision-Making

SEL Student SWBAT: Identify and recognize ways in their life where they can practice patience, responsibility, and honesty.

Summary: Ping is a Chinese boy with an emerald green thumb; he can make anything grow “as if by magic.” One day the Emperor announces that he needs a successor, someone who can carry on after he is gone with the ruling of the kingdom and the growing of the flowers. He gives each child one seed, and the one who grows the best flower will take over after him. Competition is fierce, and Ping is heartbroken that nothing comes up, despite his careful tending. On the day of the competition, he is the only child with an empty pot; all the others bring lush plants. But the Emperor has tricked everyone by distributing cooked seeds, unable to grow; and Ping, with his empty pot, is the only honest gardener--and the winner.

Activity Materials:

- 1 3” small terracotta pot for each group
- 1 can of spray gloss finish
- Gardening soil
- 1 seed per pot: I choose the friendship plant for its symbolism
- Watering cans
- Plant fertilizer (only to be done 3-4 weeks in by the teacher)

Directions:

1. Bring students to your designated reading area, and have them hypothesize what the story will be about based solely on the front cover.
2. The teacher will jot down several ideas on the whiteboard/anchor chart to review following the story.
3. Read “The Empty Pot” by Demi as a whole group, or listen to the story via an audiobook.
4. Once the story is over, revisit the initial ideas to see if they aligned with their predictions.
5. Have students identify any problems that arose in the story, and share them with a partner sitting next to them.
6. As a whole class have them analyze the problems, and identify how the characters solved them.

****Once you feel the students have a good understanding of the story you can move onto step #7, or you may continue to dive deeper into the story. Depending on how the conversation is going.**

7. Break students into groups of 2-3 depending on how large the class is, and give them each a pot.
8. The students will have 30 minutes to collectively paint their pot any design they feel fit.
9. The teacher will spray a gloss finish when the paint is dry to lock in the design.
10. The students will now begin planting their plants.
 - a. Put soil in the pot; about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up.
 - b. Dig a small hole in the soil and drop the seed in.
 - c. Cover the seed with soil that was pushed to the side.
 - d. Water your plant.
 - e. Place the plants in an area that receives low to medium sunlight.
11. Students will now water their plants each day during a designated time BUT the teacher will not remind them after the first week of planting.
 - a. This will teach the students responsibility as they will need to communicate within their group to make sure that the plant is watered daily.