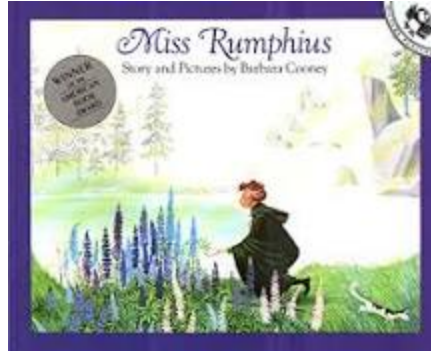


Miss Rumphius

By: Barbara Cooney



Essential Questions for Consideration:

- *What is beauty?*
- *What can an individual do to make the world more beautiful?*

Overview:

In this lesson, participants will read summaries on the views of beauty from six different cultures. Using what they have learned from these readings, participants will then reflect on how their definition of beauty may have changed and how they can then apply this definition to an action plan to make the world more beautiful.

Materials:

- Paper
- Pen or pencil
- “**Six Names of Beauty**” summary reading. Based on the book *Six Names of Beauty* by Crispin Sartwell (See below)

Activity:

1. Begin the lesson by asking participants to take a few minutes to reflect in their journals on the following prompt:

What is beauty? How would you define beauty? What makes you say something is beautiful?

Are there certain characteristics that make something beautiful?

2. Ask volunteers to explain their thinking. Tell participants that they will be returning to this question at the end of the lesson.

Reading: Six Names of Beauty

- 1.) Give the participant(s) a copy of the summary reading ***Six Names of Beauty***.
- 2.) Have each group or individual focus on a different culture's definition and views on beauty.

Answer the following questions below.

i.) *What language/culture are you reading about? What is their word for beauty?*

ii.) *In your own words, how does this culture describe beauty?*

iii.) *How is that similar and different from how you define beauty?*

iv.) *How is it similar or different from how other cultures define beauty?*

- 3.) Individuals or groups should report out on their answers to questions.
- 4.) After discussing different views of beauty, ask participants to reflect on the question below.

How has your view of beauty changed since reading how other cultures view beauty?

- 5.) Have participants share out responses and reflections.

- 6.) In their journals, have students answer the following question.

What can I do to make the world a more beautiful place?

While answering this question, students should cite specific evidence from their ***Six Names of Beauty*** worksheet, journal entry, or discussion, to justify why this activity is considered beautiful.

- 7.) After students share their responses, challenge students to complete this act of beauty.

Six Names of Beauty- Summary Reading

Summarized from the book *Six Names of Beauty* by Crispin Sartwell

Language/Culture	Word for Beauty	Simplified Explanation
English	<i>beauty</i>	“The object on longing” “The experience of beauty is always a wanting. Since we all long,[...], beauty is a universal object of human experience. But to the extent that different cultures, groups, or individuals have different longings, their experiences of beauty will have different objects.” (Sartwell, 3-4)
Hebrew	<i>yapha</i>	“Glow, bloom” “The original meaning of “yapha” is to be bright, to glow. So first of all, we might notice that the term indicates a quality of the beautiful thing or person rather than of the perceiver: a thing, as it were, sheds or exudes its beauty. Beauty is something the beautiful object emits, like a light: a thing is beautiful in virtue of what it gives. A possibly related Aramaic term means to burst forth or to bloom, which is in turn related to the Arabic “wadu’a,” to become beautiful, as well as “ward-un” (rose or blossom), and “warada” (blossoming tree).” (Sartwell, 28)
Sanskrit	<i>sundara</i>	“Whole, holiness” “The connection of beauty and spirit” (Sartwell, 76) “The idea that the worship of God and the experience of earthly beauty could be actually the same thing is indeed profound. It coaxes us from our senses and their world toward the mystery that cannot be sensed. It affirms the world as spiritual and the spirit as worldly.”(Sartwell, 77)
Ancient Greek	<i>To kalon</i>	“Idea, ideal” The Greek words for beautiful (kalos) and beauty (to kalon) have moral as well as aesthetic force. They refer to “nobility” as well as what we would think of as direct visual beauty. But these terms also have an epistemic dimension; they are connected to the idea of knowledge. All of these meanings might be brought together in a notion of “illumination”: the kalos is above all, we might say, what is drenched in light. The noble soul is the clearly illuminated soul, and such a soul will be beautiful. (Sartwell, 88)

Advanced Activity

Japanese	<i>Wabi sabi</i>	“Humility, imperfection” “Wabi is most directly translated as “poverty,” and initially in its history had all the negative connotations of that state. The life of the peasant-hard, humble, and bare- is wabi” (Sartwell, 113) Sabi means “loneliness,” again originating in a word that is largely negative.[...]Sabi is a quality of stillness and solitude, a melancholy that is one of the basic human responses to and sources of beauty. [...] Thus, wabi-sabi is an aesthetic of poverty and loneliness, imperfection and austerity, affirmation and melancholy. Wabi-sabi is the beauty of the withered, weathered, tarnished, scarred, intimate, coarse, earthly, evanescent, tentative, ephemeral. (Sartwell, 114)
Navajo	<i>Hozho</i>	“Health and harmony” “[...] it’s not primarily about the way things appear-though it includes appearance as an aspect of what things are. It refers equally to a state of human beings, a state of the objects around them, and a state of the universe as a whole. It is usually translated into English as “beauty,” though also as “health” or “balance,” “harmony,” “goodness.” It means all these things and more. It refers above all to the world when it is flourishing; it refers to the community, flourishing in the world; it refers to things we make, which flourish and play a role in the flourishing of other things; and it refers to ourselves, flourishing as makers, as people inhabiting a community that inhabits a world. It is a word for the oneness of all things when they are joined together in a wholesome state.” (Sartwell, 150)