



“Know Yourself: A Tale from the Middle East”
An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks



Unit/Theme: self-awareness

Proficiency Level: D.R.A. 34-38; for students at a more remedial level teacher reads aloud

Timing: two to three hours with writing assignment (two- to three-day unit of study)

Content Objectives

For students to:

- be able to retell the story in proper sequence
- be able to derive the theme or “Big Message” in the story
- understand the characters and perhaps be able to make a connection using schema to a character from another story or even real life

Language Objectives

For students to:

- understand and use new vocabulary
- determine the meaning of new words by using inference or context clues
- retell the story, first orally with a partner, then in writing
- develop the theme and be able to write down the “Big Message” (Extension: relate the story to a personal experience or prior story/read aloud)

Learning Strategies

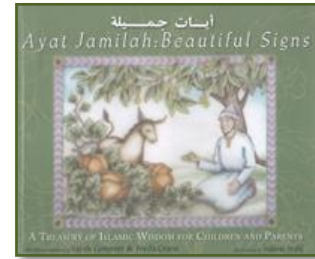
For students to:

- understand the story sequence by building a context
- use discussion to brainstorm about the lesson of the story as a pre-writing strategy

Key Vocabulary: generosity, approached, small request, without hesitation, plucked coin after coin, overwhelmed, gratitude, glancing, frail half-smile, earshot, zakaat, obliged, indignation, ran its course, contrite

Materials

- *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*, collected and adapted by Sarah Conover and Freda Crane. Boston: Skinner House (2010). Available at www.uuabookstore.org or 800-215-9076 and wherever books are sold.
- recorder or iPhone, student writing notebooks



Context Building

Ask the students:

- How do we learn to know ourselves? Do we learn by self-reflection, by asking others, or through our relationships?

Presentation (Teachers)

1. Now that the students have some background, read the entire story out loud without stopping.
2. Read the story again. Ask the students to listen carefully for:
 - what the poor woman asked the generous man
 - how she responded
 - how the friends responded
 - how the generous man replied
 - what the friends did in the end
3. Ask the students:
 - What do you think the moral of the story is? What is the “Big Message”? Turn and tell an elbow partner.

Part Two of Presentation (depending on the stamina of your students)

Conduct a group discussion about the meaning of the word “generosity.”

- Pose the question, “Who do you think you operate more like, the generous man or his friends?”
- Discuss what the man meant when he said, “Unless I give her what I am able to, *I* won’t be happy. She may not know me, but I know myself.”

Practice/Application

Retell the story with the students using important details. Start a story chain. Use the new vocabulary in the retelling. Use sequence markers, for example:

in the beginning, then, next, after that, in the end, finally

Assessment

Ask the students to retell the story using important details. Explain that they need to include the moral of the story in their own words. Encourage them to use descriptive adjectives and interesting verbs. Post some questions for them to ponder and write about:

1. Describe the generous man.
2. Describe his friends.
3. Why did the friends say that he was foolish?
4. Why were they so indignant?
5. Why did the generous man give the woman so much money?
6. Why were his friends contrite at the end of the story?
7. Explain the man’s self-reflection.

Extension

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:
 - Have you ever been treated generously? What was your response?
 - Have you ever given to or shared generously with someone else? What was the other person’s response? How did you see yourself?
2. Ask the students to describe their answers to their partners and record them.