The Carrot Seed – Ruth Krauss

**Character Traits and Themes**

Primary Character Trait:
- **Optimism** - Expecting good things today and in the future

**Objectives**

The learner will:
- Develop a further understanding of the Character Trait: Optimism
- Begin to develop an understanding of the 5 Basic Needs: specifically, Survival
- Begin to understand the difference between the beginning, middle and end of a story
- Develop an understanding of how a seed grows
- Understand what it means to summarize a story

**Grade Level Content Expectations**

**Kindergarten**

**R.NT.00.03** Discuss setting, characters, and events in narrative text.

**R.CM.00.01** Begin to make text-to-self and text-to-text connections and comparisons by activating prior knowledge and connecting personal knowledge and experience to ideas in text through oral and written responses.

**R.CM.00.02** Retell up to three events from familiar text using their own words or phrasing.

**R.CM.00.04** Apply significant knowledge from grade-level science, social studies, and mathematics texts.

**Resources**

**Trade Book:** *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss

**Other Trade Books:**

**Estimated Time Parameters**

- [x] One day
- [ ] More than one day
- [ ] Mini-unit

**Introduction**

Advanced Preparation: You will need a carrot and a carrot seed for this introduction.

As a whole group, show the students the carrot that you brought in. Ask the students the following questions: *Has this carrot always looked like this? How do you think we get carrots?* After you have
a short discussion about how the students think we get carrots, show them the carrot seed. Tell the students that the carrot you have been showing them came from a seed just like the one you are holding. Discuss with the students how they think the carrot grows from a seed to a carrot. Ask them what they think the seed needs to grow. When finished, tell the students that they are about to hear a book about a boy who grows a carrot.

Questions to facilitate discussion:

1. Ask students if they knew that you have to use seeds to plant some fruits and vegetables.
2. Do you have a favorite flower, fruit, or vegetable that you would like to plant?

**INSTRUCTION**

Read aloud the book, *The Carrot Seed*. Tell the students that this book is about a little boy who plants a seed and watches it grow, even though his family doesn’t think it will. As you read, ask students to begin summarizing what happens in the story in their minds. Explain that summarizing is something that good readers know how to do. Also, point out these story elements: First, a story has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning tells us about the characters and the setting. The middle tells us the problem, and the end shows us the solution to the problem.

**ACTIVITY IDEAS**

**Activity 1 - Culminating Activity**

After reading, ask the students the following questions about the story.

**Beginning**

Who is the first character in the story? What is the setting? Who can tell me something about the character?

**Middle**

What is the problem? Who are the other characters that we met? What does the little boy do every day to help the seed grow?

**End**

How did the story end? Did the boy keep trying to take care of his seed or did he give up? How would you feel if someone kept telling you couldn’t do something? Would you give up?

**Summarize**

Who can summarize? Remember to tell about the beginning, middle and end of the story. As students summarize, make sure they are adding the important story elements for each part.

**Extend**

Is there another story we have read similar to this story that talks about not giving up? (Answers may include *The Little Engine that Could*). Discuss that another phrase for ‘not giving up’ is ‘being optimistic.’

**Personalize it**

Tell about a time when you were optimistic about something.
Activity 2 - Questions to Discuss or Write a Written Response

- Why do you think everyone tells him the seed won't grow?
- Does he believe them? How do you know?
- How does the boy take care of the seed?
- What do you think the boy and his family learned when the seed finally grew?

Activity 3 - How does a seed grow?

At this age, many students have not had the opportunity to see how a seed actually grows. This activity will allow students to see a seed growing in all of the different stages.

Advanced Preparation: You will need enough plastic bags, paper cups, seeds, soil, and paper cups for the whole class. You will also need to have some type of picture journal that the students can draw in as the seeds sprout and grow. Choose a seed that will sprout and grow within a few weeks; bean seeds work very well for this.

- Pass out a seed, wet paper towel, and plastic bag to each student.
- Direct the students to place the wet paper towel behind the seed, and then place both items in the plastic bag.
- Label the bags with the students’ names, and then tape them in a window of the classroom.
- Pass out the seed journals you premade for the students. Have students draw what their seeds look like at this point.
- Set an observation schedule for the following two weeks. During this time, have students draw pictures of their seeds. The booklets will need to be collected and passed out each time.
- After the seeds have sprouted, have students plant their seeds in paper cups with soil. At this time, you may choose to let the seeds continue to grow in the room or send them home with the students.
- As a whole class, discuss how the students felt throughout the process. Ask the following questions: Did you think your seed was ever going to grow at the beginning? Did it need soil to sprout? How did you feel once the seed started growing? What will your plant need to survive now?

Activity 4 - Pessimistic or Optimistic Activity

Read the following statements to the class:

- "Everybody hates me."
- "I got a bad grade on my math test. Next time I take a test, I will ask for help."
- "My friends are mad at me right now."
- "Even though I have had a hard time with math in the past, this time my studying really paid off; I did well on my test."

Decide as a group whether the statements are pessimistic or optimistic.

Next, ask the students to take the pessimistic statements and change them into optimistic statements.
"Everybody hates me" can be turned into, "some people are upset with me right now, but if I talk with them about it and work on my behavior, we can resolve the conflict".

This new statement indicates that when people get angry, it is only temporary, isolated (everyone isn't angry at the student; only some people are upset) and changeable (the student can manage the conflict and his or her behavior).

Ask students if they can do one on their own.

Activity 5 - Vegetable/fruit Art

Advanced Preparation: You will need to have large pieces of paper for each student, paint, and a variety of vegetables and fruits available for this activity.

This activity is a fun way for students to be creative with different types of vegetables and fruits. I suggest making this a center activity for kindergarteners. It will be messy, and you will want someone helping the students.

On a table, have a large variety of fruits and vegetables cut in half. Also, have a variety of paint colors for the students to choose from. Have students dip the vegetables in the paint and stamp them on their papers. When finished, let the paint dry, and then display the art somewhere in the room.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

1. Checking students’ oral and written responses can serve as an understanding of summarizing.
2. Students’ journals can serve as an assessment for observing the seeds.
3. Students’ oral responses can serve as an understanding of the differences between the beginning, middle, and end of a story.