

The Two Goats (*An Aesop Fable*)

Two goats, frisking gaily on the rocky steeps of Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, enjoyed climbing the mountains. They chanced to meet, one on each side of a narrow pathway. They were going in opposite directions and beneath them was a deep river. The trunk of a fallen tree was the only means to cross, but on this even two squirrels could not pass each other in safety. The narrow path would have made the bravest tremble. Not so for the two goats. They were too proud to stand aside for each other to cross.

One set his foot on the log. The other did the same. In the middle they met horn to horn. Neither would give way, and so they both fell. The stubborn goats were swept away in the deep river.

Source of story: The Aesop for Children – Library of Congress Aesop Fables
<http://read.gov/aesop/001.html>

Sub-value: Patience

Age group: 5 - 7 years



Greedy Anansi

This is a story about a spider boy. His name was Anansi.

There was a great famine in Africa where Anansi lived. There was no food for anyone.

Anansi and his little brothers and sisters were very hungry. The spider boy could not think of anything but food. "This hunger will kill me!" he often said.

One day he went out of the house and walked to the seashore. "I shall try to catch a little fish," he thought. He sat on the seashore watching, watching, watching – but nothing came. Then suddenly he saw a green island in the sea.

Anansi climbed into a little blue boat. And soon he came to the green island. He got out of the boat, stood under a coconut tree and looked up at the big coconuts high above him. He tried to climb up the tree and get the coconuts, but that was not easy. He tried again and again, but he could not get the coconuts. The spider boy cried and cried.

Then Anansi went into the forest. He saw a little house there. An old man came out of the house. "What do you want here, my spider boy?" asked the old man. "Do not be afraid. Tell me everything."

So Anansi told him about the famine and about his hungry people. Then he told the old man about the coconuts and cried again.

The old man took Anansi's hand and said, "Don't cry my spider boy! I have something for you. It is better than coconuts." He went into his house and brought a little pot. "Take it home and give it to your mother. Now you and your people will never be hungry. When your mother wants to make dinner for her family, she must only say: "Pot, pot, what you did for the old man, please do for me!"

Anansi thanked him and went quickly away. He came to the little boat, got in, and said at once, "Pot, pot, what you did for the old man, please do for me!" And the pot gave him a good dinner. Anansi ate it all and was strong again.

He soon came home. But he did not want to give the pot to his mother. "It is my pot. I shall have it and eat when I want to." So Anansi put the pot in some dark place of the house and spoke to it when nobody was at home. Every day his mother and brothers and sisters went out to look for food. Anansi did not go with them. He said, "Oh, I am ill. I cannot go." When he was at home alone, he ran to his pot and the pot gave him a good dinner.

Anansi's brothers and sisters grew thinner and thinner every day. But Anansi grew fatter and fatter. "Why is he so fat?" one of his brothers asked one day. "I think he has a secret. I shall find it out." And the next day he did not go out to look for food with his mother. He stayed at home. Anansi thought that nobody was at home, took his pot and said, "Pot, pot, what you did for the old man, please do for me!" And the pot gave him a good dinner.

His brother listened to the words. Now he knew about the pot and he told his mother about it.

The poor woman began to cry. "I have a bad son!" she cried. That day she told Anansi to go out of the house together with the other children. She stayed at home and asked the pot to give her dinner. "How happy my children will be when they come home!" she thought.

Anansi came home with the other children. Their mother gave them dinner. Anansi said, "I am very ill. I cannot eat it. I shall go to bed." But he did not go to bed. He went to the place where the pot was. But the pot was not there!

The next day his mother went to the village square with the pot in her hands. She stopped there and began to beat the pot with a little stick. Many people came to the place. Then she said, "Pot, pot, what you did for the old man, please do for me." And the pot gave her food! The woman spoke to the pot many times and the pot gave the food to the hungry people. But when she spoke to the pot for the fiftieth time, the pot melted away.

There was nothing on the ground in front of the poor woman. Anansi was very angry. He decided to go to the old man again and tell him everything. "He will give me another pot," he thought.

When Anansi came to the seashore, the little blue boat was there. He got into it and soon he came to the old man's house. The old man listened to Anansi's story. "I have no pot to give you, my spider boy, but I'll give you this stick. You say the same words to it, only instead of pot, pot, say stick."

Anansi took the stick and ran to the boat. He could not wait a minute. He said quickly, "Stick, stick, what you did for the old man, please do for me!" And the stick did! It beat him on the back, on his fat face, on his fat hands and legs. It beat all his fat body! He did not know what to do. He jumped into the water and swam away as quickly as he could. He left the boat with the stick in it.

He came home crying like a small child. But he did not tell anybody about the stick. But that was a good lesson to him.

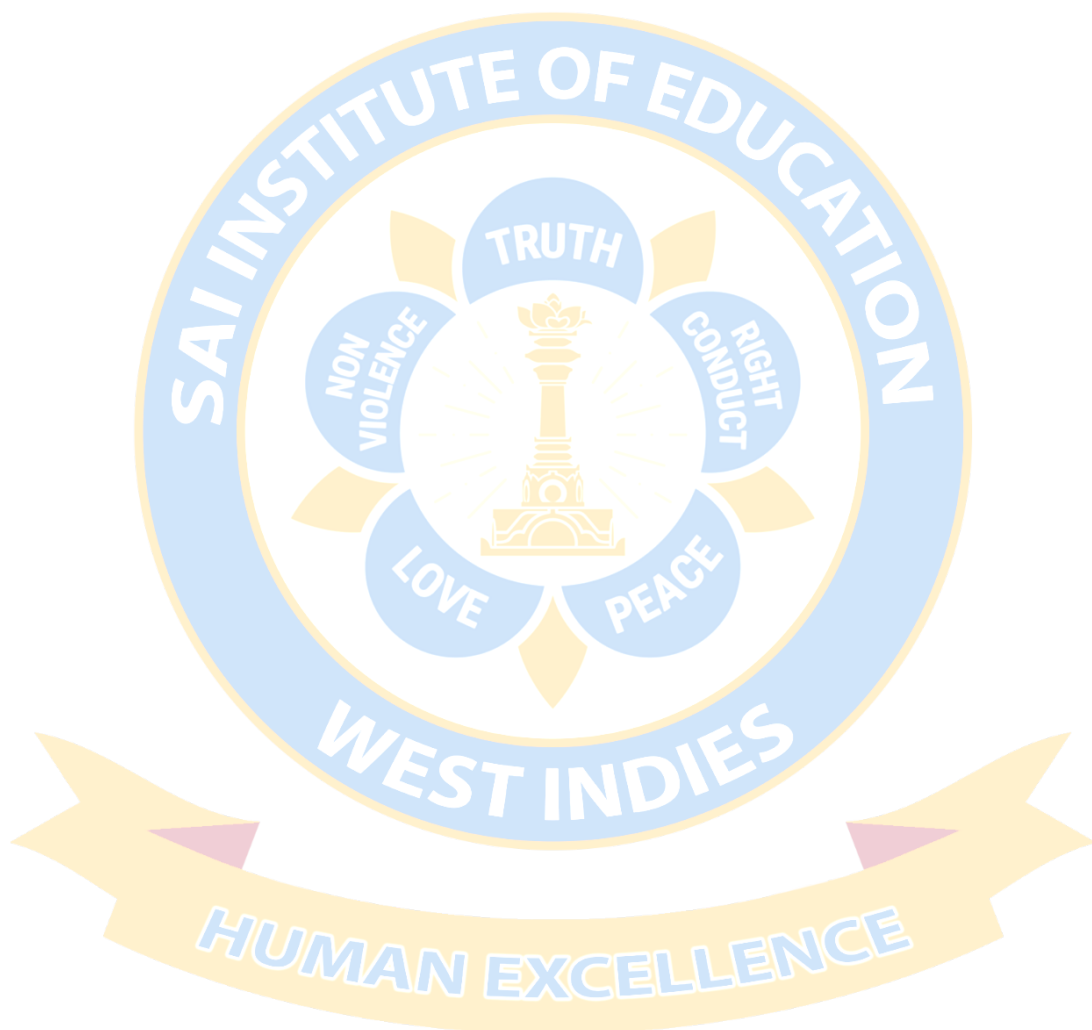
People say that now everything he gets he shares with his brothers and sisters and with other people too.

Source: *Advance-Africa.com*

<https://www.advance-africa.com/African-Fables-Folktales-and-Stories.html>

Sub-value: Sharing

Age group: 5 - 7 years



The Old Man and the Monkey (*Aesop- adapted*)

Once upon a time there was an old man whose one and only friend was a little monkey. He loved her dearly and took great care of her. The monkey, too, loved him so much, that, although she was free to go wherever she pleased and could very well leave him, she chose to stay with him for life. The old man and the monkey lived rather poorly. They went from town to town and from village to village entertaining people, he with his recorder and she with her funny somersaults.

Despite their poverty they were very attached to one another and felt happy because they were together. One day they went to a place where they saw a big stable filled with many animals kept in cages. As the monkey passed by she saw that all the animals had plenty of food to eat and a warm corner to sleep. So she thought: “What a wonderful time these animals seem to be having! They have so much food and they don’t get the least tired. They don’t need to do somersaults and jump all day like I do. Wouldn’t it be nice if I could stay here, too!” Without thinking twice about it, she jumped to the nearest tree, held tight to a branch with her tail, made a somersault in the air, flew over the railing of the cage and landed right inside. “That’s what I call life,” she said. “Plenty of food to eat and loads of soft straw to lie down on. No more somersaults, no more sleeping on hard ground and rocks. This is paradise!” She spent her day that way, enjoying her new rich and comfortable life. But when the next day broke, having had her fill of all the comforts, her heart yearned for her beloved friend, the old man. She missed his company, his recorder, his smile, his love. In no time at all, she understood that the railing before her was an iron cage which deprived her of her freedom and did not allow her to go up the trees, hang from branches, play with the old man and make somersaults freely in so many different places. That’s when she felt that she had had enough

Employing all her strength and making the grandest somersault she had ever attempted, she managed to get out of the cage and rushed to find the old man. She found him sitting on a rock, playing his recorder in a very sad state. She threw herself in his loving arms and they both started dancing and singing, with such joy and happiness that none of them had ever felt. And do you know why?

Because they felt deep in their heart, that love and freedom cannot be exchanged for all the comforts in the world.

Sub-values: Friendship, love

Age group: 7 - 9 years

The Story of Yumi. (Chile)

Yumi is a very little boy. He lives in a village surrounded by mountains. Yumi has three brothers. They are older than he is. They are all very good hunters. “I want to be a hunter too!” says Yumi one day. “When I become a good hunter I will catch condors, llamas and wild boars!” “Why wait? I can hunt today! Here is my bow and here is my arrow!”

Yumi runs out of the village. He runs to the tall field of corn. He runs to the woods. Yumi looks behind bushes. He looks on every tree branch until... “A bird’s nest! A bird’s nest!” he cries.

“Yumi, Yumi, little boy...”, cry the birds. “Your bow and arrow are not a toy! Little child, little boy your bow and arrow are not a toy! Little child do not give pain to anything that lives!”

You are right!”, says Yumi. “I will not hurt you!”

“Thank you Yumi!” say the birds. “Every good action brings something good! This pumpkin is for you... it’s a magic pumpkin! Go and plunge, plunge the pumpkin in the water. Dip, dip the pumpkin in the water.”

Yumi dips the pumpkin in the river and... “Look at the fish!” he cries.

“Give it to us!” cry his brothers. They plunge the pumpkin in the river, but... it disappears! Yumi goes back to the fields. “Look at the guanacos!” He picks up a stone and is about to throw it when he hears the birds sing:

“Everything you do, sooner or later comes back to you! So watch what you say or think or do! Whatever it is will come back to you!”

Yumi puts down the stone. “Every good action brings something good!” sing the birds. “This poncho is for you!” Yumi waves it in the air and catches a dozen of birds! “Look at this magic poncho!” he cries.

“Give it to us!” say his brothers. They wave it in the air, but... the poncho flies away! Yumi goes back to the fields. “I will catch a condor!” he says.

“Everything you do, sooner or later comes back to you! So watch what you say or think or do! Whatever it is will come back to you!”

“You are right,” says Yumi. “Every good action brings something good!” say the birds. “These moccasins are for you!” “Stamp your feet and look up high! A big brown condor will make you fly!”

Yumi stamps his feet and a big condor appears! The little boy flies to the village and...

“Give us those moccasins!” cry his brothers. They stamp their feet but the condor flies away with the magic moccasins!

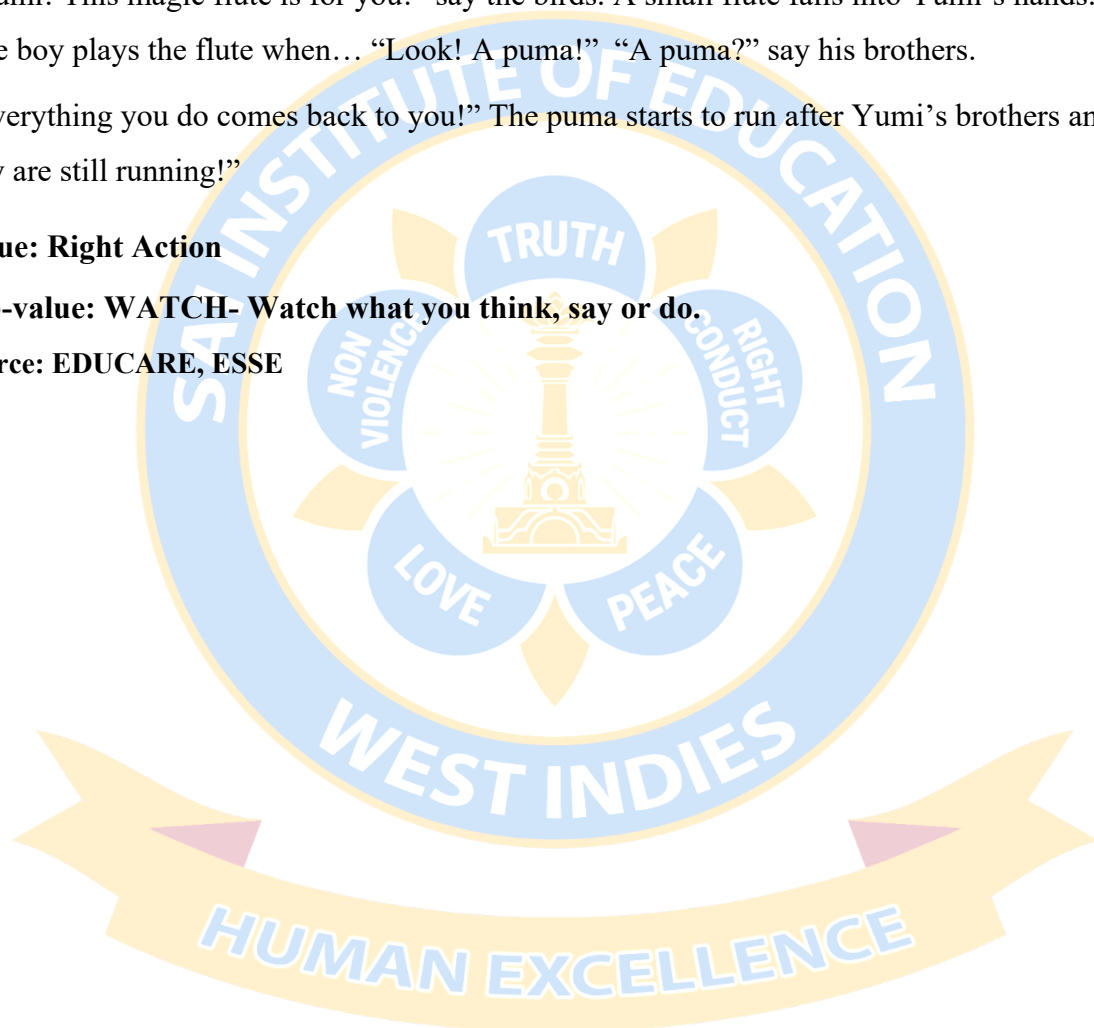
“Yumi! This magic flute is for you!” say the birds. A small flute falls into Yumi’s hands. The little boy plays the flute when... “Look! A puma!” “A puma?” say his brothers.

“Everything you do comes back to you!” The puma starts to run after Yumi’s brothers and... they are still running!”

Value: Right Action

Sub-value: WATCH- Watch what you think, say or do.

Source: EDUCARE, ESSE



The Song of the Armadillo A Folktale from Bolivia

Once there was an armadillo who lived in the Bolivian rainforest. He loved music more than anything in the world and all he wanted to do was to be able to sing like many of the other animals could.

He sat by the pond and listened to the frogs calling to each other.

‘Oh, I wish I could sing as low as you can. Can you teach me to sing, please?’ he asked them.

But the frogs just laughed at him and said, ‘Don’t be silly – armadillos can’t sing!’ He sat under the trees and listened to the crickets chirruping to each other.

‘I wish I could sing as high as you do,’ he said to them. ‘Can you please teach me?’

But the crickets laughed at him as well and said, ‘Don’t be silly – armadillos can’t sing!’ So the poor armadillo left the pond and walked slowly back to the edge of town.

Now the music that the armadillo loved the best was the song of the beautiful birds: hummingbirds, martins, and parrots. He could hear them singing all day long high high up in the trees and yearned to be able to sing as beautifully as they could.

Suddenly, he heard the beautiful song of some canaries in a cage being taken to the local market by a young man. The armadillo stood spellbound as he listened to the beautiful music. He pleaded with the canaries to teach him how to sing as beautifully as they could. The canaries laughed just like the crickets and the frogs and mocked the poor armadillo.

‘Don’t be so silly – everybody knows that armadillos can’t sing and there is no point in you even trying to learn!’ they said to him scornfully.

So the poor armadillo turned away, so sad that he was nearly in tears.

Now the man carrying the cage was a famous musician and he realised that the armadillo would never be happy until he was able to make the same beautiful music that he heard all around him every day in the rainforest. So he said to the armadillo kindly, ‘I might be able to help you, but you will have to wait a long time.’

The armadillo was so excited that he rushed over to the man and said, ‘I really don’t care how long I have to wait – all I want in life is to be able to make beautiful music.’

The musician said to the armadillo, ‘But in order to help you make the beautiful music that you love so much, you will have to wait until you die and you are such a beautiful creature that I really wouldn’t want that to happen to you too soon.’

But the armadillo was so amazed that the musician would be able to help him achieve his ambition, that even the thought of death could not stop him wanting the man to help him in any way that he could.

They spent many hours talking and the armadillo finally agreed that he would continue to enjoy listening to the music of the other animals until he became very old and then he would return to the musician’s house so that he could learn how he might be able to make beautiful music himself after his death.

After living a long and happy life in the forest, the armadillo realised that he was close to death and returned to the town. The musician made him welcome and explained that after the armadillo died, he would make a wonderful stringed instrument from his shell and travel all through the land playing music to all the people and animals. Well, this made the armadillo very happy and he died with a great big smile on his face at the thought of how he would at long last achieve his greatest wish.

So the musician did as he had promised and made a beautiful harp from the shell of the armadillo and he travelled all over the land playing sweet music in memory of the armadillo.

Sometimes the musician would play his instrument by the pond where the frogs lived, and they would stare at him with big eyes and say: ‘Listen! The armadillo has finally learned to sing.’

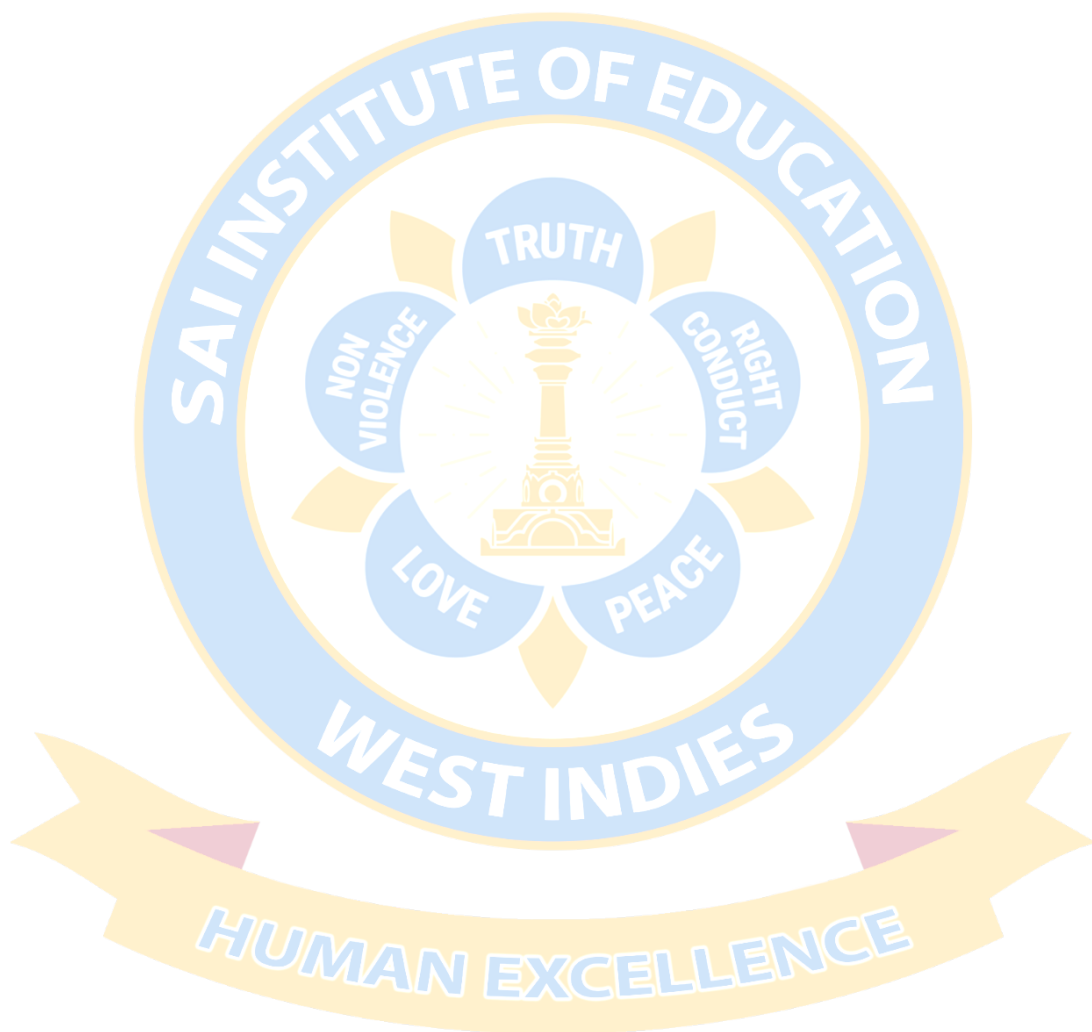
Sometimes the musician would play his instrument by the trees where the crickets lived, and they would creep outside to stare at him with big eyes and say: ‘Listen! The armadillo sings so beautifully.’

And often the musician would visit the town where the canaries now lived in cages in the windows of all the houses and the little birds twittered to each other in amazement: ‘Listen! The armadillo makes the most beautiful music in the whole forest now.’

And so it was. The armadillo had learned to sing at last, and his voice was the finest in the land. <https://worldstories.org.uk/>

Sub-values: Focus, perseverance.

Age group: 9 -11 years



The Sack of Potatoes

Miss Dian, a kindergarten teacher in Tacarigua, East Trinidad, one day decided to let her class play a game. She told each child in the class to bring along a plastic bag containing a few potatoes. Each potato will be given a name of a person that the child hates. So, the number of potatoes that a child will put in his/her plastic bag will depend on the number of people he/she hates.

When the day for bringing the potatoes came, every child brought some potatoes with the name of the people he/she hated. Some had two potatoes, some three while some had up to six potatoes. Miss Dian then told the children to carry the potatoes in the plastic bag with them wherever they went for one week. They wondered why they had to do this.

As the days passed, the children started to complain to Miss about the unpleasant smell let out by the rotten potatoes. Apart from this, those having six potatoes also had to carry heavier bags. After one week, the children were relieved because the game had finally ended.

Miss Dian asked: "How did you feel while carrying the potatoes with you for one week?" The children, even though they were so young, let out their frustrations and started complaining of the trouble they went through having to carry the heavy and smelly potatoes wherever they went.

Then Miss told them the hidden meaning behind the game. She said: "This is exactly the situation when you carry your hatred for somebody inside your heart. The stench of hatred will pollute your heart and you will carry it with you wherever you go. If you cannot tolerate the smell of rotten potatoes for just one week, can you imagine what it is like to have the stench of hatred in your heart for your lifetime?"

Moral: Forgiving others is the best attitude to have. Negative thoughts rob us of peace.

Sub-value: Forgiveness

Age group: 9 - 11 years

The Donkey who Fell into the Pit (Adapted)

Once a man named Pepe and his donkey were walking along a very lonely dirt track in the countryside. Suddenly, the donkey stumbled into a deep hole in the ground. Luckily, the donkey was not hurt by the fall and cried out for his master's help. His master tried hard to get the donkey out, but all his attempts failed. Alas, thought Pepe: " My poor donkey will die of starvation in this deserted place." So, he decided to give the donkey a less painful death by burying the poor animal alive.

Pepe started throwing soil into the pit with the intention of burying the poor donkey alive. But as each spadeful of dirt from above hit the donkey, the donkey would shake it off and take a step up on the growing heap of earth. As his master poured more and more soil , the donkey rose higher and higher. Eventually, the mound grew high enough for him to jump out of the pit.

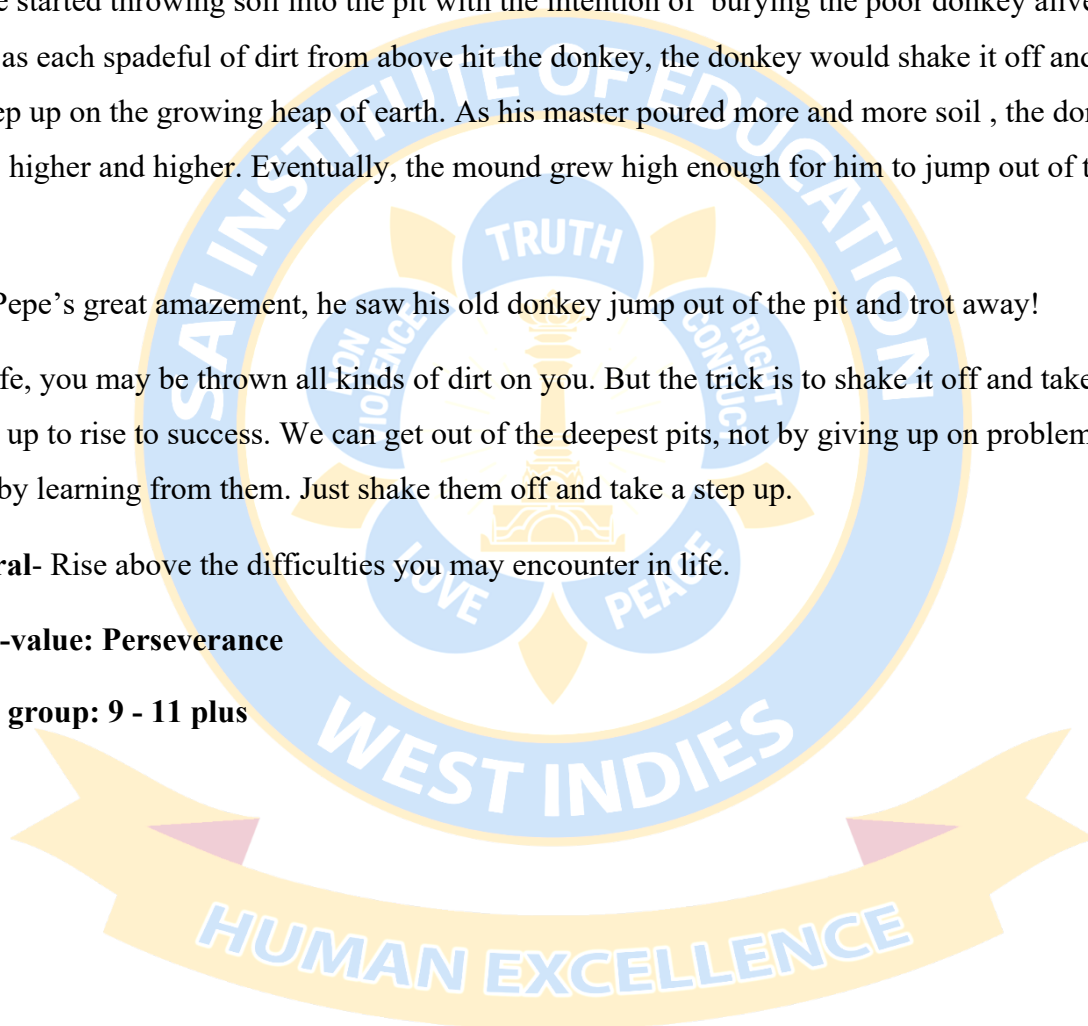
To Pepe's great amazement, he saw his old donkey jump out of the pit and trot away!

In life, you may be thrown all kinds of dirt on you. But the trick is to shake it off and take a step up to rise to success. We can get out of the deepest pits, not by giving up on problems, but by learning from them. Just shake them off and take a step up.

Moral- Rise above the difficulties you may encounter in life.

Sub-value: Perseverance

Age group: 9 - 11 plus



The Boy Who Cried Wolf (*Adapted*)

There was once a village on the outskirts of a huge forest. A shepherd boy used to take his herd of sheep across the fields to some meadows near the forest. All day long he sat under a very shady tree, while his flock of sheep grazed in the beautiful green meadow. The time passed very slowly. The shepherd-boy felt bored and wanted some fun and excitement in his life.

So, to get some fun, one day he started shouting at the top of his voice: “ Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is taking my sheep!” The villagers working in the nearby fields heard the boy’s cry and came running for help.

“Where is the wolf?” asked the farmers ready to slay the mighty fox. The villagers saw a large flock of sheep were grazing quietly but there was no sign of a wolf.

The shepherd-boy began to laugh in amusement and told the villagers that it was a big joke. The villagers were angry and scolded him for raising a false alarm. The shepherd-boy was warned not to repeat this mistake. The boy laughed and replied “ It is so much fun to see you running.” But, the boy did not take the villagers’ warning seriously. He continued to play the same trick several times for the next few days. The farmers came rushing to help the boy again, but they were all fooled by the boy again and again.

After a few days had passed, the boy was sitting on a tree and looking after his sheep. Suddenly he spotted a wolf approaching one of his lambs. The boy panicked and cried loudly, “Wolf... Wolf... The wolf is carrying away a lamb !”

But this time none of the farmers came to help him. The boy shouted more and more loudly “Help! Wolf!” Still no one came to help him chase away the wolf. The villagers thought that the boy was up to his old tricks one more time.

With no one to help the boy, the wolf carried a lamb away. The boy was extremely sad to lose his lamb. But, the boy had brought this upon himself because he had lied one too many times.

Sub-value: Truthfulness

Age group: 9 - 11 years

The Three Friends (*Adapted*)

Once upon a time, in a little village named Felicity on the west coast of Central Trinidad, there was an empty book. The book looked wonderful. It had a beautiful cover, but all its pages were empty. Children and grown-ups would pick up the book, eager to read. Alas, when they found no stories inside, they would throw the book aside.

Not far from there was a lovely ink-well. It was full of ink for years. His owner had forgotten about him and left him in a dark, dusty corner. The inkwell and the storybook spent their days thinking how unlucky they were. They could have done so for years if a very pretty scarlet ibis feather had not floated down from the swamp nearby and landed next to them. The feather felt lost and lonely because he had fallen away from his ibis. He cried and cried. The book and the inkwell joined him and they cried and cried about how they had been thrown aside.

But, unlike his two friends, the feather soon got tired of crying. He decided to do something about making the situation better. Drying his tears, and leaving his complaints behind, he clearly saw how the three of them, working together, could gain a lot more than just suffering.

“Let us write a beautiful story,” he said to his friends.

All excited, the storybook opened up his clean, white pages. The inkwell was very careful. He did not spill even a drop. The scarlet feather took his time and formed perfect letters on the page. Together, they worked to write a lovely story about three friends who cooperated to improve their lives.

On her way to school, a teacher found the storybook, the ink and the feather. So, she picked up all three and took them to school. When lessons began, she told the story to her pupils. They were very attentive and they loved it. It was so interesting.

From then on, every night, feather, inkwell and storybook cooperated to write a new story for the teacher. They were so happy about making their life better and very useful, thanks to their hard work and cooperation.

Sub-value: Cooperation

Age group: 7 - 9 years

The Exhibition

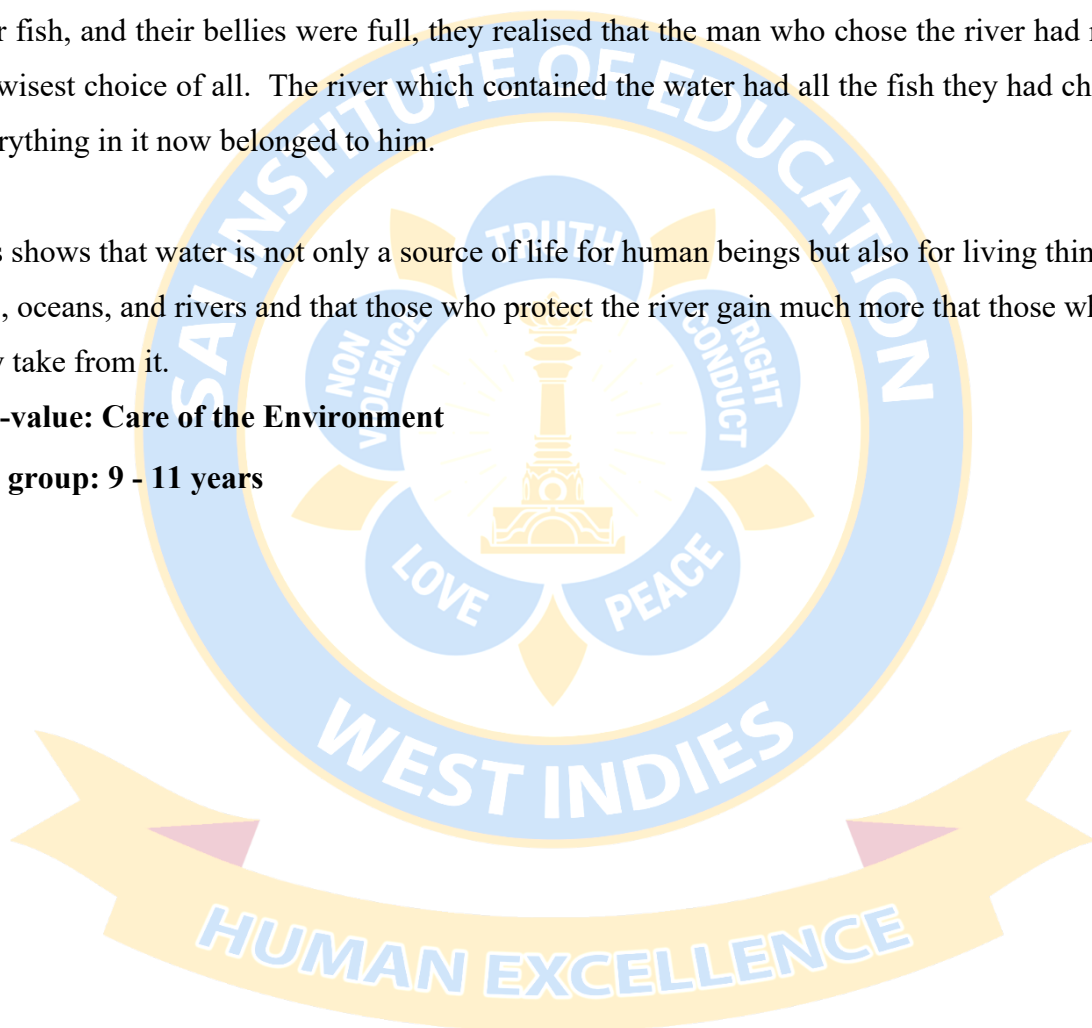
Once upon a time in Africa there lived a chief who really appreciated the importance of rivers. He was a very wise man. One day he organised an exhibition to show his people the love he had for the creatures found in rivers. At this exhibition, each citizen was allowed to choose any of the displayed items, which consisted of various species of fish and the river itself.

Each person selected an item of his choice. They all selected various types of fish to eat. They did not see any sense in choosing a river in preference to things to eat. After they had eaten their fish, and their bellies were full, they realised that the man who chose the river had made the wisest choice of all. The river which contained the water had all the fish they had chosen. Everything in it now belonged to him.

This shows that water is not only a source of life for human beings but also for living things in seas, oceans, and rivers and that those who protect the river gain much more than those who only take from it.

Sub-value: Care of the Environment

Age group: 9 - 11 years



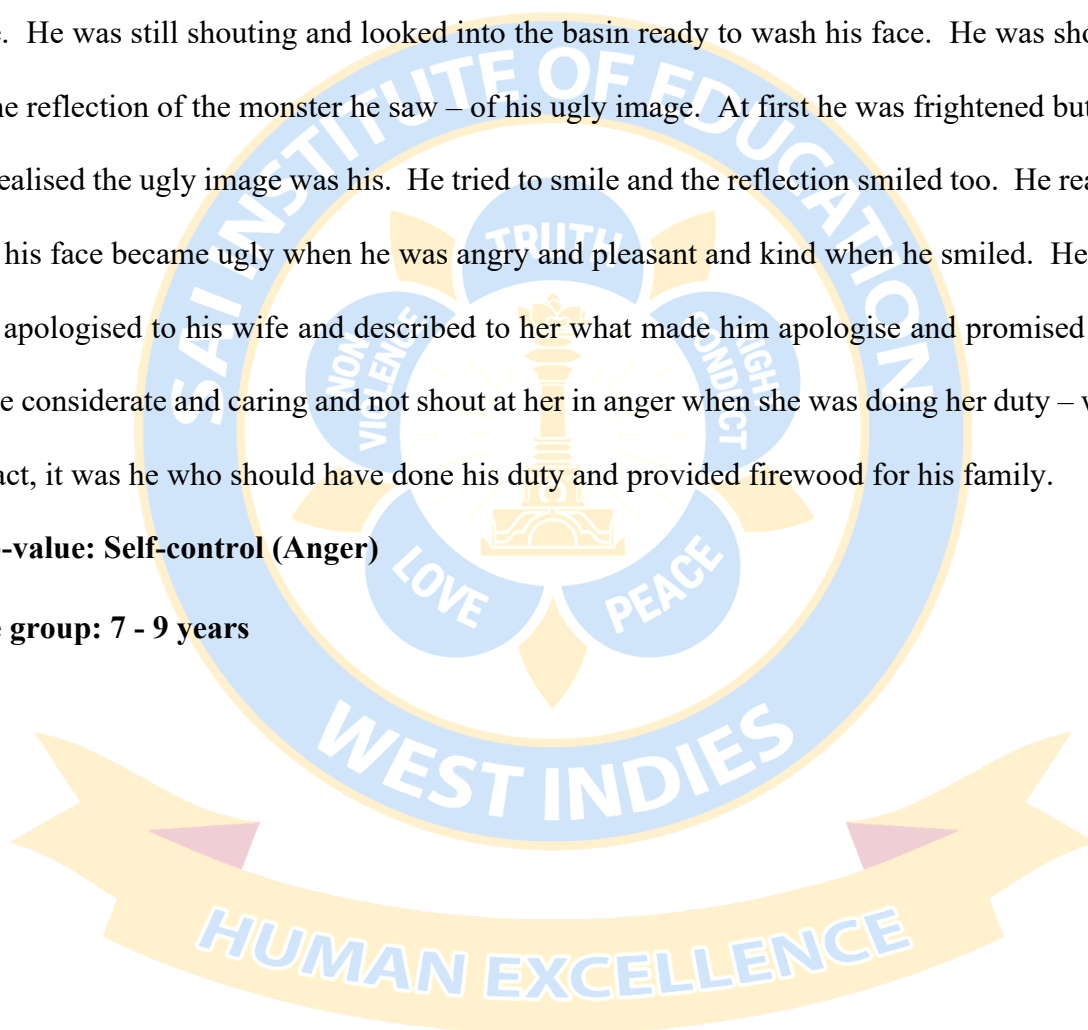
Control of Anger

In a little village in Morocco in Africa lived a couple. The husband's name was Kwame, and his wife was Adanna. One day Adanna served her husband with cold water for bathing and told him she could not heat the water because there was no firewood. Kwame became very angry. He lost his temper and called Adanna all sorts of names.

As he sat on his three-legged stool, he took a cake of soap with his left hand ready to wash his face. He was still shouting and looked into the basin ready to wash his face. He was shocked at the reflection of the monster he saw – of his ugly image. At first he was frightened but later he realised the ugly image was his. He tried to smile and the reflection smiled too. He realised that his face became ugly when he was angry and pleasant and kind when he smiled. He went and apologised to his wife and described to her what made him apologise and promised to be more considerate and caring and not shout at her in anger when she was doing her duty – when, in fact, it was he who should have done his duty and provided firewood for his family.

Sub-value: Self-control (Anger)

Age group: 7 - 9 years



The Curious Little Fish

Once upon a time, in the great big Atlantic Ocean just off the Sans Souci coast-line in north-east Trinidad, there lived a very tiny fish. His name was Sprat. Sprat was a very curious fish. Even though he was a very young fish he already understood that there are very big fishes, medium fishes and tiny fishes. He knew that all the fishes of different sizes lived in the great big ocean.

One day, at the great big Fish School, Sprat noticed that some of the other fishes are covered with something small and shiny. Sprat was so curious. He really wanted to know what were the small shiny things all over these fishes' body.

Sprat was so interested and curious, he just had to know. "But how would I figure out what this is?" Sprat thought to himself. Sprat decided to ask. He remembered that asking questions is a good way to find out things you want to know.

Sprat swam up to the group of fish at school and he asked his question. Sprat asked Lisa, "What are those shiny things all over your body?" Lisa said, "Those are scales." Lisa also told Sprat that some fishes have lots of scales and that scales help to protect their delicate (soft) skin. Sprat thanked Lisa for telling him about scales.

Sprat, out of curiosity, learnt that some fishes are scaly and he now knew why. Sprat realised that curiosity leads to learning.

Sub-value: Curiosity

Age group: 5 - 7 years



HUMAN EXCELLENCE

THE MAGIC FISH

James and Sandra lived in an old ramshackle wooden hut near the sea in Mayaro. From their hut, they had a full view of the wide blue sea. They would watch the sea admiringly. Some days it was as calm as a lake; at other times it was rough, the waves reaching into the sky, almost. The sea was full of fish- all kinds of fish and every size of fish. Besides, there were red looking sea crabs with large pincers, shrimps and sea conches pink-looking shells. James and Sandra would look at the sea gulls diving into the water for a prize catch.

James loved the sea. Every morning as the sun rose, he would set out in his little wooden boat far out into the sea to catch fish. He would spend many hours under the blazing Mayaro sun throwing his fishing line with small sardines at the end hoping to attract some big fish. If he was lucky, some days he would catch big fish; other days his catch was small. He did not mind. He got some to sell; he had enough fish to eat and to share with his friends and family.

One day, as he threw his line, he could feel that something special had bitten at the sardines he had used for bait. He felt a strange, strong tugging on his line. He was only too eager to see what it could be. So, very carefully, he began pulling in his line. What could he see at the end of his line!

A most beautiful fish dangled at the end. He had never seen such a fish. In all his dreams, he could not dream of such a fish. It was a beauty of a fish. Its scales danced and glistened in the noon sunshine. The scales were in every color of the rainbow. He could not wait to return home to show it to Sandra. So, with as much speed as he could, he turned around his boat and began rowing towards the shore.

Taking out the fish, he called excitedly to Sandra. Sandra's eyes almost popped out on seeing such a strange fish. Very carefully, they both put the fish into a jar of sea water and placed it on their small table. They were really wowed by it all. Being a magic fish it could speak. And this is what it said: "I am giving you three wishes. You may wish for anything you want and it will be yours.

"I wish to be rich," said James, for they were very poor.

Instantly, the old wooden hut was transformed into a beautiful mansion fit for a king. The old, worn- out clothes they were wearing became rich and expensive clothing.

"I wish to be richer," said Sandra. The mansion became even bigger and more beautiful. The old wooden boat became a big boat that could go far into the deep ocean. Both James and

Sandra looked like a king and queen decked out in all their finery. They danced for joy at all the riches they now had.

One last wish remained. It was Sandra's. "I wish to be richer still!" exclaimed Sandra.

Woo...shh! In the twinkle of an eye their good luck disappeared and so did the magic fish.

His last words were. "Too greedy!"

Sub-value: Contentment

Age group: 7 – 9 years.



HOW NORTH AMERICA CAME ABOUT

Long long ago in the beginning of times, there was a great flood as it had rained for a very long time. Many of the animals and people had drowned all except one man named Weesakayjack together with a few animals who survived on a small island. Together they worked to make a big canoe which they used to travel around after the rain had stopped. Weesakayjack suddenly remembered that he forgot to bring a piece of earth to recreate a new world. So, he thought that the only way to get some earth was from the bottom of the ocean.

Weesakayjack got a vine, tied it to the giant Beaver and sent him down to the bottom of the ocean. They waited and waited until at last the Beaver came up but with no earth. Disappointed Weesakayjack sent down an Otter after tying the vine on his body. The Otter too came up, after a long time, with no earth.

Seeing the disappointment on Weesakayjack face, the Muskrat offered to try. So once again he tied the vine to the Muskrat's body and down, he went to the bottom of the ocean. They waited for such a long time that they thought he had died. So Weesakayjack decided to pull the vine which brought the Muskrat lifeless body, but wait, there was a tiny piece of earth which he clutched in his paw. The Muskrat sacrificed his life so that life on earth can continue.

Turtle came forward and offered to bear the weight of the piece of earth on his back. Suddenly the wind started to blow and blow from the four directions and the tiny piece of earth started to grow and grow and then the wind ceased to blow.

The water became still as the land grew right in the middle of the ocean. That land has become North America, the land that the First Nation has lived on for thousands of years.

The Legend of Weesakayjack

First Nation Legend

Taken from YouTube

Values: Non-Violence and Love

Sub-values: Co-operation and Patriotism

Age group: 7-year olds

HOW THE BIRDS GOT THEIR COLOURS.

This is a story of how the birds got their colour. Long long ago in the dreamtime, when all the land and animals were being made, all the birds were black all one colour. Till! One day a little dove flew around looking for food. He flew down to the ground to catch a big juicy grub, but instead he landed on a sharp stick ouch!!! Which pierced his foot. It made him very sick.

For days he laid on the ground in pain, his foot swelled up, he was dying, all his friends stood around him to see how they could help all except crow. He wondered around with his hands behind his back.

Suddenly the parrot rushed forward to the dove and burst the dove's swollen foot with his sharp beak. Colours splashed out all over the parrot red and green ran down his chest, tail and wings. It also splashed on all of the other birds. Some got red, some got blue, some got brown and yellow some even got spots and stripes too. All got colours except crow who was standing away from the others. Crow got no colours at all.

That's how the birds got colours as for the little dove, he soon got better, thanks to the parrot, he was able to fly away.

Indigenous Stories for Primary School

Dreamtime Story

By Mary Albert

Values: Right Action and Love

Sub-values: Courage and Empathy

Age group: 5 - 7 years

HUMAN EXCELLENCE

MY NEW HOME

I am Jenny. Last month my parents and I moved from the capital city-Georgetown to the Cinderella county of Essequibo in the country. I now live in a small neighbourhood called Richmond Housing Scheme. The neighbours there are very kind and friendly. They help each other clean the drains, weed the tall bushes and keep the community clean and tidy. Our neighbour on the right is the Persauds' and on our left is the Michaels', Uncle 'Big Joe' . Many people in the village plant kitchen gardens and would share some of their produce with neighbours and sell the rest at the market. Uncle Big Joe gives us bora, (bodi), pumpkins and bolunger (melongene) every Saturday. He even allows me to help water the plants on the weekend when I have no school and my chores are done. I really like Uncle Big Joe. We also get cow's milk when Uncle Big Joe milks his cows and he is presently helping my father to plant our own kitchen garden. Uncle Big Joe has many cows that he takes to the pasture every day. He is always heard saying, "Bai you can't let the land go waste, plant and you will get to eat, share and make some money."



My best friend is Susan Michael called Sue. She is the grand-daughter of Uncle Big Joe. We are both seven years old. We go to the same school. The name of our school is C V Nunes Primary School. We walk to and from school every day. There are lots of places to run and play in the country. Sue and I would go to the play park, which is in the next street, and play

on the sea-saw, slides, swings, jump in and out of the tyres or just run around, enjoying ourselves. There are lots of free spaces in the play park to run.

The villagers can be seen going to places of worship on Sundays. Sue promised to take me to her church once I get permission from my parents. My parents go to the Mandir, which is two streets away from us and I go with them too.

The country is very quiet. There are no loud noises from speeding vehicles and shops. Our neighbour- the Persauds' have a shop, but they do not play loud music. The people in the village play their music and television very quietly. I am very happy in my new neighbourhood and most of all I like our neighbours and my best friend.

Sub-value: Sharing

Age group: 5 - 7 years



THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

Last Sunday was Mary's birthday party. She invited her friends to her birthday party which was held in the yard of her parent's home in Anna Regina. The place was well decorated with red, yellow and silver balloons, streamers and fresh flowers. White plastic tables and chairs were set in two rows. One square table was in the middle. It had a colourful Princess cake that looked very delicious. There were also sweets and drinks.

Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday dear Mary!

Happy birthday to you!

That was the song played from the music set. At about three (3) pm, there were many little boys and girls entering the gate to attend the party. All the children were from the village. Mandie, Carol and Joan wore pretty flounced dresses and the boys wore coloured shirts and long pants.

The children sang '*Happy Birthday*' and Mary had to blow out the candles on the cake. Carlos cut the cake with Mary and put a big piece into her mouth. She had difficulty chewing it and all the children laughed. Everyone, including Mary's parents joined in making a toast and wishing her well. The food served was very tasty and there were also party bags with lots of goodies. Everyone had to stand and shout 'Hurrah' after the count of three and clapped very loudly for the birthday girl. Those who brought gifts gave them to Mary.

The children played 'musical chairs', 'ketcha'-running around to catch each other, 'blindfold' and some 'guess the fruit name' games. There was loud laughter and singing whenever one of them won in a game.

It was about five (5) pm and all the children had to leave before the night stepped in. The children each had to collect a colourful bucket filled with extra goodies and toys. The children had lots of fun and they were very happy. They all bid farewell to Mary and her parents and went home. Mary had an enjoyable time with her friends at her birthday party.

Sub-value: Sharing

Age group: 7 - 9 years

The Friends

Every day the school friends sat at the same desk in Standard 3, by the window next to the door. Their names were Debbie, Razia, and Paul, and they always ate their lunch together, and sometimes shared their sandwiches and cakes.

“I’ve got a banana again today,” said Paul. “Do you want it, Razia?”

“No, thanks.”

“Hey! you haven’t got anything. Didn’t you bring any lunch today?”

“No,” said Razia

“Would you like some of mine?” asked Debbie.

“No, thanks. I’m not eating until tonight.”

“How can you go all day without eating?” asked Paul. “You must be starving!” “If I were older, I’d fast for thirty days like my parents do,” said Razia.

“Don’t you eat anything at all when you fast?”

“We have breakfast while it’s still dark. And we have a full dinner after sunset. The period of thirty days during which Muslims fast is called ‘Ramadan’.”

“But why do you do it?”

“It’s because of our religion. Ma says we fast to show that we are Allah’s servants. And my grandmother says a little hunger does no one any harm, and it reminds us to help people poorer than we are. When the fasting is over, at the end of Ramadan, we have a special thanksgiving day called ‘Eid-ul-Fitr’. We get cards from our friends, and presents, and we go to the mosque to pray.”

Later on in the day, Debbie and Paul asked their teacher, Mrs. Johnson, if she ever fasted. “Yes,” she said, “But don’t look so worried. It’s not dangerous. You give things up and feel better for it.”

“Do many people fast?” asked Debbie.

“Many Christians and Hindu families fast on certain days. Some Christians families fast each year for a month called Lent, When Muslims fast, at Ramadan, they also think about all the poor people in the world. Eid-ul-Fitr, the last day of Ramadan, means ‘Festival of the ending

of the fast.’ Each Muslim family takes gifts and money to the mosque to give to the poor people outside.”

When school ended that day, Debbie said to Paul, “I wonder if there is any of that stiff card left?”

“Why?”

“It’s because of something Razia said about Eid-ul-Fitr, I’ve an idea.”

On the days before Eid-ul-Fitr, the postman delivered lots of cards and air-letters to Razia’s house. There were cards and air-letters from all parts of the world.

Most of the envelopes were addressed to the grown-ups. But a few had Razia’s name on them. The biggest envelope, addressed to Razia, arrived just before Eid-ul-Fitr. It was a thick brown envelope, the kind you put oversized letters in. The paper was so thick that Razia had to tear it open along the fold with a kitchen-knife.

Inside she found a big, home-made card. On the front, done by Debbie were drawings of a crescent moon and a star, and inside, in Paul’s was the message. “Happy Eid! Love from Debbie and Paul.”

Source : New Caribbean Junior Reader (An Integrated Approach to Reading)

Book 3 by Pamela Mordecai and Grace Walker Gordon

Value: Non – Violence

Sub-value: Brotherhood/Sisterhood.

Age group: 7 - 9 years

HUMAN EXCELLENCE

Winston 'Spree' Simon and Pan

(Story of the Birth of Pan Music)

Everywhere in the Caribbean people enjoy pan music. From Guadeloupe to Guyana, from Jamaica to Trinidad, people dance at festival and Christmas time, and in fact throughout the year, to the music of the steelband. But many people do not realise that the steelpan is a great new musical instrument and that it was made up, or invented in Trinidad. Although many people have doubts about it, one story is that Winston Spree Simon was the man who invented pan. This is how they say it happened.

Spree Simon's family were humble people. First, they lived in the Rose Hill, East Dry River section of Port of Spain. Then they moved to John John. Most of the people were poor like the Simons. The men worked at the docks. Some people worked in factories, in the area, like the biscuit factory, the soap factory, and the candle factory. When the young people were ready to make music for their sessions, they went to those places to find things to make music with.

From long before that time, people in Trinidad had used spoons and bottles, pieces of bamboo and various metal instruments to make music. But the young people were always finding some new thing to use for music-making. As they stamped their feet and clapped their hands, they used whatever they could find, even old tins, to knock time on.

When he was a little boy, Spree used to beat one of these metal instruments. One of his older brothers was a member of the *John John Band*. Spree joined in the band too. He played the kettledrum. He was the third best kettle drummer.

Some people in the band played on biscuit tins. The biscuit tin was known as the *slap base*. One day, when he was still quite young, Spree noticed something about these tins that people played music on. It was this that gave him the idea for the steelband pan.

He said it was one day in 1939 between the months of May and June. The *John John Band* was parading the streets of the village. Spree was playing the kettledrum which had a special sound because it was made of light soft metal. He wanted to get a rest from drumming and dance a bit. So, he gave the drum to a friend of his during that time. When he got the drum back he noticed that it was dented badly and the sound it used to make was gone. Spree tried to beat out the dent with a stone, so the drum could get back the shape it had and make the same sound again. As he was hitting the drum with the stone, sometimes hard, sometimes lightly, he noticed that he was getting different sounds. Then he tried hitting it with a piece of wood. The sounds

were richer. Spree was excited. He found he could get four different notes. He told the other members of the band what he had discovered. And pan was born.

During the years that followed, Spree and other bandmen worked on the pans. Because Carnival was banned during the years of World War II in Trinidad, people had lots of time to try out things with the new instrument. By 1940, Spree had produced a *melody pan* with eight notes on which he could play tunes.

People continued to do more work on the pans. Soon there were many different kinds of pans. In fact, there were so many that panmen could play any kind of music on the steel pans.

Today there are steelbands all over the world and people in Canada, England and the United States, as well as the Caribbean, play steelband music for celebrations and festivals.

So the next time you hear steelband music remember that the steelpan is a great new musical instrument. And thank the Lord for pan music and pan!

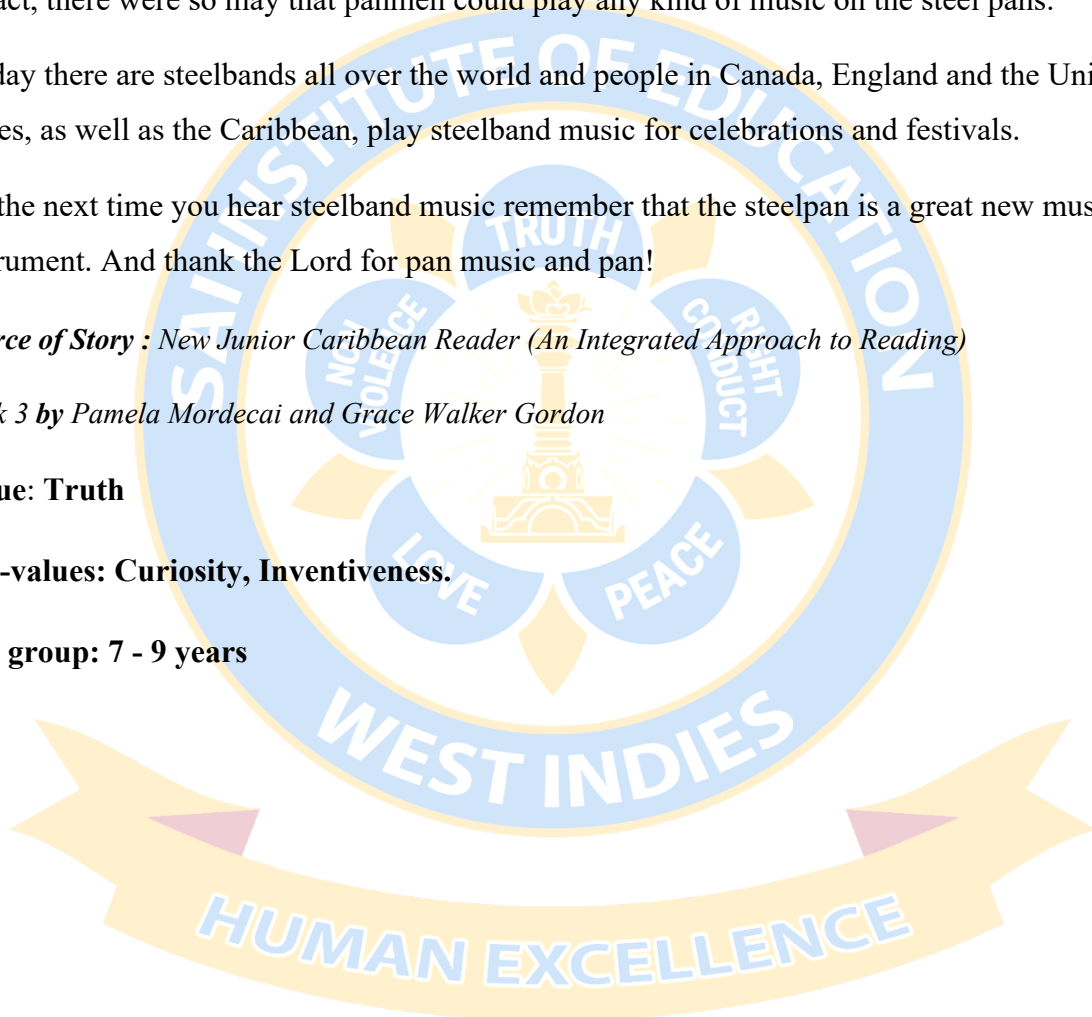
Source of Story : *New Junior Caribbean Reader (An Integrated Approach to Reading)*

Book 3 by Pamela Mordecai and Grace Walker Gordon

Value: Truth

Sub-values: Curiosity, Inventiveness.

Age group: 7 - 9 years



New Year's Hats for the Statues by Yoshiko Uchida

Once a very kind old man and woman lived in a small house high in the hills of Japan. Although they were good people, they were very, very poor, for the old man made his living by weaving the reed hats that farmers used to ward off the sun and rain, and even in a year's time, he could not sell very many.

One cold winter day as the year was drawing to an end, the old woman said to the old man, "Good husband, it will soon be New Year's Day, but we have nothing in the house to eat. How will we welcome the new year without even a pot of fresh rice?" A worried frown hovered over her face, and she sighed sadly as she looked into her empty cupboards.

But the old man patted her shoulders and said, "Now, now, don't you worry. I will make some reed hats and take them to the village to sell. Then with the money I earn I will buy some fish and rice for our New Year's feast."

On the day before New Year's, the old man set out for the village with five new reed hats that he had made. It was bitterly cold, and from early morning, snow tumbled from the skies and blew in great drifts about their small house. The old man shivered in the wind, but he thought about the fresh warm rice and the fish turning crisp and brown over the charcoal, and he knew he must earn some money to buy them. He pulled his wool scarf tighter about his throat and plodded on slowly over the snow-covered roads.

When he got to the village, he trudged up and down its narrow streets calling, "Reed hats for sale! Reed hats for sale!" But everyone was too busy preparing for the new year to be bothered with reed hats. They scurried by him, going instead to the shops where they could buy sea bream and red beans and herring roe for their New Year's feasts. No one even bothered to look at the old man or his hats.

As the old man wandered about the village, the snow fell faster, and before long the sky began to grow dark. The old man knew it was useless to linger, and he sighed with longing as he passed the fish shop and saw the rows of fresh fish.

"If only I could bring home one small piece of fish for my wife," he thought glumly, but his pockets were even emptier than his stomach.

There was nothing to do but to go home again with his five unsold hats. The old man headed wearily back toward his little house in the hills, bending his head against the biting cold of the wind. As he walked along, he came upon six stone statues of Jizo, the guardian

god of children. They stood by the roadside covered with snow that had piled in small drifts on top of their heads and shoulders.

"*Mah, mah*, you are covered with snow," the old man said to the statues, and setting down his bundle, he stopped to brush the snow from their heads. As he was about to go on, a fine idea occurred to him.

"I am sorry these are only reed hats I could not sell," he apologized, "but at least they will keep the snow off your heads." And carefully he tied one on each of the Jizo statues.

"Now if I had one more there would be enough for each of them," he murmured as he looked at the row of statues. But the old man did not hesitate for long. Quickly he took the hat from his own head and tied it on the head of the sixth statue.

"There," he said looking pleased. "Now all of you are covered." Then, bowing in farewell, he told the statues that he must be going. "A happy new year to each of you," he called, and he hurried away content.

When he got home the old woman was waiting anxiously for him. "Did you sell your hats?" she asked. "Were you able to buy some rice and fish?"

The old man shook his head. "I couldn't sell a single hat," he explained, "but I did find a very good use for them." And he told her how he had put them on the Jizo statues that stood in the snow.

"Ah, that was a very kind thing to do," the old woman said. "I would have done exactly the same." And she did not complain at all that the old man had not brought home anything to eat. Instead she made some hot tea and added a precious piece of charcoal to the brazier so the old man could warm himself.

That night they went to bed early, for there was no more charcoal and the house had grown cold. Outside the wind continued to blow the snow in a white curtain that wrapped itself about the small house. The old man and woman huddled beneath their thick quilts and tried to keep warm.

"We are fortunate to have a roof over our heads on such a night," the old man said

"Indeed we are," the old woman agreed, and before long they were both fast asleep.

About daybreak, when the sky was still a misty gray, the old man awakened for he heard voices outside.

"Listen," he whispered to the old woman.

"What is it? What is it?" the old woman asked.

Together they held their breath and listened. It sounded like a group of men pulling a very heavy load.

"Yoi-sah! Hoi-sah! Yoi-sah! Hoi-sah!" the voices called and seemed to come closer and closer.

"Who could it be so early in the morning?" the old man wondered. Soon, they heard the men singing:

"Where is the home of the kind old man,
The man who covered our heads?

Where is the home of the kind old man,

Who gave us his hats for our heads?"

The old man and woman hurried to the window to look out, and there in the snow they saw the six stone Jizo statues lumbering toward their house. They still wore the reed hats the old man had given them and each one was pulling a heavy sack.

"Yoi-sah! Hoi-sah! Yoi-sah! Hoi-sah!" they called as they drew nearer and nearer.

"They seem to be coming here!" the old man gasped in amazement. But the old woman was too surprised even to speak.

As they watched, each of the Jizo statues came up to their house and left his sack at the doorstep.

The old man hurried to open the door, and as he did, the six big sacks came tumbling inside. In the sacks the old man and woman found rice and wheat, fish and beans, wine and bean paste cakes, and all sorts of delicious things that they might want to eat.

"Why, there is enough here for a feast every day all during the year!" the old man cried excitedly.

"And we shall have the finest New Year's feast we have ever had in our lives," the old woman exclaimed.

"Ojizo Sama, thank you!" the old man shouted.

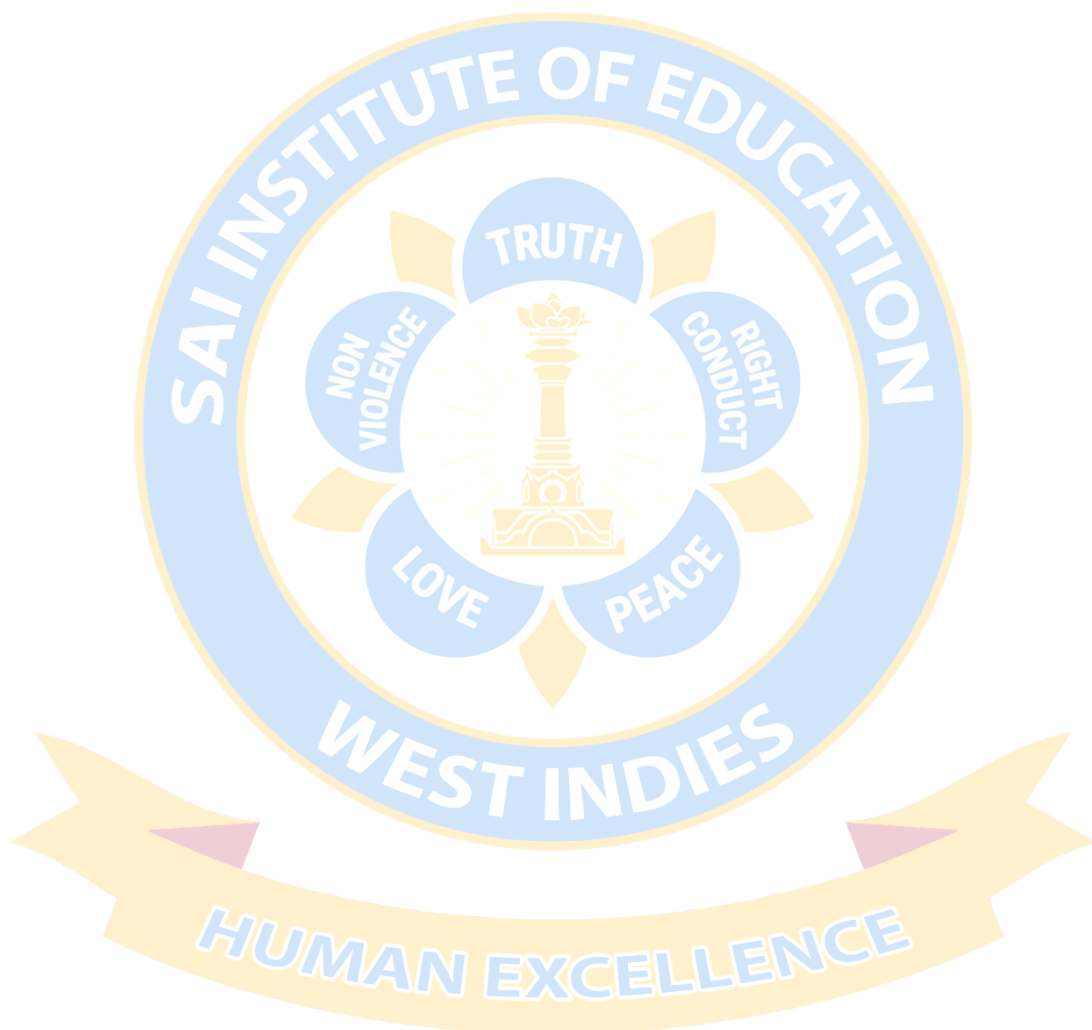
"Ojizo Sama, how can we thank you enough?" the old woman called out.

But the six stone statues were already moving slowly down the road, and as the old man and woman watched, they disappeared into the whiteness of the falling snow, leaving only their footprints to show that they had been there at all.

Sub-values: Humility, kindness, gratitude.

Age group: 9 - 11 years

*"New Year's Hats for the Statues" from **The Sea of Gold and other tales from Japan**, adapted by Yoshiko Uchida. Copyright © 1965 Yoshiko Uchida.*



The Empty Pot by Demi

A long time ago in China there was a boy named Ping who loved flowers. Anything he planted burst into bloom. Up came flowers, bushes, and even big fruit trees, as if by magic! Everyone in the kingdom loved flowers too. They planted them everywhere, and the air smelled like perfume. The Emperor loved birds and animals, but flowers most of all, and he tended his own garden every day. But the Emperor was very old. He needed to choose a successor to the throne. Who would his successor be? And how would the Emperor choose? Because the Emperor loved flowers so much, he decided to let the flowers choose. The next day a proclamation was issued: All the children in the land were to come to the palace. There they would be given special flower seeds by the Emperor. "Whoever can show me their best in a year's time," he said, "will succeed me to the throne." This news created great excitement throughout the land! Children from all over the country swarmed to the palace to get their flower seeds. All the parents wanted their children to be chosen Emperor, and all the children hoped they would be chosen too! When Ping received his seed from the Emperor, he was the happiest child of all. He was sure he could grow the most beautiful flower. Ping filled a flowerpot with rich soil. He planted the seed in it very carefully. He watered it every day. He couldn't wait to see it sprout, grow, and blossom into a beautiful flower! Day after day passed, but nothing grew in his pot. Ping was very worried. He put new soil into a bigger pot. Then he transferred the seed into the rich black soil. Another two months he waited. Still nothing happened. By and by the whole year passed. Spring came, and all the children put on their best clothes to greet the Emperor. They rushed to the palace with their beautiful flowers, eagerly hoping to be chosen. Ping was ashamed of his empty pot. He thought the other children would laugh at him because for once he couldn't get a flower to grow. His clever friend ran by, holding a great big plant. "Ping!" he said. "You're not really going to the Emperor with an empty pot, are you? Why couldn't you grow a great big flower like mine?" "I've grown lots of flowers better than yours," Ping said. "It's just this seed that won't grow." Ping's father overheard this and said, "You did your best, and your best is good enough to present to the Emperor." Holding the empty pot in his hands, Ping went straight away to the palace. The Emperor was looking at the flowers slowly, one by one. How beautiful all the flowers were! But the Emperor was frowning and did not say a word. Finally he came to Ping. Ping hung his head in shame, expecting to be punished. The Emperor asked him, "Why did you bring an empty pot?" Ping started to cry and replied, "I planted the seed you gave me and I watered it every day, but it didn't sprout. I put it in a better pot with better soil, but it

didn't sprout. I tended it all year long, but nothing grew. So today I had to bring an empty pot without a flower. It was the best I could do." When the Emperor heard these words, a smile slowly spread over his face, and he put his arm around Ping. Then he exclaimed to one and all, "I have found him! I have found the one person worthy of being Emperor! "Where you got your seeds from, I do not know. For the seeds I gave you had all been cooked, so it was impossible for any of them to grow. "I admire Ping's great courage to appear before me with the empty truth, and now I reward him with my entire kingdom and make him Emperor of all the land!"

Sub-value: Honesty

The Empty Pot by Demi. Henry Holt and Company, 1996. ©1990



The Music Makers

One night Mr. Waracabra held a party in the forest under the bulletwood tree. All the animals were invited. Mr. Waracabra hired two musicians to play for his party. The musicians were a big crab and a small crab.

When the big crab played his guitar, no one danced. His music was slow. The animals sat and ate and talked. But when the small crab took up his guitar, everybody became alive. He played merry tunes and soon all the animals were dancing.

The animals were jumping and swaying. Then one proud lady, Miss Powis, fell into the fire which lit the dark forest. Poor Miss Powis!! Her “dress” was changing. All the animals tried to pull her out of the fire, but no one was able to free her. Then, they all saw her tail stretching like elastic and her blue feathers were changing into black, with grey and white specks.

Then Mr. Waracabra gave one thug and out came Miss Powis. What a mess she was! She looked very sad, but limped to a swamp. She stood in the water to cool her feet and to wash her feathers. From then on, Miss Powis dwells near swamps, so that she can always be safe.

Source : *Adapted from Amerindian Folk Tales (Guyana)*

Li P. (2004) Fun With Language Book 3. Ministry of Education, Georgetown, Guyana.

Sub-values: Caring, concern for others, thoughtfulness.

Age group: 7 - 9 years



Being Kind

The Blake family loved to care the flowers in their garden. They tended to flowers such as hibiscus, rose, dahlia, sunflower and several other flowers. Every day the family pulled out weeds and watered the plants. They also cut the pretty flowers to beautify their dining room.

Their six-year-old baby of the family, Patty Blake decided one morning to hide under an overgrown hibiscus tree. She had a plan. She wanted to surprise her mother with a bouquet of flowers for her birthday. She picked one lily, then two, then three until she picked about twelve of them. Then she hid under the hibiscus tree. Quietly she crept out of the garden and returned to play with her dolls.

While Patty played with her dolls, the doorbell rang. Her mother went to see who was at the door. Patty stopped playing and listened. It was the class teacher. She said, “Good morning, Mrs. Blake. I have come to ask you for a few pink lilies. We are expecting a visitor at school tomorrow. Do you have any of those flowers to give us?”

“Yes”, replied mother. “I have lots of pink and white lilies in my garden. I’ll send them with Patty, very early in the morning.”

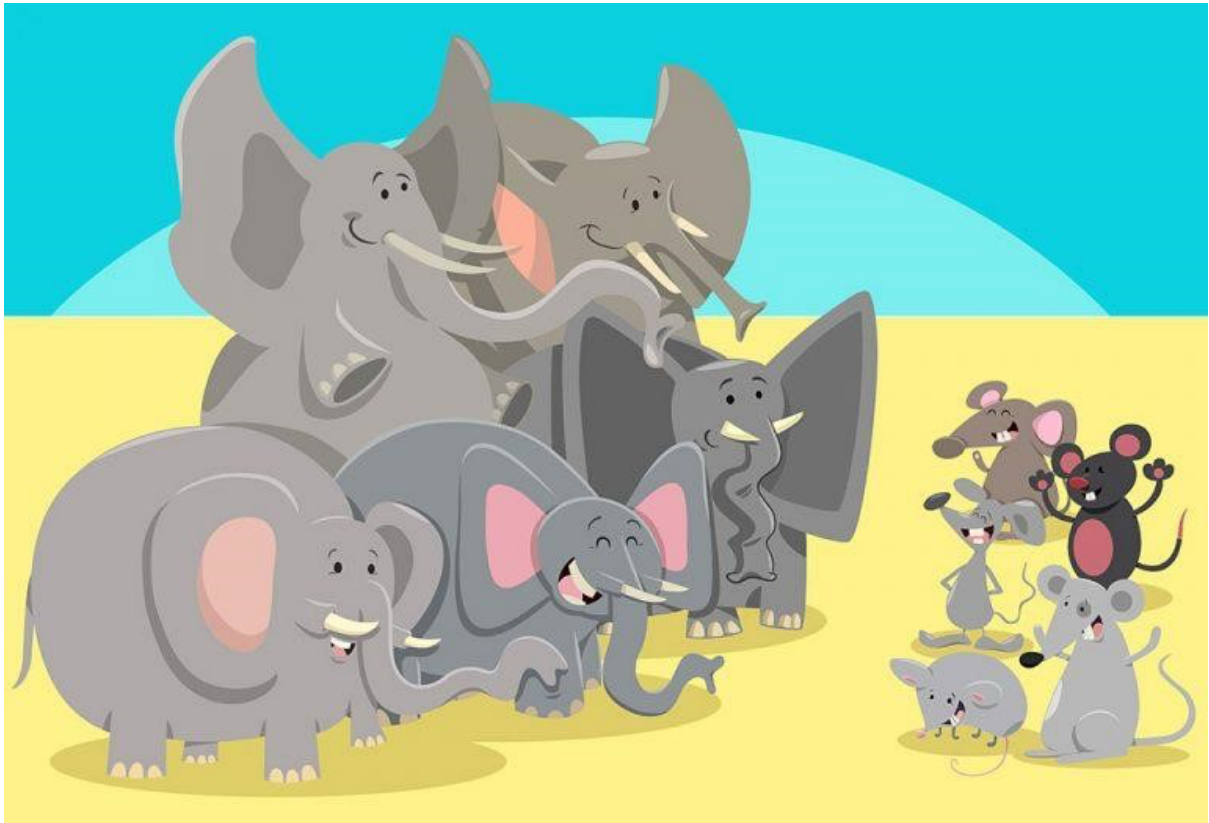
Patty was sad. She so desperately wanted to surprise her mother. Mother noticed Patty’s face and asked her the reason for her downtrodden look. Patty, her eyes filling with tears, stuttered the reason for her sadness. Mrs. Blake comforted her, telling her that the best birthday present she could give her was to be helpful to her teacher. Besides, she said, “We always have flowers”, and gave Patty a big hug for thinking about her birthday. Patty beamed under her mother’s arm and said, “I will still get flowers for you another day.”

Source: *Barker, I. (2004) Fun With language Book 4. Ministry of Education, Georgetown Guyana.*

Sub-values: Affection, consideration, caring, generosity, kindness, selflessness, sharing, Happiness, humility, contentment, good behaviour, good manners, satisfaction, perseverance, understanding.

Age group: 9 - 11 years

The Elephants and the Mice



There was once a village that was abandoned by its people after it shattered, following an earthquake. However, the mice living in the village decided to stay and make it their home. On the outskirts of this village, there was a lake, where a herd of elephants visited regularly to bathe and drink water. Since the village was on the way to this lake, the elephants trampled the mice while walking there. So, the king of mice decided to meet the elephants. He told them, "O elephants, as you travel through the village, many mice are trampled. We will be very grateful if you could please consider changing your route. We will remember and return the favour when you are in need."

The elephant king laughed, "We are giant elephants. What favour can you mice return? Nevertheless, we will honour your request and change our route."

After a few days, the elephants got trapped and entangled in nets that were set up by hunters. They struggled hard to escape, but in vain. The elephant king remembered the promise made by the king of mice. So, he sent a fellow elephant who got lucky and was not trapped, to ask the mice king to come and help them.

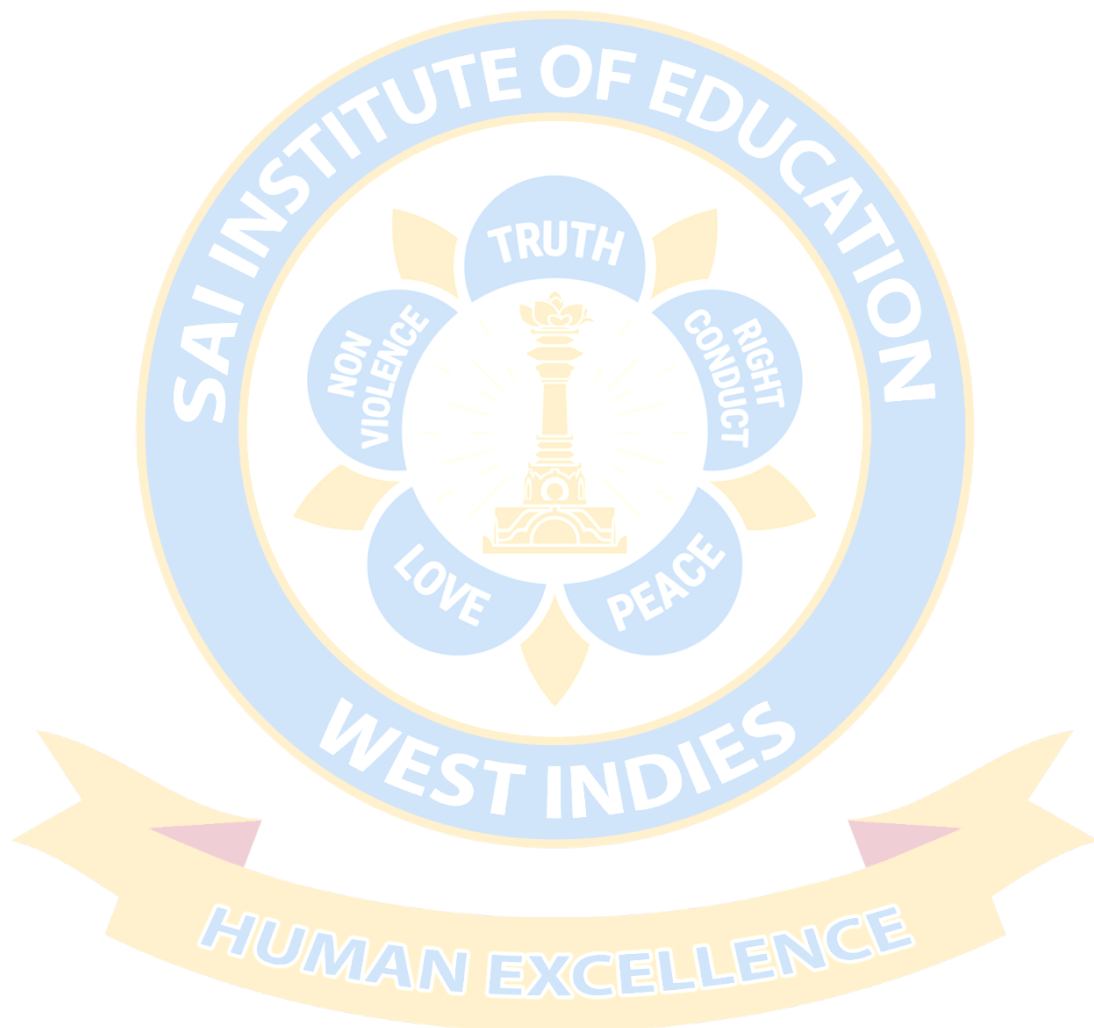
Soon, all the mice came and started nibbling the nets, and freed the elephants. The king of the elephants couldn't thank the mice enough!

Moral of the Story: *A friend in need is a friend indeed. Always be kind to people, and grateful for their help.*

Source: <https://parenting.firstcry.com/articles/top-10-short-stories-of-panchatantra-for-kids/>

Sub-value: Gratitude

Age group: 7 - 9 years



The Story of “Pawankali” (Adapted)

The usually quiet Ramnagar was abuzz with the news of a young elephant calf roaming in its fields. The Head of the Village called out Balram for help. Being a Mahout’s son, Balram knew a thing or two about handling elephants.

Balram spotted the culprit gobbling sugarcane in his own farm. As he stepped closer, the startled beast looked up to find out who was disturbing its delicious feast. Balram smiled and patted its head. Encouraged, the she-elephant resumed devouring the juicy canes. Balram joined her; suddenly realising he too hadn’t had anything since morning.

Her hunger satisfied, she playfully started chasing the birds, crushing other crops under her stubby feet. “Get away from here,, get away from here, my dear little one,” Balram affectionately encouraged her out.

They went to the jungle, looking for her mother without any luck. Chhutki (Little One) spent the night in the empty barn. The next seven days saw them continuing their search in different directions with no success. The little tusker now looked forward to their daily excursions into the deep woods.

“Poachers brutally killed an elephant for her tusks.” The newspaper headline confirmed Balram’s worst fears. Unsure what to do, Balram looked at his orphaned companion. She returned his gaze with her trusting eyes. The moment of uncertainty was gone.

“The elephant is too young to survive in the wilderness on her own. I will take care of her until she is able to fend for herself.” Balram informed the Head of the Village.

Balram christened the elephant Pawankali. She filled the void left behind by his only daughter who was pursuing Law in the US.

Spoiled with love, one day Pawankali wandered into a neighbour’s field, ruining the whole crop. A complaint with the forest department was registered. Pawankali was forcibly taken away, as the new Wildlife Protection Act prohibited to keep wild animals as domestic pets. A few days later, Balram’s daughter got killed in an indiscriminate shooting in her college. The devastation dealt by the twin blows sent him into a spiral of depression.

Loneliness got the better of him and Balram felt that life was not worth living. He continued in his state of loneliness until he decided to approach the office of the National Board for Wildlife with an application seeking custody of Pawankali. They relented on one condition –

Balram would have to move to Jim Corbett wildlife sanctuary. A wild animal can't live in a human settlement, but a human can live in the protected forest, they reasoned.

Pawankali and Balram now live next to Corbet Woods, a resort located near river Kosi.

Pawankali takes small kids on jungle safaris under Balram's supervision.

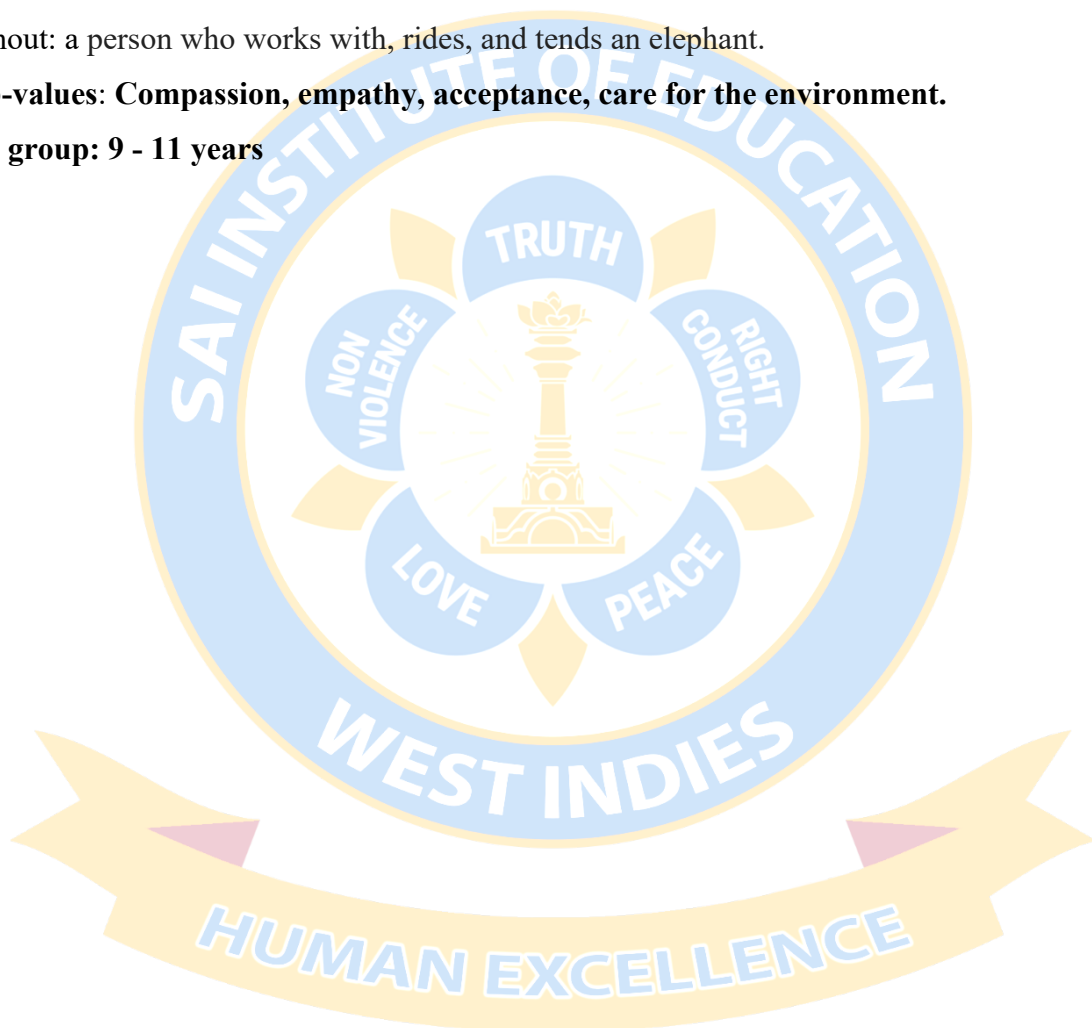
Earlier his friend, now his soulmate; Balram credits Pawankali for giving him a new lease of life.

Source: <https://penmancy.com/the-story-of-pawankali/>

Mahout: a person who works with, rides, and tends an elephant.

Sub-values: Compassion, empathy, acceptance, care for the environment.

Age group: 9 - 11 years



The Voice of Conscience

Mrs. Wilson had survived the loss of her husband and had been battling poverty alone while making sacrifices to groom her teenaged son, Horace, into a decent, God-loving and law abiding young man. Daily, she would remind him of a Bible verse and explain its message as best as she could to the boy. She was a sincere, dutiful and patient woman and she taught her child positive human values, partly in keeping with her promise to her dying husband - that Horace must grow up to be honest, truthful and a happy person.

“I’m fed up of all this talk about the Bible and Jesus and Christianity! Don’t tell me of it anymore!” he would rant. This twenty-year old, in recent years would return home drunk and haggard and had gotten into the habit of smoking. His mother was tired and afraid for him; that her once angelic son was exposed to the corrupting ways of town life.

She prayed to God for help.

In her quiet moments, she would think of her late husband, a pastor. She would imagine his wish for a family that is a *model of goodness and affection for all humanity*. One night, she dreamt her husband writing, underlining sentences in some of his favourite evangelical books. She had talked to Horace’s former teacher, Mr. Ram, about her child’s negative attitude. He understood.

Horace came home one day saying that he was joining a group of ‘pork-knockers’ and would be journeying from Bartica to Puruni to get fast money – digging for gold.

She saw her son packing his huge haversack with batteries, a transistor radio, eating utensils and cigarettes! Shocked, Mrs. Wilson, now felt that she had wasted her years.

From the bookshelf in her humble home, she grabbed a ‘Values’ book, marked by her husband’s hand. She wrote a short note on the inside first page about her love for her son Horace, who had now distanced himself from her, their family values, and God. Placing it in a clear plastic bag, she tucked the book into Horace’s haversack. She trusted that God will care and guide her son.

Two weeks later in the Puruni backdam, Horace was now experiencing the hardships of ‘bushlife’, and its attending dangers, quite unlike his home and his village, Bartica. He wept and worked. He missed the voice of his former friends and his mother. He was helpless and robotlike.

One evening after the first fortnight, while going through his meagre belongings, he saw a familiar book wrapped in clear plastic. He slowly opened it. Horace did not pack this. He recognized his father's book. He saw his mother's handwriting on its first page with her message. He almost fainted. He shouted "God!" But Horace did not want to look at the book. During his sleepless night, he remembered his childhood with his parents. The next day he worked harder and refused to eat. His conscience was bothering him. "What am I doing here?" "What made me do this?" "What is the cause of my despair?"

At day's end, he drank creek water to fill his stomach. He did not have batteries for his radio and his stock of cigarettes had been depleted.

The next day he was sick; physically, and very worried. Alone in the pork-knockers' camp, he tried to relax. He took out the discarded book and decided to read. The underlined words were clear and he read them aloud from the book on "**Values for Life**". His father, his mother and God were speaking to him. Horace completed reading all the lines which were underlined by his late father. He saw his mother's face and repented for being abusive to her and swerving from the righteous path.

By the end of the first month, Horace was reading aloud every evening. The raucous life of the pork-knocking crew became calmer. He was happier with God and his creation.

A falls-boat with drums of fuel arrived at the camp and he begged to return to Bartica on its roundabout trip. Breaking ranks with his buddies he left camp; famished, but happy.

Horace managed to reach 'home' and met his happy mother. Mrs. Wilson was astonished at how subdued he was. At the end of his meal he said 'Thank God'. She was shocked. She waited. Horace drew out the book '**Values for Life**' and showed his mother. They both smiled and hugged while Horace cried. In his mind he said, "No more bush-life for me!"

At their church service that weekend, Horace was happy to lead the choir with the hymn "*Amazing Grace*".

Sub-value: Inner Silence

Age group: 9 - 11 years.

Hard Work Pays off

The Common Entrance Examination class at St. Anthony's Roman Catholic School was known for its hardworking teacher, Sir Comacho, and his pupils, who generally did well at their exams. Competition was stiff in subjects like Spelling and Dictation as well as Notation and Arithmetic among the brighter children. But there were also pupils who excelled at Reading and General Knowledge. Kim, Morena and Cheryl always excelled. They were studious. Avis and Compton were always at the top of the class. However, they were sometimes caught cheating. Peter, a playful lad would complain to Sir that he would see the cheats 'cogging' while work was being done.

In the rural community of Bartica, a good secondary education was the dream of every parent for their sons and daughters. A 'free-place' at the Bartica Secondary School was the fervent aim of the students. Georgetown schools were expensive and a difficult choice.

For the goal of being a student at the secondary school, diligence at classwork and 'lessons' were essential. The teacher's recommendation was highly regarded. While most students worked hard, a few others did otherwise – they skulked from lessons and would even copy their friends' work, thinking that the teacher would never know.

The examinations were due in April of the next year. It was already December and everyone had a wonderful Christmas vacation. At the beginning of the New Year, work began in earnest again.

In the last two months before the big day, Peter was proving by his commitment and patience that he was as good as the top students, while Kim and Cheryl became aloof and sometimes boastful with over-confidence. Compton continued with his sly ways in getting good results and still appeared to be the top boy. Avis had changed her attitude for the better and was always alert to Sir's advice like many of the better students. The watchwords were: "*Do your best, read and revise a lot*", and "*There is no short-cut to success*".

All went well on the day of the examination. Some parents accompanied their children, and waited at the examination centre. Expectations were high from relatives of the children who sat the test. At the end of the day, there were good reports from all the students who claimed that the test was easy and they expected to pass.

In time, the results were announced. All were tense. Some cried. This had been their last chance to move on with their education.

Peter topped the school. He knew he could be the best with positive effort. Avis was pleased with second place. Kim lost her way because of boastful arrogance and over-confidence. Cheryl also failed because of being both boastful of her ability and laziness in completing her homework Compton came in at the bottom of the class. He was shocked at his results. He soon realized that Sir's advice was the best.

The new school year began with Peter and Avis and a few others being students at the coveted Secondary school. A brighter future awaited them.

Sub-values: Honesty, diligence.

Age group : 9+ 11 years



A Troubled Teenager

Kate, a secondary school student from Barbados, enjoyed a wonderful life with her parents and baby brother. They were not rich, but her parents worked hard and they would spend money wisely to have everything they needed. Kate also worked hard at her job of being a student. Now that the coronavirus pandemic had forced them to all stay at home, life had become a nightmare. Her parents were constantly arguing, making Kate very uncomfortable.

Kate didn't know what to do and would find herself thinking about her unhappy situation rather than focusing on her schoolwork. Now she barely did any schoolwork as she no longer cared. One day her teacher telephoned her and warned her that she was jeopardising her future by not doing her schoolwork. Kate wanted to talk to her about what was happening, but instead pretended that she didn't mind failing. How could her teacher possibly understand?

When Kate's teacher also complained to her parents, Kate got upset with her teacher. Kate did not realise that her teacher was trying to help her. Meanwhile, Kate's father was beginning to threaten her mother. Kate could not bear the pain. She wanted to hurt herself to end the pain. Her home had become a never-ending hell.

A few weeks later, in one of her classes, Kate was shown a video of a troubled teenager who found comfort by speaking to her friends. Kate had become distant from her friends during the pandemic because she did not want them to hear the quarrelling in the background. But she thought that maybe it was time to speak to her favourite teacher, Mr. Terrence. This would be a big step for her as she did not want to get her parents in trouble but wanted to help make things better.

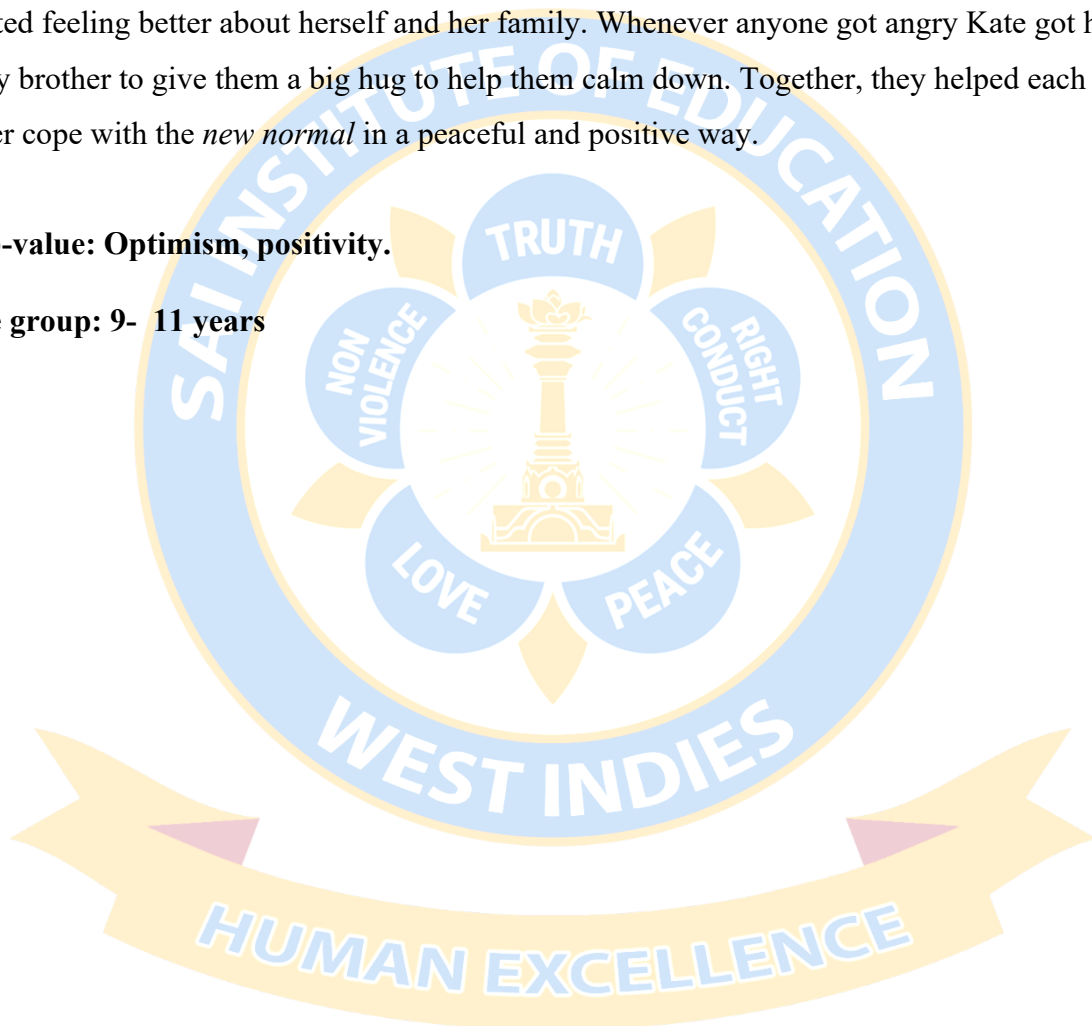
Kate sent Mr. Terrence a private message during their online session and he scheduled a time when she would be able to speak to him in confidence. When he telephoned her, she told him exactly what was happening at home and how she felt. By speaking to her teacher Kate was able to stop feeling depressed. They were able to figure out that her parents were frustrated and did not know how to express their frustration without hurting others.

Mr. Terrence was able to help Kate realise that she was still loved by her family and had a special purpose to fulfil in life. He sent a poster which guided parents to be good role models by exercising, meditating, and having optimistic habits. The poster encouraged everyone to pursue beneficial activities to keep occupied and to avoid arguments by calmly expressing how they felt rather than getting angry.

Kate started to see her parents genuinely try to listen to each other and support each other. This encouraged her to do her part by once again doing her best in her schoolwork. Soon Kate started feeling better about herself and her family. Whenever anyone got angry Kate got her baby brother to give them a big hug to help them calm down. Together, they helped each other cope with the *new normal* in a peaceful and positive way.

Sub-value: Optimism, positivity.

Age group: 9- 11 years



Sally's Scare

Sally was a six-year-old girl who lived in Arima, Trinidad, with her mother and twin brother Harry. They both attended the Arima Island School. However, in March 2020, Sally's mother told her that there was a pandemic so they had to stay at home until it was safe. Both Sally and her brother were scared. "Are we going to die Mummy?" asked Harry. "No my darling, you will be safe at home," their mother replied, "I will teach you to follow safety protocols."

At first the children enjoyed being at home but then their mother, a store clerk, was told that she couldn't return to work until it was safe for people to be out in public. Now the children became worried because they did not know how their mother would get money to buy things they needed. When Sally spoke to her mother about it her mother told her to always remain calm and think positively. The three of them discussed examples of other people who were able to overcome challenges and Sally felt better. The next day Sally's mother spoke to a police officer who told her where she could go to apply for help from the government. They were all hopeful.

A few days later, a farmer from the community unexpectedly dropped off some vegetables and other supplies to their home. They were overjoyed as Sally's mother was also able to secure a social grant to help her pay the bills. At night when their mother was lovingly putting them to bed, Sally asked her mother if everything would be okay. Her mother assured her that once they remained calm, continued to think positively and always supported each other, they could face any obstacle together.

"How can I be supportive?" asked Sally. "Always think only loving thoughts, say only loving words and do only loving actions," said her mother. Sally thought about the kind, generous farmer. "Mummy, I also want to be kind and helpful all the time," she whispered as she yawned. "Yes Sally, we should all be kind and helpful all the time," Mummy agreed softly. That night Sally had a wonderful dream of being a loving and caring helper who looked after all in her community.

Sub-values: Kindness, helping, sharing.

Age group: 6 - 8 years

Anil Gets Frustrated

Anil was a nine-year-old boy from New Amsterdam, Guyana. He had enjoyed going to school but since the pandemic began, life had changed a lot. Now he had to do virtual learning because it was not safe to go to school. This was a great challenge for Anil because he did not have his own device. He had to wait for his father to come home from work and then get the work from his father's smartphone.

Anil felt lonely because he could no longer meet his schoolfriends to play. He was at the senior level of primary school and had a lot of schoolwork to do. He felt frustrated because there was so much work to write, learn and figure out for homework. One day he felt as if he could not bear the stress anymore. "I cannot do online learning Daddy," he sobbed bitterly, "It's too much for me!"

Anil's father gave him a tight hug and comforted him as he cried. "It's okay Anil, I know that this new normal will take a while for you to get accustomed to, but I have always taught you to try your best." Anil's father then showed him how to take deep breaths and sit silently, imagining whichever form of Nature made him feel happy. He assured him that he just had to be optimistic when facing new situations, build his self-confidence and never be afraid of anything.

When Anil calmed down, he discussed with his father all the things that frustrated him. His father guided him to make a home timetable so that he could do his schoolwork in parts and also take breaks in between work. This involved doing some of his schoolwork at night and the rest the next morning. Anil's father also got his aunt to videocall and guide him on the phone whenever he did not understand a topic.

In time Anil realised that when he broke up all his schoolwork into chunks, it made it easier for him to manage. Taking breaks in between chunks of work helped him to avoid being stressed because he used his break time to exercise, water the plants, make chow or just relax for a bit.

Soon Anil became comfortable with the new normal as he realised that every problem had a solution and once he remained confident and kept calm, he could get help to figure it out.

Sub-value: Perseverance

Age group : 9-11 years