



Teacher's Guide and Lesson Plan for *Penguin's Special Christmas Tree*

By Jeannie St. John Taylor

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Part One: Before Reading the Book

Vocabulary

- **Christmas** (title page)

Suggested activity: explore holidays around the same season

- **Tree** (title page)

Suggested activity: think of different kinds of trees – relate them to geography

- **Contest** (page one)

Suggested activity: Ask students “what is competition? Is it all about winning?”

- **Friendship** (theme)

Suggested activity: Ask your students “who is your best friend? How many friends do you have? What’s the most important thing about having friends?”

Predictions

1) What would you do if you wanted to win a competition with your best friend? How could you work together with a friend to win a competition? Why is it important to be able to work in teams?

2) What would you do if you had to impress Santa? What could you do if you had to impress your parents?

Part Two: While Reading the Book

Comprehension and Discussion Questions

1. While reading the story, ask students the following questions. Get them to take turns sharing their ideas so that they can learn more about one another and how they celebrate the holidays.
2. Do you celebrate Christmas?
3. What do you celebrate?
4. What is your favorite part about Christmas?
5. Does it snow everywhere for Christmas?
6. What would you like Santa to bring you for Christmas?
7. What is the most important thing about this season?
8. When I say Christmas, what color do you think of? Why? Do you have a best friend? What does it mean to be a friend? What do friends do?
9. What is friendship? What does it mean to you? Get the students think of original ideas to put in the top of a Christmas tree (excluding the ideas already mentioned in the book).
10. If they don't celebrate Christmas, what holiday (if any) do they celebrate? Incorporate it into the activity so that way other children can be educated on other holidays.

Part Three: After reading the book

Language Arts

Here, we will divide the classroom into different groups. Each group will learn the word in a different language and will teach the rest of their classmates.

1. Teach your students different ways of saying Christmas or seasons greetings in various languages. e.g Felices fiestas (Spanish), Auguri (Greetings/season greetings Italian), Boas Festas (Portuguese).
2. How do you say friendship in different languages?

Songs

In this activity, the whole class will sing along.

- "Oh Christmas Tree"

Lyrics: http://www.lyricsfreak.com/b/boney+m./oh+christmas+tree_20022472.html

- “Deck the Halls with lots of Holly”

Lyrics: http://www.carols.org.uk/deck_the_halls.htm

- This song is to the tune of the “Color Song”:
(name) is the friend I see
If you are (name) please smile for me
Stand up, turn around
Wave to your friends and then sit down.
- This song is to the tune of “If You’re Happy...”
If you’re friendly and you know it, clap your hands.
If you’re friendly and you know it, clap your hands.
If you’re friendly and you know it, and you really want to show it, if you’re friendly and you know it, clap your hands!

Art Activities

Friendship bracelets

Give each child a piece of string and some fruit loops. Have the children string the fruit loops onto the string to make a bracelet. Then the children can trade with a friend. Explain that you make a friendship bracelet to show your friends you care for them.

Clay Ornaments

Bring in some moulding clay and cookie cutter shapes. Divide students into groups of four and tell them that they have to share the cookie cutters for the activity. Using the cookie cutter, they will make Christmas clay ornaments. When they are dry, you can put a string through the ornament and the students can take them home.

Drama

Using *Penguin’s Special Christmas Tree*, write a play with your students. Centre the play around the concepts of the season/holiday, fundamental values on how the holidays are important to think about peace and love from friends and family. Once the play has been written, get the kids to perform the play for their parents. In this activity, every student will participate in the play.

Gym

Divide the class in pairs (of best friends), tie their legs, and run a 3-legged race. To make it more fun, and inclusive, try a four-legged race when the kids have had a good practice! This will encourage kids to work together and be more

inclusive.

Math

Problems can be modified for other religions or other holidays students celebrate.

- 1) Joe has 9 gifts under the Christmas tree from his mom and dad. Dad gave him 3. How many gifts did mom give him?
- 2) Sue ate 6 candy canes and Jane ate 2 candy canes. How many more candy canes did Sue eat than Jane?
- 3) Kyle got 3 new trucks for Christmas. If he has 5, how many trucks does he have now?
- 4) You have to share your 8 chocolates with your sister. How many will each of you get?
- 5) Candy canes are 5 cents. How many candy canes can you buy with 10 cents?

Science

Investigating a burning candle - compare how long candles burn when different sized jars are placed over them. Notice that the larger jars (with more oxygen) allow the candles to burn longer. This theme in relation to cooking can show the importance of oxygen as the source of life, but keeping it extremely basic as it might be quite difficult to comprehend for young children. I.e. turn on a fan, and ask them that what they are feeling from the fan is air. And if they blow out from their mouths its air too.

EXTRAS

Here are several websites that are about celebrating the holiday season. These sites are also full of game ideas.

<http://www.thekidzpage.com/christmas/index.htm>

<http://www.funbrain.com/kidscenter.html>

About the author:

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