

Something special: Marking special events



Primary Lesson Plan

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Source

Oodles of Noodles: Early Years (Integrated Units Collection)

Learning areas

Studies of society and environment, English

Level

Lower primary (K–2)

Description

This unit provides opportunities for students to consider themselves as individuals and as integral parts of both a family and a broader community. It is anticipated that they will be able to identify some aspects of the history of their family, develop an awareness of the diversity in other families and communities, and value that diversity. One activity from the unit is presented here.

Purpose

Using items of special significance and stories, students learn the way we mark occasions and some common symbols we use.

Duration

2 sessions

Possible outcomes

In relation to *Studies of society and environment — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, and *English — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, work on this activity could lead to the achievement of outcomes in the following strands:

- **Studies of society and environment**
 - Time, Continuity and Change
 - Place and Space
 - Culture

- **English**
Speaking and Listening

There will also be links with other learning areas such as the Arts.

Materials required

- collection of memorabilia, brown paper bags, marker pens
- children's picture books such as:
 - *Ruby* by Alison Lester (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1991)
 - *The Red Woolen Blanket* by Bob Graham (Viking Kestrel, 1987)

Procedure

1 Setting the scene

Prepare a mystery bag containing a range of objects related to events, stages, characteristics and origins of people's lives. Include items of significance: photos and pictures of people and housing; specific items of clothing (such as a baby's bib, a christening robe, a wedding veil); tools or implements; objects used in rites or ceremonies, such as a candle (birthday, church, weddings, telling time); family memorabilia. Invite students to reach in and remove an object from the mystery bag. Focus discussion on the items withdrawn.

Ask:

- Why might that be important to someone?
- When do you think this was used by someone?
- Do you know anyone who still has a ... like this?
- Have you kept anything from when you were little?
- Why has this person kept this thing? What was its purpose?
- Who might use this item? (Consider cultural differences as well as age.)
- Why do you think the place in this picture is special?

2 Group the items and discuss any commonalities

Identify any common aspects to the items and why these might recur (for example, all from babyhood, all to do with births, marriages).

3 Read stories about valued objects

Read the story *Ruby* by Alison Lester or *The Red Woollen Blanket* by Bob Graham. Use the story to stimulate discussion about valued objects from stages in the students' own or their families' lives.

4 Creating personal mystery bags

Ask each child to bring one object to school in a mystery bag. Send home large brown paper bags that the children have labelled, with a covering letter to parents requesting that the child be permitted to find a suitable item and relevant information about it (a parent may include written information in the bag) and bring it to school.

Explain that the item should have significance in the life of the child or in the life of a member of the family, for example, a person, a special occasion, a religious or cultural celebration, a holiday, a family member's cultural origin or a place of importance.

The bag should be sealed and the item should be kept a secret (if possible!).

Display unopened mystery bags in a decorative wall display, on string from the ceiling or on a table.

5 Talking about special items

Invite students to open their bag and share their secret with the rest of the class. This may be done as a daily activity — a few children at a time — over the period of a week.

Encourage students to say why that item was chosen, what they know about it and how it relates to prior discussions. Read out any written information accompanying the object.

Display items next to photos of students and name cards for further reference.

Acknowledgements

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