

I Won't Go To China

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Teaching Guide

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RATIONALE AND THEMES

This is a gentle story, which weaves a path from disappointment and rejection through gentle support to pride and acceptance.

The essence of the story is universal, charting how disappointment at missing a football match leads Chang-ming to begin to reject all that is special in his life.

The subtle intervention of the teacher distracts this process and allows his pride in his cultural tradition to be re-asserted.

The themes are essentially SPHE and include:

- Disappointment
- Cultural heritage
- Family relationships
- Making choices
- Valuing contributions
- Unhappiness.

SUMMARY

Chang-ming's selection for the school football team coincides with a planned family holiday, visiting his granny in Beijing to celebrate Chinese New Year.

Chang-ming is very unhappy at having to miss the opportunity to play for the school team and, in his frustration, begins to reject all things Chinese, much to the concern of his parents.

His mum approaches his teacher and together they devise a subtle yet creative diversion which distracts Chang-ming and allows him the opportunity to reassert, share and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of his Chinese traditions.

APPROACH

The themes of the story are universal and offer fertile scope to examine how feelings of disappointment can contribute to negative thoughts and actions. The story also demonstrates how positive action and energy can provide a distraction from disappointment, helping to contribute to and strengthen feelings of self worth.

The approach should favour whole class discussion/ circle time and offer the opportunity for the children to identify and assess how their own behaviour can be influenced by personal experiences of disappointments.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (Read pp5-7) Chang-ming decided that he didn't want to be

Chinese any longer. What do you think caused him to begin to think this way? Can you think of any other things people do when they are feeling very disappointed? What sort of things could they do to help themselves to feel better?

- (Read pp16-18) The teacher has managed to get Chang-ming to change his mind about going to China. How do you think she did that? Why is it necessary for everyone to feel that what they do is important?
- (Read pp 24-27) Chang-ming's granny believed that there were lots of ways to bring 'Good Luck'. Do you think that any of these were really true? Why do you think people have superstitions? Have you heard any superstitions from your granny?

ACTIVITIES

1. My Name

(Read pp 6-7) Chang-ming didn't want to be called 'Forever Bright'. His mum and dad had chosen the name because there had been a bright full moon when he was born.

If you were able to choose a name for yourself that described something special and interesting about you, what would it be?

You could design a personal bookmark with the name and a picture of why you chose it.

2. My Year

(Read pp19-20) The Chinese New Year usually begins in late January or early February. Each year is named after an animal and there are twelve animals.

Chang-ming was born during the year of the Snake, which is between the year of the Dragon and the year of the Horse.

Do you think you could make a chart of the animals from page 20 and what year they represent?

If the year 2000 was the year of the Dragon, can you calculate what age Chang-ming is?

Can you use your chart to calculate which Chinese year you were born?

3. The Photograph

(Read pp 22-31) Chang-ming took lots of photos of China for his school report. Which of them do you think was his favourite? It will be the one that he is going to use for the front of his report.

Do you think that you could help Chang-ming design the front

cover for his report?

It will have a title and several pictures and drawings as well as some interesting facts about China and the Chinese New Year.

4. The Wish

(Read p26) As his hair was being cut, Chang-ming made a wish. If you were to have one wish, can you say what it would be and explain why you chose it?

If you cut out and decorate a star shape, you could write your wish on one side and then your explanation on the other.

5. Dressed to Impress

(Read p27) Mei Li has bought Chang-ming a new outfit of Chinese clothes for the New Year party.

It is a beautiful outfit and Chang-ming looks splendid dressed in such bright colours.

Do you think that you could draw a picture of Chang-ming in his Chinese clothes?

You can find a template at: www.tinyurl.com/ChineseClothes

6. Glad to Be....

(Read pp29-32) Chang-ming finally realises that he is lucky to be Chinese. Can you find three things that you think helped to

persuade him? You could illustrate these with a drawing.

Could you think carefully about the place where you are from and what you would say to someone to convince them that you are proud of your own background?

Could you choose and illustrate three things that make you proud of your own tradition?

7. My granny thinks I'm?

(Read pp 25 & 32) Chang-ming's granny thinks he is very special. She has lots of photos of him, and when she sees him for the first time she is very happy.

How do you think that your granny/granddad would describe you so that everyone knew how special you were to them?

If they were talking about you to a neighbour, what might they say?

Could you write out what they might say and then perform it for the others in the class, perhaps?

You could pretend to be your granny and begin your description of yourself with:

'My Caoimhe is just...'

Class Project

In the story, Chang-ming is disappointed at missing the football match and, in his frustration, he begins to resent being Chinese. It is only when he is given the opportunity to report on his trip to Beijing for Chinese New Year that his pride is restored and he is able to appreciate the richness of his Chinese tradition and heritage.

1. Proud to be

This first activity is best suited to a whole-class project with everyone having the chance to make a contribution. The focus of the activity can either be broadly environmental or focused on a specific issue, as appropriate.

The prompt of the activity could be:

'Chang-ming eventually realised that he was proud and glad to be Chinese. What do you think there is to be proud of in your own background / area / tradition?'

The initial activity could simply be a walk around the immediate local environment (school / local area) identifying items of interest.

Research and information-gathering could then be classified, eg:

Places we see / Things we do... etc

For display, a simple generic form, such as a blank tree or a blank map, could be used to represent either the area or the tradition, and the children could then add their own individual comments on what they think makes them most proud to be associated with it.

Cut-outs in the shape of hands or leaves could be used for the comments and these could be attached to the tree/map, emphasising not only the sense of association but also the range and diversity of opinion.

2. Celebration

The previous activity can also be themed as appropriate and focused at an individual level of ability, where the children are given the opportunity to record their own observations and impressions of a specific cultural celebration or event.

During the activity, children will get the opportunity to develop awareness of different forms of writing and consider how the differences between fact and opinion can be used to create different impressions.

Class and small-group discussion about the nature of fact and opinion will give children a valuable opportunity to develop personal thinking skills as they try to clarify the impression that they want to create and consider how to use the literary tools to create it.

The task asks the children to create a single A3 sheet on their specific topic. The task suits either individual or small-group output.

Initially, whole-class discussion can be used to create an adequate range of ideas and suggestions, ensuring the individual finished tasks will have a range of pictures and comment.

The comment falls into three categories:

1. DID YOU KNOW: (Fact and information: concise and clear)
2. PEOPLE SAY: (Opinion: comment or popular myth)
3. I LIKE: (Personal preference /opinion)

Class discussion can draw the distinction between the different categories of comment, how they can be used to create an impression and how they can be recognised. **(See template on page 3)**

Halloween

Did you know?

People say ...

People say ...

Picture

Did you know?

Did you know?

People say ...

I like

(See kids.nationalgeographic.com/Places/Find/China for age appropriate information)

The Great Wall of China was built more than two thousand years ago by the Emperor Qin. It was built to protect the Chinese from the fierce warrior tribes who lived to the north and west of China. The Wall itself is over 6000km long – that is almost twenty times longer than the distance from Derry to Cork. The wall is so long that you can see it from a space ship orbiting the earth.

Do you think that you could make a replica of the Wall in your classroom?

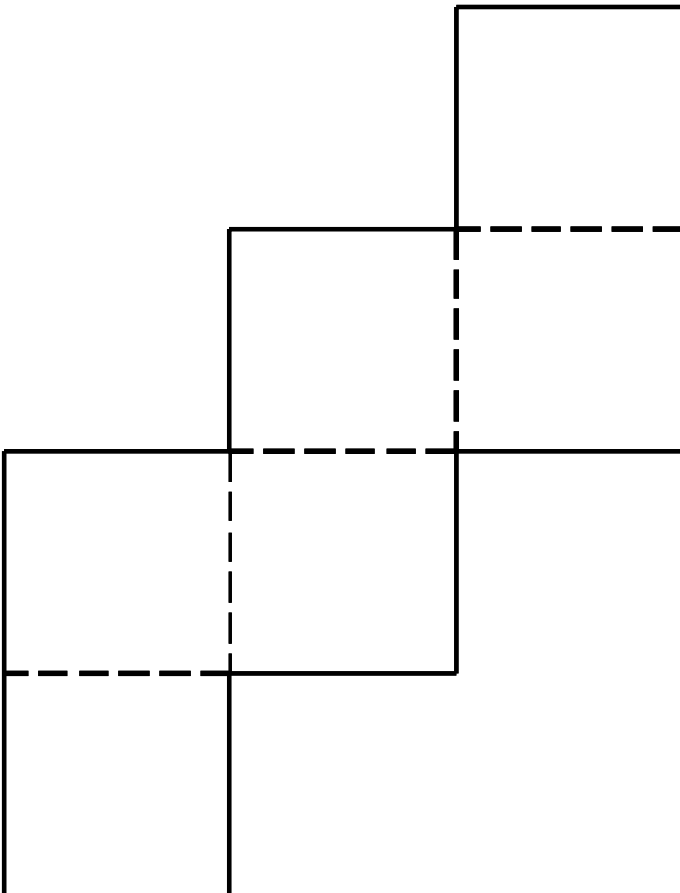
You are going to need something to build the Wall with. If you use the shape below (this is called a net), you can cut it out and fold it along the dotted lines and it will fold into a cube.

Before you glue your net into a cube, you can decorate the six faces and record some interesting information about China on each face. That way, when you build your wall, it will be:

The Great Information Wall of China.

You will need to decide which colours to use and what types of information you wish to include. You could decide to include information on:

- The geography of China
- Chinese traditions and customs
- Chinese dress
- Chinese food
- Chinese legends
- Chinese language and characters

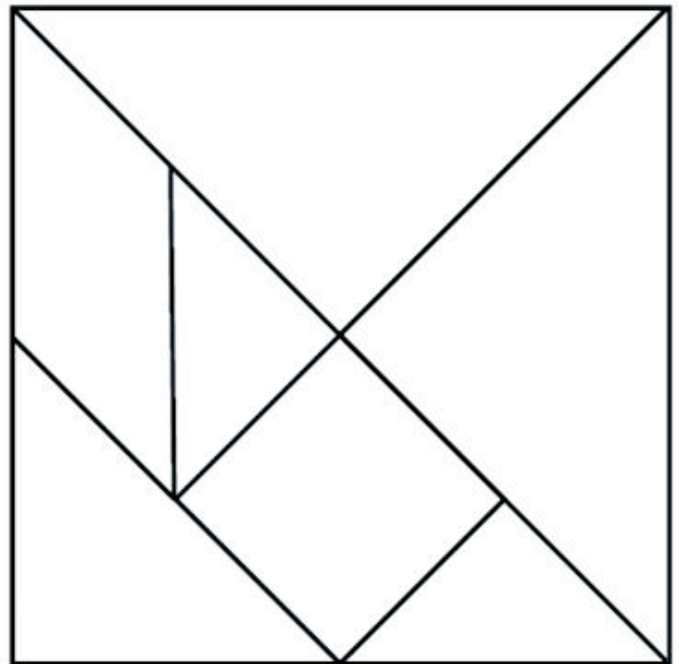


The tangram is an ancient Chinese puzzle. It is a square that has been cut into seven different shapes. When the square has been cut up, the puzzle is to use all the pieces to re-assemble the square again.

There are lots of other fun ways to use the puzzle:

1. You can use the pieces to make shapes of animals, people, an aeroplane and cars etc.
(You must use ALL the pieces for each shape.)
2. You can make your own shape. Trace around the outline, then cut out and separate all the pieces. Challenge your friends to put the pieces back where they fit.
(You must remember where the pieces go so that you can check if they are correct.)

Cut out the tangram shape below carefully from cardboard and have fun...



Try these to start you off:

- What is the smallest number of pieces you need to make a square?
- How many small squares can you make?
- Can you use all seven pieces to make a rectangle?
- Can you name the shape of all the tangram pieces?

There is more background information and lots of interactive tangram puzzles (with the solutions! Some of them are difficult) at the following website: www.logicville.com/tangram.htm