

Book Club Questions – Crow Boy

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Human Relationships: Making Fun of Others

The children in the story make fun of Chibi by calling him names like slowpoke and stupid. This is so unkind. Discuss name calling with your student and why she should not participate in it. Also discuss how she should react if someone makes fun of her.

Human Relationships: Recognizing talents in other people

Mr. Isobe saw something special in Crow Boy-- something that none of the other teachers or students saw. What was it? Something good! Crow Boy wasn't weird or stupid. He was smart and special. Encourage your students to think of family members, friends, and other people they know. What talents do each of these people possess? What makes each person special?

How do you think Crow Boy felt when his classmates made fun of him? How do you think he felt when they gave him the nickname Crow Boy?

If you were Crow Boy, how would you have liked to be treated?

What lesson do you think Crow Boy's classmates learned?

Mixed Media

Yashima used crayon, ink, pencil, and tempera to illustrate this book. Can your student pick out the various mediums in the pictures? ("Do you see where the crayon is used? The ink? Pencil?"). Discuss that when illustrators combine mediums, we call this mixed medium. After studying the illustrations together, go to your art supply cabinet and let your student choose two (or more) different mediums to combine to create a picture of his own.

Black and White drawings

Just for fun, let your student try a black and white drawing like Chibi. Does he like it or would he rather add color? Discuss these things. Look at other books you may own that only have black and white drawings. Would your student add color to them or leave them black and white? Why?

ACTIVITY

Geography: Japan

The name Japan means "the sun" and Japan is also referred to as "the land of the rising sun". The Japanese flag is a red circle (sun) on a white background. Have students use red and white construction paper to make a Japanese flag.

Food: In Japan, people eat their food with chopsticks. They also have different dinner etiquette. For example it's considered very rude to ever point with your chopsticks or leave your chopsticks sticking up in your bowl of rice or other food. You should never use your chopsticks to stab or skewer food. When serving food from a common platter, you should use opposite ends of the

chopstick than what you put in your mouth. It's also considered good manners to pick up a bowl of rice and hold it right below your mouth so the rice doesn't fall in your lap. Making slurping sounds when eating soup or drinking something is a compliment to the chef.

Buy inexpensive chopsticks for your students to try using them. Have them practice using the chopsticks by picking up cotton balls before they try eating with them. When ready, give your student a small bowl of sticky rice to try.

Clothing: Visit [Making Friends](#) and print out a Japanese paper dolls. On the page are two traditional Japanese outfits; the kimono (kee-mo-no) and the gi (gee). The word kimono simply means things to wear. Both women and men wear the kimono. Kimono are very rarely worn as every day clothing today. Sometimes if one travels to a rural area in Japan or a smaller island like Okinawa, you will see the kimono worn by elders. A Japanese woman usually owns only one kimono in her lifetime. It's a special kimono worn for the coming of age ceremony on her 19th birthday. Kimono are still popular in wedding ceremonies, but are typically rented. The traditional shoe worn with a kimono is a pair of geta sandal. They look very similar to American flip-flops. The Japanese also have special socks to wear with their geta sandals. They're called tabi socks. The socks are kind of like mittens for feet. The big toe is separate from the rest of the toes to make wearing sandals easier. The white pants and shirt set found on the page is called a gi. Gis are typically worn in a dojo when practicing martial arts such as karate.

Chop: A chop is a personal seal and is sometimes used as a signature. Chops are often found on scrolls, screens and official documents. Traditionally, they are usually carved in soft stone, bone, or wood and are made of symbols that say something about the owner or are things important to them. When an artist was done creating his work of art, he would dip his chop in red ink and stamp it onto the piece.

Have your students create their own chop by carving it into a small block of craft foam or a gum eraser. For younger students, you may want to have them draw a simple design on paper and then transfer it to the chop and carve it yourself. Or you can use a ready made stamp from the store that has a picture that has meaning to the child. Be sure to remember to carve the design in reverse so it shows up correctly when stamped. Once you have the chop, your student is ready to use a red ink pad to stamp away.

Japanese Garden (design project)

The Japanese place great value on their gardens. Garden designers are considered artist. Gardens are typically represent a miniature world. Since space is rare many gardens are sculptured to represent a miniature world. Items placed in the garden represent larger landforms. Rocks for example symbolize mountains; trees represent forests and so on.

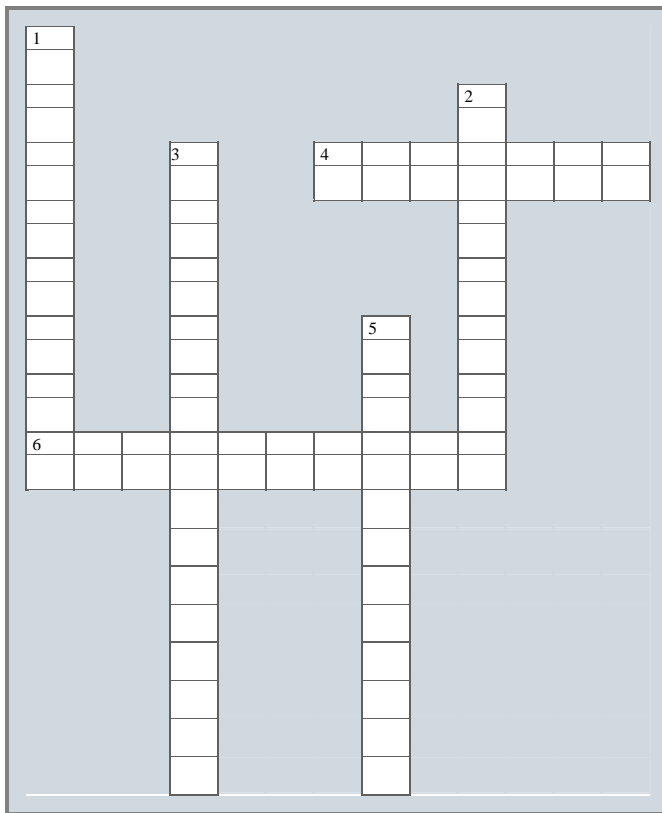
Make your own miniature Japanese garden. You can find many attractive containers are your local gardening or home improvement store. Look for a container that is long and doesn't have very high walls such as a large saucer for a terra cotta pot. You can research plants that typically grow in Japan and see if they are available in your area. If not, any plants will do, just remember this is suppose to be a miniature world so small plants are best to work with. Once you have your

container and plants all you need now is rocks and pebbles and any other embellishments you might want to add such as sand for a beach or desert perhaps. While you're at the store you might also look for decorative bamboo. They have become very popular over the last few years. These plants have been bent to grow into decorative patterns.

If your student is feeling particularly creative you might try experimenting aluminum foil or other plastic containers to add water features. Or you might try adding small pebble painted blue (such as fish tank gravel) to represent the water features instead.

This is a great time to introduce younger students to what makes plants grow and different land features. Older students might enjoy researching Japan's land features and using the miniature garden for making a replica of the country.

Crow Boy Crossword



Across

4. high respect, as that shown for special merit; esteem
6. the successful completion of a

Down

1. to walk laboriously or wearily along or over

program of study

2. lonely and sad
3. the frequency with which a person is present
5. to copy exactly

STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES, BUT WORDS WILL NEVER HURT ME.

Words Do Hurt

What Parents Can Teach Their Children

by Deborah Byrnes

.Fatty!. .Four-eyes!. .Stupid!. .Chink!. .We don.t want you to play!. Whether our child is the victim or the perpetrator, parents are usually distressed to hear children use such hurtful words. By understanding why children engage in name calling and by responding thoughtfully to such events, we can help both the name caller and the victim.

Isn.t Name Calling Just Part of Childhood?

Name calling doesn.t have to be part of childhood. Children need to learn that words do hurt every bit as much as physical pain. In fact, the memory and pain of being called names is often carried far into adulthood. You can help children understand that words don.t cut or bruise the skin, but they do hurt people on the inside where it doesn.t show. If your child engages in name calling, talk to them about the circumstances under which the name calling occurred and encourage the child to find another way to express his or her anger or hurt. Explain that name calling hurts people and doesn.t help fix problems.

Why Are Children Likely to Use Name Calling or Hurtful Words?

Out of ignorance of the impact of his or her words Children may be uncomfortable or curious when they see people who look or act differently from themselves. They may use derogatory words to describe the difference. .How come that kid looks weird?. may be blurted out when first seeing a child who has a physical difference.

This is a perfect opportunity to talk about differences. Children need to realize that people are not all alike and that we can enjoy learning about how people are different. Explain to your children that we often think people are strange because what they do or how they look is unfamiliar to us. We don't think what we do or how we look is strange because that is what we are used to. To avoid hurting others, we can tell children to ask us quietly or privately about differences that they observe in the people around them.

Because of anger

Children may use name calling because they want to punish or get a reaction from a person they are angry at. Because they have been good observers of the culture, they use a name that they know carries the power to hurt. Young children may use names that do not even match the characteristics of the person they are trying to hurt. The child knows that the word can be used to hurt others, so he or she uses it without understanding the meaning. In such instances it is important for the parent to focus on the use of name calling to hurt others rather than focusing on the inaccuracy of the term. Let the child know that name calling is unacceptable, and help him or her to think of other ways to deal with his or her feelings.

To feel powerful and important

A child may call someone else .stupid. to mask his or her own insecurities and show others that he or she is better than the victim. Sometimes a child will put another child down with a name to mask his or her own hurt at being left out or rejected. Acknowledge the child's feelings, and help the child to come up with alternative ways to interact. A parent might say, .It sounds like you are [hurt, angry, upset], but name calling is not okay. What could you do differently next time you feel this way?.

To gain acceptance

If high-status friends use put-down words, a child might do the same to feel accepted and show support for friends. Parents can explain to their child that it is not okay to put others down, even if friends do it. Help your child to empathize with the victim. Ask your child these questions:

.How do you think the victim of the name calling felt?.

.Did you feel good about saying that?.

.What else could you have done?.

Encourage your child to act differently in the future. Role play situations with your child to give practice saying

things like, .I don.t like name calling. It.s not playing fair,. or .Just leave him alone..

Correcting a Child.s Thinking

Name calling can involve naïve or illogical thinking on the part of the child. If a young child puts down whole groups of people, it is important to carefully correct his or her thinking without making the child feel defensive. For example, a father has just been confronted by a very

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angry 6-year-old daughter who says, .I don.t like Wu; she.s Chinese.. (This statement has occurred after she has clearly had a rather upsetting play date with her friend Wu.) The father might respond with some of the following ideas: .I know you are angry at Wu, but when you say .I don.t like Wu; she.s Chinese,. it sounds like you know all the people in the world from China and you don.t like any of them. You can only like or dislike people you know. There are people you don.t like to play with because they do things you don.t like, but being from China has nothing to do with it. It is okay to say that you are angry with your friend Wu, but we don.t judge people we don.t know..

What Do I Say When My Child Is Called Names?

When a child has been put down by someone else.s language, it is important for the child not to internalize the negative message he or she received. The message is, .You are a bad or unacceptable person because you are [dark skinned, poor, Jewish].. Talk with the child and assure him or her that it was wrong for the other child to say such things. Help your child understand that some children have not yet learned that calling people names because of the way they look or behave is wrong. You may explain that children call people names because they are angry, confused, or unsure of themselves; and they have not learned better ways to deal with their feelings. You may also point out that it is silly and unfair to hurt people because of how they look, where they live, or what they wear. Help the child to see the problem as belonging to the name caller, not to him or her.

If name calling or exclusion is a frequent problem at school, talk with your child.s teacher and let him or her know what is occurring. Teachers can implement character-education lessons that will help all the children in the class be more sensitive to and

accepting of each other. There are numerous children's books that can be used by parents or teachers to open discussions on this topic. Here are a few titles that should be easy to find in most school or public libraries:

Amazing Grace by M. Hoffman

Crowboy by T. Yashima

Chrysanthemum by K. Henkes

Activity Corner

Woodworking

Tools are interesting to children because they see adults using them. Providing boys and girls with child size tools and wood scraps creates an opportunity for them to learn woodworking as well as develop motor skills and creativity. Their eyes, hands, and muscles work together as they create.

The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss

You Look Ridiculous, Said the Rhinoceros to the

Hippopotamus by B. Waber

Practicing What We Preach

As we work with our children to be respectful of others, we must make sure that we model this behavior. If people use bigoted language around you or your child, don't ignore it. Children need to know that such behavior is unacceptable even when it comes from a relative or respected adult. A calmly stated response such as, ".Please don't use such language around me or my child, .I'm uncomfortable with that word because it is hurtful to others, or .That kind of joke is not funny to me, should get the point across. Later you may want to share why the word or words were not respectful of others. If your child asks why Grandma or Aunt Ceily would say such a thing, you might say, ".A lot of wrong ideas about people have been causing problems for a long time. It's sad when people make others feel bad because of [the color of their skin, their religion, their weight]. People grow up with these ideas, and it's hard to get rid of them. But when a lot of children like you grow up, fewer and fewer people will believe such things. In the mean time, we can help others learn that it isn't fair or kind to say such things.. This kind of message helps children know that they can help overcome racism, sexism, and other forms of bigotry.

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books and articles on anti-bias education.