

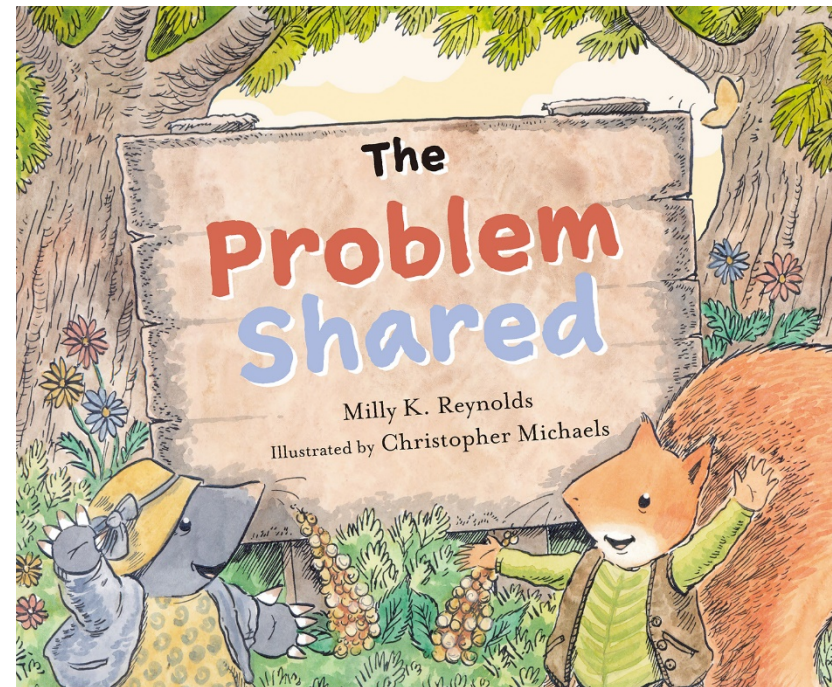
The Problem Shared Teaching Notes

Author: Milly K. Reynolds

Illustrator: Christopher Michaels

Synopsis:

Sebastian, a noble squirrel from the Redfoot clan, is on his way to a huge family feast when he encounters Olive, a girl in desperate need. Her farm is parched, her bucket leaks, and her future looks bleak. Torn between his plans and his kind heart, Seb thinks of ways to help Olive and enlists the help of a clever friend to solve Olive's problem. The Problem Shared is a heartwarming tale of friendship and teamwork. With beautiful and engaging traditional artwork, this story is sure to delight and engage all readers.



Teaching Notes - The Problem Shared by Milly K Reynolds

Responding to the text

Discussion

What are the major themes of the book? How do you know? What evidence do you have from the text or the illustrations?

Suggestions

Take the time to think about the proverb, 'a problem shared is a problem halved'. Do you believe it is true? There is no right or wrong answer, simply how well can you explain your thinking.

Responding to the text: Year Level Ideas

Foundation: respond orally to each question using simple statements.	Year 1 – 2: do you know what a proverb is? Can you think of any other proverbs? These can then be written down.	Year 3 – 4: respond by writing a persuasive paragraph. Start with a proverb, give two evidence statements why the proverb is true, and finish with a closing statement.	Year 5 – 6: write a discussion piece that highlights a proverb. Discuss the validity of the proverb and argue for and against it being true. (1 for and 1 against).
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Improvising on text

Discussion

Have you ever worked together with someone or as a team to resolve a problem? How did it help?

Suggestions

As a class, make a list of different problems that could occur in the story and look for creative solutions to solve them. Select the class favourites to rewrite the text.

Improvising on text: Year Level Ideas

Foundation: Complete as a class. Teacher can rewrite, introducing other ways teamwork could be introduced to resolve Olive's problem. Students can illustrate.	Year 1 – 2: Students can work in small groups or individually to rewrite the ending, where the solution doesn't work. Does it have to be written? Think of different ways of recording your ideas.	Year 3 – 6: Students can experiment with different pictures which will help with generating new ideas for problems resulting in different outcomes for the story. Does it have to be written? Think of different ways of recording your ideas.
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Questioning

Foundation – Year 6: Here are some suggested questions you might like to ask as you read the text. These are to promote discussion and as a result may have multiple answers.

Before Reading

- Make a prediction about what you think this story might be about.
- Look at the endpapers. What do you think this might tell us about the story?
- What do you notice about the front and back cover?

During Reading

Literal Questions

- What was Olive's problem?
- Why was Olive so upset?
- How did Sebastian help?
- Who did Sebastian ask to help him?
- How did Sebastian's family treat him, when he got home?

Inferential Questions

- What do you think would have happened if Sebastian had not wandered by?
- Why do you think Sebastian was so quick to offer help?
- Why was Sebastian given the biggest acorn when he returned home?
- Do you think the neighbours were happy with the outcome?
- How did it benefit the community?

By Myself Questions

- How old do you think Olive was?
- Where do you think her parents were?
- What fruit and vegetables do you think they grew?
- What vegetables or fruit would you grow if you could?

After Reading

- What do you like/dislike about this book?
- Has anyone ever helped you out without being asked?
- Do you have a person you can go to, if you need support or help?
- Do you think helping others is important?
- How does working together improve outcomes?

Reader's Theatre

FoundaCon – Year 6: In small groups, students take on the role of the characters/narrator and practice/performance the story. Then present to their class. Students can also present any improvised story as a reader's theatre.

About the Author:

Milly K. Reynolds loves anything creative. Since completing a degree in creative writing, Milly moved into Arts Event management before resuming the path of writing. She has organised street festivals and art and sculpture exhibitions and has set up galleries. Her life highlights include climbing Machu Picchu, travelling through Mongolia, and her unwavering love of reading. Originally from New Zealand, Milly now lives on the Gold Coast in Australia with her kitesurfing husband and two extraordinary children.

About the Illustrator:

Christopher Michaels is a British artist, born and raised in Cambridge, UK. He graduated from Cambridge School of Art with a BA in Illustration and an MA in Children's Book Illustration. His work often reflects his fondness for all things gentle, quaint, and old-fashioned. He can often be found sketching away on any number of unfinished projects, pondering the nature of the world over a nice cup of tea and a good biscuit.