

If You Plant a Seed

By Kadir Nelson

What happens if you plant a seed...of selfishness? Of kindness?

Audience

- K-3

Synopsis

A mouse and a rabbit partner to plant cabbage, tomato and carrot seeds. Together, they tend to the seeds until these yield food. However, their newly grown crops create an ethical dilemma when birds descend upon their feast. At first, the mouse and rabbit choose not to share their food with the birds, and a food fight decimates their food supply. After the food fight, the mouse offers a piece of food to the birds in a gesture of kindness. In a show of gratitude, the birds fly overhead and drop hundreds of seeds over their field. A new garden grows, one that is more plentiful than the rabbit and mouse could ever have produced on their own and now there is plenty for everyone to share.

Author Website

- <http://www.kadirnelson.com/>

Curricular Connections

- Science (Plants and Gardening)
- Character Education
- Persuasive Writing
- Problem/Solution

Lesson Ideas

- Character Traits
 - Have the students identify which character traits were described by the animals in the story and cite actions perpetrated by those characters to support the claim.
- Cause and Effect
 - Complete a cause & effect graphic organizer for the story for each of the three main cause and effect scenarios
- Problem and Solution
 - Complete a "Somebody Wanted/But/So" graphic organizer for the story
- Research gardens and the life cycle of plants
- Persuasive Writing
 - Read the story halfway, stopping right when the birds are descending on the rabbit & mouse. Have the students write a letter to the rabbit and mouse persuading them to share their food with the birds.
 - Have students write persuasive letters from the birds' point of view
 - Have students write persuasive letters from the points of view of the rabbit and the mouse

- Make book-to-book connections
 - What other books have characters who share what they have? What other books have characters who are not good at sharing? Compare and contrast the outcome(s).
- Book Review
 - Write a book review of this story. Include your opinion, support your opinion with examples from text, state who you think would like this story and why.

Common Core Anchor Standards

- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.1
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.CCRA.R.2
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

List of Attached Materials

- If You Plant a Seed Resource Kit (PDF Teaching Guide)

Suggested Companion Titles

- Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson
- Eleanore Won't Share by Julie Gassman
- One Grain of Rice by Demi
- Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed by Emily Pearson
- Henry Helps Plant a Garden by Beth Bracken
- Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert