



Merry Christmas, Geraldine

By Holly Keller

Language Arts Lesson: Synonyms and Antonyms

Read the story *Merry Christmas, Geraldine* to your students. After reading, have students brainstorm a list of adjectives Geraldine used to describe her Christmas tree (big, pretty, tall, heavy). Write the words on the board or on chart paper. Next, remind (or inform) students that an antonym is a word that means the opposite and a synonym is a word that means the same. Beside each word, have the students identify antonyms and synonyms for Geraldine's Christmas tree words. Once the lists are finished, and students understand the meanings of antonyms and synonyms, have them complete the worksheet included in this packet.

Science Lesson: What trees need to grow?

Have a class discussion about what made Geraldine's tree grow so big. It needed water, sun, air, soil, and space to grow. Discuss what would happen if Geraldine's tree had no sun or no water. Would it still have grown so big? Would it have grown at all?

Plant lima bean seeds in 4 cups. Label each cup and place it in a location so that the following conditions are met:

- Cup 1 – provide the bean seed with soil, water, and sunlight
- Cup 2 – provide the bean seed with soil and sunlight, but withhold water
- Cup 3 – provide the bean seed with water and sunlight, but withhold soil
- Cup 4 – provide the bean seed with soil and water, but without sunlight

Be sure to water the seeds each day (except for cup 2).

Ask students to predict the growth of the seeds. Which will grow best? Fastest? Slowest? After a week, ask students to check the progress of each bean seed. Were their predictions correct?

Continue "caring" for each bean seed at least until the seed in cup one has outgrown its cup. Discuss the differences in the growth observed by the beans in each cup. Possible leading questions:

- What elements are needed for plants to grow? What did you see that makes you think this is so?
- What did you notice about the bean plant in cup 4? (Note: The stems and leaves will likely grow, but not be green as the chlorophyll in the plant did not receive any sunlight).

Have students keep a daily journal of what is happening to the seeds in each cup. They can write and/or draw what they see.



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Social Studies Lesson: Wants and Needs

In *Merry Christmas, Geraldine*, students will have heard an example of the “tug” between wants and needs. Discuss with students Geraldine wants in the story (a BIG tree) and what her mom said were her needs (a small tree to fit in the house). Discuss the difference between wants and needs. Ask students to identify some things in their lives that are wants and needs. Make a chart on large butcher paper or on the chalk board of wants and needs. Then have the students complete their own wants and needs using the worksheet in this packet.

Math Lesson: Comparison words

Discuss comparison words with your students (big, bigger, biggest; short, shorter, shortest, etc.) On the chalk board, draw a long rectangle and divide it into thirds. Write one word in each box in the rectangle (big, bigger, and biggest). Then draw a picture of a tree that is big, bigger, and biggest.

Next, have your students do the same project using different words. Start the process by brainstorming a list of words that can be used to compare size (tall, short, long, big, little, small, large). Prior to the project, cut large construction paper in half long ways, one for each student. Fold the paper into thirds. Have the students draw a picture for each word and write the comparison word or a sentence using the comparison word in each box. For example: The flower is tall. The tree is taller. The Giant Sequoia is the tallest.

Art Lesson: Christmas Trees

Use the Christmas tree outline in this packet for this project. Photocopy the outline on tag board or card stock. Have the students cut out the Christmas tree outline. Then, glue green toothpicks as needles on the tree. If you can't find or don't wish to purchase green toothpicks, you can soak regular toothpicks in green paint and let them dry or use spray paint. The students can paint or color the trunk brown. Trees can be decorated when the glue has dried.



REAL TREES 4 Kids!

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Grades K-2 | Grades 3-5 | Grades 6-8 | Grades 9-12

Merry Christmas, Geraldine

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Write antonyms and synonyms for the following words.

Word	Antonym	Synonym
tall	_____	_____
smart	_____	_____
fast	_____	_____
fat	_____	_____
quiet	_____	_____
happy	_____	_____
dirty	_____	_____
hot	_____	_____



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Language Arts Lesson: Letter writing

Directions: Write a letter to someone telling them about the story and why they should read it. Your letter should have at least 5 sentences. Be sure to include the heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature.



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Name _____ Date _____

Language Arts Lesson: Writing

Directions: Write 4 sentences telling about the story. Draw a picture of your favorite part.



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Name _____ Date _____

Social Studies Lesson: Wants and Needs

Directions: Write and draw things you want and things you need.

Things I Want

Things I Need

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