Grades: 3-5

Characteristic: Patience

Book: Are We There Yet

Author: Dan Sanat

Discussion Questions:

* In the book, the little boy thinks time passes so slowly. What happened to make time pass more quickly?
* What was the overall lesson of the story?
* Why is important to be patient?
* What could the little boy have done different throughout the story?
* What happens when we are impatient? Consequences

Activities:

* Untangle Game
  + We live in the age of instant everything. We want what we want and we want it now. We have instant coffee, high-speed internet, microwave ovens, fast cars, self-serve check-out, and fast-food. Almost any-and everywhere we go, we have cell phones, Mp3players, TV’s, computers, you name it. We may have instant this and quick that, but we don’t have much patience. The Untangle Game is a fun activity to introduce the need for patience with ourselves and with others. The rules for The Untangle Game are very simple.
    1. Divide into groups of 6 (must be an even number).
    2. Stand facing one another in a circle.
    3. Have each student grab the right hand of a student across from (not next to) him or her.
    4. Next, join left hands with a different person.
    5. Finally, try to untangle (become an unbroken circle) without anyone letting go.
  + After a group finishes, let them assist a struggling group. When the kids have played the game for a while, have a discussion with the following questions:
    1. How did it take patience to get untangled?
    2. What motivated you to keep going when you were frustrated and tempted to give up?
    3. What does patience look like.....in the classroom.....on the playground.....in the cafeteria......at home?
  + After discussing the questions, define with your students what it means to Be Patient. (We have listed some examples below)
    1. I am patient with others and how they act.
    2. I am careful with my work and how I handle situations.
    3. I think before I speak or act.
    4. I know it takes patience to achieve my goals....at school, at home, and in life.
* Marshmallow Test
  + Buy some big marshmallows – enough for each student to get two. I always opt for the Jet-Puffed Jumbos – and really play up the fact that I “splurged” on buying them the best, most tasty marshmallows I could find.
  + Explain the rules of the “test”. I usually say something like, “I’m going to give each one of you a delicious marshmallow to eat. Mmmm….doesn’t that sound great? Here’s the deal. You can eat that yummy marshmallow right away if you want. OR – if you can wait just 15 minutes without eating it, I’ll give you a second marshmallow, and then you’ll have TWO to eat! Either way is fine.”
  + Place a marshmallow on each student’s desk. Set the timer. Observe! Depending on the age of your students, you may want to increase or decrease the time they have to wait. Typically, I conduct this “test” during independent reading time or while they have work to do at their desks. I avoid making any comments or walking around. Those children that can resist will usually do one of two things: Distract themselves - squirm, hum, make faces, doodle, anything to keep from eating that treat! Remove the temptation – avoid eye contact with the marshmallow, cover it with a napkin, or hide it somewhere. Out of sight, out of mind!
  + After 15 minutes, reward those students who resisted with a second marshmallow. And EAT! I simply have them show me the original, uneaten marshmallow and hand them a second one if earned. If not, I sympathize, saying “Aw…I know it was really hard to resist. I’m not sure I could’ve done it either!” Keep it light and fun.
* Write and Discuss
  + Have students reflect on their experience during the “test” by writing or sharing their thoughts. Here are some ideas for prompts that will deepen their understanding:
    1. What helped you resist eating the marshmallow?
    2. Do you think it would be easier or harder to resist if you were by yourself?
    3. What if I was out of the room?
    4. Did your classmates influence your decision to eat the marshmallow?
    5. Why did you decide to eat the marshmallow before the 15 minutes were up?
    6. What would have helped you wait longer?
    7. How long do you think you could wait?
    8. What if it were a different kind of treat?
    9. What lessons did you learn from this “test” that you can apply to your own life?
* After our discussion, explain the origin of the test and show this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ> Students will LOVE watching these kids struggle with NOT eating that marshmallow!

Me Journal Prompts:

* Write about a time you felt very impatient. What happened and how did you handle that?
* Write about how it made you feel when someone was impatient with you.
* What are different ways we can show patience?