

CHRYSANTHEMUM

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Book by Kevin Henkes ©1991

Themes: Family Relationships, Kindness, Names, School

Grade Level: K - 2

Running Time: 13 minutes

SUMMARY

Chrysanthemum's only problem, once she reaches school age, seems to be her name which becomes the object of ridicule by jealous classmates. Chrysanthemum begins to feel that her name is "absolutely dreadful" instead of "absolutely perfect" as it once was. But with the help of supportive parents, and an especially wonderful music teacher, Chrysanthemum soon learns to appreciate the beauty and melodious sounds of her name again.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore the meaning of friendship.
- Children will investigate feelings of envy.
- Children will learn about the positive effects of kindness.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about their first names.

Ask:

- What do you like about your name? dislike?
- Do you know why you were given this name? If so, what was the reason?
- If you could have another name, what would it be? Why?

Share the book **Chrysanthemum** with children. Then ask:

- How did Chrysanthemum feel about her

name in the beginning of the story?

- What changed Chrysanthemum's feelings about her name?

- What kinds of things did

Chrysanthemum's parents tell her to help her feel better about what was happening at school?

- What happened at school to help Chrysanthemum feel good about her name again?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Plan a "change your name day" at school. Bring a variety of artificial flowers into the classroom. Tell children the names of each. Then let each child close his/her eyes and pick a flower from the bunch. Tell children that the name of the flower will be their name for the day. Children can keep their flower at their table or on their desk and wear a name tag with the flower name printed on it to remind everyone of their new name.

Throughout the day, have children refer to one another by their flower names. By the end of the day, children will be surprised at how often their name is used.

Remind children of the way

Chrysanthemum's parents supported her throughout the story. Ask children to think about problems they may have had and the ways their parents or other family members were supportive or helped them resolve their problems. Encourage children to describe what it feels like to have the support and understanding of others. Later, have children try to think of ways they might be more helpful to or supportive of their family members or classmates.

Talk with children about the ways

Chrysanthemum's classmates treated her before Miss Twinkle entered the story. Ask:

- Why do you think Chrysanthemum's classmates teased her about her name?
- How do you think Chrysanthemum felt?
- What would you have done if you were Chrysanthemum?
- How do you think Chrysanthemum felt when Miss Twinkle told the class how much she loved the name "Chrysanthemum?"

Ask children to bring a snapshot of themselves from home. Then help each child find out what his or her name means. Attach each child's picture to a bulletin board, along with a picture or a few words about the meanings of their names.

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