

# Chipo's Gift: A Thematic Unit For Use In Grades K-2

The following ideas and suggestions are intended to be a springboard for possible activities to accompany my book, *Chipo's Gift*. Please feel free to use and modify the activities to meet the needs of your child or student.

## **Skills addressed:**

Reading/writing: comprehension (concrete and implied), drawing conclusions

Science: comparing/contrasting species of moths (lifecycle, habits, etc)

Math: addition, counting, number recognition, sequencing

Art: identifying batik technique, eye-hand coordination

Geography: identifying continents, comparing seasons in the northern/southern hemispheres

Physical Education: using balance, range of motion

Other concepts: symmetry, relating story to personal experience, reasoning skills

## **Activities and Lessons:**

### **1. Subject: Reading Skill: Comprehension**

**Objective:** Students will use prior knowledge and picture clues to make predictions about the story.

**Task:** Discuss the images on the cover of *Chipo's Gift*.

- Is Chipo (chee' poh) the caterpillar or the moth? How do you know?
- What do you think is the gift? Why?
- Have you ever seen a caterpillar? How was it the same or different from the one on the cover?
- Optional Warm-up activity-using a puppet or stuffed animal, present "The Tale of Two Caterpillars" (available on Youtube). Ask the students to remember the details of each caterpillar and determine which caterpillar Chipo is by listening to the story. For older students: create a Venn Diagram of the details.

### **Follow-up after reading the story:**

**Objective:** Students will recall story details and draw conclusions.

**Task:** Select from the following comprehension questions to use with different skill/age levels.

- In the beginning of the story, how was Chipo different from her brothers and sisters?
- Why did Chipo go to the top of the mopani tree?
- What made the rainbow on the leaves?
- When did Chipo's colors begin to change?
- Refer to the image on page 14, compare with a map or globe. Where did Chipo travel to when she was trapped inside the folds of the dress? How do you think she felt? Explain.
- Ask the students if they have family living far away-discuss student input.

### **2. Subject: Science Skill: compare/contrast insect species**

**Objective:** Students will recall facts about two types of moths: the mopane or Emperor Moth (Southern Africa) and the Wild Silk Moth (North America)

- As a follow-up for "The Tale of Two Caterpillars", discuss and sort facts about both species
- Details to compare: how they socialize as caterpillars (ex: mopane worms forage in groups of 20 to 200, wild silk moth worms are mainly solitary foragers, one builds a cocoon in the trees; one goes through metamorphosis under the ground, **both** cannot eat as adult moths, both look similar, both are nocturnal, etc.)
- Parent/Teacher Resource: Use the scientific names to gather additional information before beginning activity: Emperor Moth-*gonimbrasia belina* Wild Silk Moth-*antheraea polyphemus*  
**\*\*Please note-do not expect students to learn these terms, they are listed to aid in your fact gathering.\*\***
- Diagram the lifecycle of the mopane moth.

### 3. Subject: Math Skill: basic addition/ 1-to-1 correspondence

**Objective:** Students will create addition number sentences using a graphic visual.

Task: **download & print math worksheet from website**

[http://debtroehler.com/Parent\\_Teacher\\_resources.html](http://debtroehler.com/Parent_Teacher_resources.html)

### 4. Subject: Art Skill: cutting moth shapes in a symmetrical manner, tearing paper

**Objective:** Students will use magazines to find pictures of flowers, tearing them out (ragged edge mosaic format) and then assemble the pieces on a background, topping it with their cutout of a moth.

- Supplies needed: magazines with pictures of flowers, construction paper, glue \*\*hint-if you have access to a repositionable adhesive glue stick, this works much better, as the students can change the way they arrange the torn paper\*\* , scissors
- Set-up: Discuss how Chipo's colors changed as she munched the leaves on different flowers and bushes.

Tell the students that they will be creating their own special moth, using flowers they choose. Discuss the concept of symmetry (a good warm-up activity to reinforce this concept is either the Simmy-Tree worksheet or the P.E. game 1-2-3 Symmetry), demonstrate the method (some students may have cut out paper hearts in the past-access prior knowledge). Show completed sample.

- Task steps: 1. Students will cut out pictures of flowers (the larger the better) from magazines. They will then tear them into mosaic pieces and glue them onto the background construction paper.
  2. Allow the glue to dry while step three is completed.
  3. Fold another piece of construction paper in half. (Hint: for younger students, the teacher can draw a basic moth wing on the center fold of a piece of construction paper) Draw HALF of a moth on the center fold of the paper and cut along the lines. \*\*The portion used will be the outside part, with the hole in the center\*\*
  4. Position the cut out moth over the flower mosaic and glue it in place.

Sample of completed craft:



## 5. Subject: Art Skill: Crayon Batik (less messy and safer)

**Objective:** Students will learn the traditional method of batik (hot wax resist), but use that information to create a variation of the method-crayon batik.

- Supplies needed: quality crayons with fine points, sturdy paper (I use economy cardstock), diluted tempera or acrylic paint (dilute to a consistency that is the same as water, but still contains a lot of pigment), plain newsprint to dry completed artwork
- Set-up: Show students pictures of traditional batik (internet search for images), explaining how it is related to the story (the clothes on the clothesline are supposed to be batik prints) and discuss how it is done (a design is created by painting wax on fabric, and dyeing the fabric a light color, adding more wax, dyeing again, and repeating the process until the design is complete. When complete, with the traditional method, the wax is melted out of the fabric completely.  
Discuss with students the reason that Chipu thought she had landed on a leaf. What were the “veins”?
- Task Steps: 1. Students will draw block-style pictures (encourage large shapes with small spaces in between) with crayons, making sure they cover their shapes with a full layer of crayon.  
2. Fold and crinkle the paper into a ball (the more they fold and ball it up, the more lines of paint that will show).  
3. Unfold the paper and dip it into a pan of diluted paint, laying it flat on newsprint to dry.  
4. Allow to dry thoroughly.

Sample of completed craft:



## 6. Subject: Physical Education/other Skill: with a partner, creating symmetry; identifying shapes that are symmetrical

**Objective:** Students will match their physical positions to a partner's positions with symmetry (1-2-3 symmetry), as well as identify shapes that demonstrate symmetry.

- Supplies needed: P.E.-source for music, other: worksheet provided on website, scissors, glue  
\*\*hint-if you have access to a repositionable adhesive gluestick, this works much better, as the students can change the way they arrange the leaves\*\*, magazines with pictures of flowers, construction paper, glue, scissors

- Warm-up Task: **Play 1-2-3 Symmetry.**
  1. Discuss concept of symmetry-use examples (face, arms, legs, etc) Practice some examples (both arms up high-symmetry; one arm up, one arm down-not symmetry)  
\*\*Hint: you can vary the level of difficulty to match the skill level of the students ex: for older students, make only subtle changes in symmetry.
  2. Divide class into pairs (try to pair with student of similar height-also a good example to show that true symmetry in nature is rare)
  3. Play the game: the leader turns on the music while each pair practices a pose. The goal is to have them stand side-by-side and match positions. Before turning off the music, **shout 1-2-3 Symmetry. Turn off the music and the pairs must remain still.**
  4. Go around the room and discuss if each pair is showing symmetry.
- Task: Symmetry worksheet:
  1. Download and print the Help Build Simmy-Tree worksheet on [http://debtroehler.com/Parent\\_Teacher\\_resources.html](http://debtroehler.com/Parent_Teacher_resources.html) Discuss why Simmy-Tree is NOT symmetrical (possible answers: shape of trunk, coloring of trunk, grouping of leaves on the branches)
  2. Tell the students that they need to locate the pairs of symmetrical (same size, shape, position) of leaves on the second page. Cut out and attach to the tree.
  3. Identify the pair of wings that are symmetrical for Chipso, to help her fly. Discuss why she would need wings the same shape and size.

Your feedback and suggestions are greatly appreciated. Please contact me at [dtroehler@aol.com](mailto:dtroehler@aol.com)  
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