

Notable Trade Book Lesson Plan: *Boxes for Katje*

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Abstract

Boxes for Katje is based on a true story of an American girl who sent a care package to a young Dutch girl. As a result of the package and an exchange of letters, Katje's family and friends in Holland received much-needed items to help them through the bitter winter of 1945. The book provides opportunities to examine the NCSS Standards of Time, Continuity, and Change, Global Connections, and Civic Ideals and Practices. Readers will enjoy the whimsical illustrations and delightful ending. The story highlights the importance of valuing the needs of others less fortunate than oneself, and it can serve as a springboard for children to take civic action to make a difference in others' lives. Helpful web sites and additional children's books expand the lesson.

NCSS Notable Trade Book Lesson Plan Template

Boxes for Katje

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NCSS Notable Trade Book Title:	<i>Boxes for Katje</i> by Candace Fleming Melanie Kroyse Books Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003
Book Summary:	In 1945, a young Dutch girl writes a thank you note for a care package she received from her new American friend. As a result of the letter, she begins to receive increasingly larger boxes of much-needed items to help her family and her neighbors through a bitter winter. The novel is based on a true story experienced by the author's mother.
NCSS Standards:	<p>II. Time, Continuity, and Change V. Individuals, Groups and Institutions IX. Global Connections X. Civic Ideals and Practices</p> <p>John Dewey believed that the job of education was to create caring, involved, and moral individuals who could be counted on to be good citizens. There is no finer way to help children learn the skills of active citizenry and the idea of valuing the needs of others than by demonstrating them in a classroom.</p>
NCATE & IRA Standards	IX. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use and dialect across cultures, ethnic groups, geographical regions, and social roles
Materials:	A copy of <i>Boxes for Katje</i> , a world map and globe, a small wrapped package addressed to Katje with the following inside: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • copy of Rosie's letter, socks, soap, and chocolate • picture of Europe (Holland) after WW II and tulip bulbs
Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To discuss the importance of active citizenry by valuing the needs of others and taking personal action to meet a need(s). b. To recognize that throughout time individuals, groups, and institutions have worked to promote the common good and meet individual needs. c. To recognize that a small act of kindness can have a positive and profound impact on others. <hr/>

Procedures:
Exploration/Introduction:
Development:
Expansion:

Ask the following queries:

- Have you ever received a surprise package in the mail?
- Who was it from?
- Why was it sent?
- What was inside?
- How did you feel after opening the box?

This is a true story about a package sent to a young girl in Holland by a girl in America. This happened a long time ago, but the package left a lasting legacy. The package was from Rosie Johnson who lived in Mayfield, Indiana, and sent to Katje Van Stegeran in Olst, Holland.

- What could be in the package?
- Why was it sent?
- Why was it received with such joy? (let children speculate)

Study the end sheets and pictures to learn about the people in Olst, the technology of the times, the homes, general conditions, language, etc.

Begin the story, but stop reading after page three. Show a real teacher-made package from Rosie to Katje. Ask the students to identify what they believe to be the contents of the box. Open the box, show the items: socks, soap, and chocolate. Discuss why these items were important and luxuries for Katje and her family.

Finish the story, but wait to read the last page.

“Our story has a surprise ending. Who thinks they know what happens?” Encourage children to share their ending to the story. Read the letter to Rosie from Katje. Then complete the story. Show the real tulip bulbs to youngsters and the final end page. Contrast it to the first end page. Have children explain the changes.

Although this story happened long ago, it illustrates how one person can meet the needs of others by taking action.

Ask the following:

- Do you believe good citizens do this today?
- What motivates individuals to do this?
- Why is this an important thing to do in our community, nation, and the world?
- Can you think of actions individuals and groups have taken recently to help others? (research possibilities on the internet, in newspapers, and in discussion with family members)

Encourage pupils to cite examples. This may include action toward victims of Katrina, other Gulf Coast hurricanes, World Trade Center families, and people in foreign countries who have experienced natural

	<p>disasters. Identify things that have been done to help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you participated? • Given to assist others? Identify local groups that help others in your community—boy and girl scouts, churches, mosques, synagogues, Salvation Army, Brown and Blue Santa, civic groups, Habitat for Humanity, etc. <p>Brainstorm with youngsters things they can do that are a service to help others. These acts require no money, but they require time and effort (e.g., rake leaves for a neighbor, carry in trash cans, feed pets, water flowers, clean up trash on the playground, read to younger children in the school, start a graffiti watch and cleanup, create a program to recycle gently used toys and clothing for needy children, etc.).</p> <p>Encourage children to investigate possibilities for a class Make a Difference Day to assist others. Identify class resources and interests. Projects need not require money, but may require time and physical effort on their behalf.</p> <p>Have youngsters work in teams to identify community needs and workable tasks. Let students report their findings and develop a plan of action to complete their goal. This may require adult guidance and assistance, but keep it the purview of the children. When students initiate the project, their motivation is high.</p> <p>Set a date for the project and document children helping with photographs for later display in your school. Discuss the event, children’s feelings about it, and what they learned. Find a way to celebrate completion of the Make a Difference Day.</p>
<p>Assessment:</p>	<p>Have pupils keep a personal journal documenting Make a Difference Day from inception to completion. Encourage pupils to write about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it valuable to help others? Why? • How does it help our community? The world? • What is the cost to you? Is it worth the sacrifice? Why or why not? • Would you do this project again or another project? Why? • If everyone participated by giving a helping hand to others, how would this change our community/world? • What was the most valuable thing you learned? • Do you believe you made a difference? Why? <p>Use the journal to evaluate student understandings and concerns about the value of individual/group civic action.</p>

<p>Suggested Extension Activities:</p>	<p>📖 Have children read books or stories about individuals who made a difference by helping others. Many of these stories can be found in the Notable Trade Books selected by NCSS.</p> <p>📖 Examples of true stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story</i> ➤ <i>Luba: The Angel of Bergen-Belsen</i> ➤ <i>The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief</i> <p>📖 Fictional Stories with a message:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>The Lady in the Box</i> ➤ <i>Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed</i> ➤ <i>Chicken Sunday</i> ➤ <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i> ➤ <i>A Rose for Abby</i> ➤ <i>Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen</i> ➤ <i>Spaghetti Park</i> and other DyAnne DiSalvo books
<p>Additional References and Web links</p>	<p>Make a Difference Ideas http://www.usaweekend.com/diffday/tools/guides/teachers_guide.html</p> <p>http://www.awesomelibrary.org/ChildrenHelp/html</p> <p>http://www.craftsforkids.com/helping.htm</p>