Sample Multicultural Stories for My Classroom
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Multicultural literature provides students with the importance of other cultures. The stories highlight differences, as well as similarities of other cultures, throughout the reading. Students’ imaginations are influenced by books, and multicultural literature brings to life different cultures, races, customs, and traditions. Exposure to different cultures results in a better understanding of people worldwide. Educating students about other cultures will increase tolerance and understanding of one another.
**Summary Information:**
Faced with what to share in class on International Day, Pablo joins his parents in their Panaderia. He helps them prepare, mix, cut, roll and bake various breads and pastries. These treats are all a reflection of his mother’s culture, as well as his father’s. Pablo has a difficult time deciding which treat he wants to take to school until he finally realizes that he wants to take jalapeno bagels. His father asks why he chose that treat, and Pablo says that the jalapeno bagel is a mixture of both his parents, just like he is. You see, his mother is Mexican and his father is Jewish. The bagel represents his father’s culture, while the jalapenos represent his mother’s culture.

The story is based on a boy named Pablo, who is very proud of his diverse family. Recognizing his parents’ diversity, he uses the jalapeno bagel to express how two cultures created him. The story also enforces the importance of the parents’ culture. They bake goods that are representative of their individual cultures while working together in their bakery.

The message this book delivers is that people of different cultures can work together, create together, and have a family together.

**Learning Activity:**
Students could decorate their own bagel with cream cheese and various shapes of sprinkles. The multiple colors and shapes of the sprinkles will represent the diversity of students, their families, and their interests. Once the bagels are created the students can eat them.
Summary Information:
A perfect and sweet baby girl is born to a Chinese couple. The couple wants what is best for their daughter, so they sent her floating off in a river by placing her in a basket. She floats in the river guided by the reflection of the moonlight while she is also protected by animals. On the other side of the world, a young couple is wishing for a baby girl of their own, but she never comes. As they hope for the arrival of a little girl, they plant trees, vegetables, and build a small home for her. One night they see a face on the moon, and they believe it is directing them to go search for their little girl. They look through flower beds, drive down winding roads, and finally float down a river. The river’s destination leads them to their beautiful little girl, who is floating in water lilies. The couple takes their new baby home and they raise her with care and love.

The story is a reflection of how a couple brings home a baby, who is not of the same culture. They raise and love her, as if they had given birth to her themselves.

The positive message in this story is that all families are not the same. Some families consist of their own children, while others take in children of other cultures.

Learning Activity:
Using construction paper, you could ask the children to create a basket that would carry a baby. Then the students could draw and cut out their baby to put in the basket. They could also include an animal of their choice to accompany their baby.
Summary Information:
In this book, there are three sisters, two of whom gang up on the youngest by leaving her all of the housework, dirtying her with ash from the fire, and leaving her only scraps to sew a new outfit and moccasins. They call her Sootface, due to the dirty nature of her face. Also in the village are an invisible warrior and his sister, and the invisible warrior sends his sister to ask all the women in the village if they can see what his bow and bowstring are made of. If they can see his bowstring, they have a true heart and will become his wife. Despite Sootface’s sisters’ attempts, they could not see him. Sootface was going to see the invisible warrior, and while her sisters were shaming her, in the end, Sootface could see him and married him!

This book portrayed the classic story of Cinderella, only it was applied in the Native American culture. Instead of being stuck with household chores such as scrubbing the floor, Sootface was ordered to fetch firewood, clean the mats, and retrieve berries.

This story teaches children that everybody should treat one another equally, no matter what. You should treat people as you want to be treated yourself. Secondly, this story also teaches children that regardless of your upbringing, even if you have a bad background, you can do anything that you set your mind to.

Learning Activity:
After reading this book, the teacher can open a discussion about how not everybody is as fortunate as we are. As a class, they can discuss places where old items can be donated to benefit another family. Then, students can be encouraged to bring in old toys and old or unfitting clothes to be donated to families in need. After a deadline (set by the teacher) is met, the students can choose a place to donate all of their collected items.
Duke Ellington
Author: Andrea Davis Pinkney
Illustrator: Brian Pinkney
Date: 1999
Grade Range: Primary
Category: Biography

Summary Information:
Duke, a young boy learning to play piano, thought that piano was in fact, not any fun at all! He was forced to take piano lessons by his parents and he thought he wasn’t creating music in the slightest, so he soon quit his lessons. Many years later, he overheard music being played on the piano which instantly inspired him to learn. After much practice, he had taught himself how to play! He began playing in clubs, which then lead to him starting up a band that traveled all across New York City. Soon after, Duke’s music was spreading onto the radio, while his band was also being renamed to “Duke Ellington and His Orchestra”. It was this point in Duke’s life when he wrote a beautiful song that spoke to the African Americans, from the time of slavery all the way through the civil rights period.

This story did a great job following Duke through his life and all the accomplishments he made. It talks about how he was able to take something and teach himself how to do it, without any assistance from others.

The story gives an example of a person becoming successful due to their own determination. Duke was inspired by music at a young age and was able to become a famous musician who played at grand symphony hall! This book really enlightens children to follow their dreams and never give up.

Learning Activity:
Students could ponder what they are very good at, and then they could write their own autobiography and explain how they learned what they are good at. Perhaps they had to attend classes, or maybe they were just like Duke and learned it all by themselves! Students could also present to the class over a period of time, similar to Show and Tell.