



Candy Shop *By Jan Wahl*

Discussion & Activity Guide

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Grade Levels: PreK-2

Themes: Primary – Discrimination; Others – Racism; Concern for Others; “Outsiders”

Summary: Daniel, an African-American boy, is a very young urban cowboy, eager to accompany his aunt on a shopping trip to his favorite store—Ms. Chu’s candy shop. Their trip takes them through a busy urban area that includes boarded up houses and empty lots. When they finally reach the candy shop, they find a large group of people standing in front of the store. Someone has written hurtful words on the sidewalk and Ms. Chu is in tears. Daniel, the would-be cowboy, wants to do something, so he gets a bucket and soap and washes away the words. His aunt invites Ms. Chu to come home with them for sweet potato pie. The author is careful not to reveal the exact content of the graffiti message.

Reader questions:

- How would you describe Daniel’s neighbors and his neighborhood?
- Why are Daniel and his aunt surprised when they reach the candy shop?
- What are the people looking at?
- Why is Ms. Chu upset?
- How does Ms. Chu react to Daniel and his Aunt Thelma?
- Why does Daniel get the bucket and soap?
- Have you ever been hurt by angry words? Can these words hurt as much as falling down, scraping your knees, or getting cut?
- In what way is Daniel’s behavior different than the adults who are in front of the shop?
- Why do the author and illustrator not tell what angry words were written on the sidewalk in front of Ms. Chu’s store?

Sample Cross-Curricular Activities:

Language Arts:

- 1) Ask students to describe a time when they have been hurt by angry words. What was it like? How did it feel?
- 2) Ask students to describe their own favorite store/shop and tell why they like to go there.

Language Arts/Social Studies:

- 1) Ask students to describe their own neighborhood in as much detail as Daniel uses in the story. They may draw their neighborhood, labeling places that they know.

Math:

- 1) Ask students to practice weighing various quantities of candy and other items. Many grocery stores and supermarkets sell bulk candy by weight.

Web Resources:

- 1) www.col-ed.org/cur/sst/sst66.txt (a K-12 lesson plan, to be modified according to grade level, that deals with cultural acceptance)
- 2) www.teachingtolerance.org (“Letters to Gabby”, an activity designed to help students resolve conflicts)

National Curriculum Standards

English/Language Arts

Standard #1: Read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of text, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and of the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment.

Standard #2: Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interaction with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, content, graphics).

Math - Grades PreK-2

Measurement Standard: Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and processes of measurement

- Compare and order objects according to the attributes of length, volume, weight, area and time

Social Studies - Early Grades

Standard #1- Culture: Provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity

- Give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.

Standard #2- Time, Continuity, and Change: Include experiences that provide for the study of ways human beings view themselves in and over time.

- Demonstrate an understanding that different people may describe the same event or situation in diverse ways, citing reasons for the differences in views.

Standard #3- Individual Development and Identity: Include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity

- Analyze a particular event to identify reasons individuals might respond to it in different ways.