A GIFT FOR GITA: Teachers' Guide

GENERAL THEMES AND CONNECTIONS:

1) Visiting grandparents from another country

2) What makes a home

3) The bittersweet experience of an immigrant letting go of an old country and making Canada home

∗ changes

∗ how memories of an old home fade as new experiences and memories take over

∗ the joys of belonging here

∗ the pain of missing family and old environments

∗ the inevitability of changes in life

∗ sense of split loyalties and ties

4) Missing grandparents and family

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

5) Topics of discussion:

∗ What are the different feelings Gita experiences during this story? Remember that you can feel more than one thing at a time.

∗ What does Naniji first feel when she hears that Gita's dad was offered a new job in India?

∗ Why is Gita confused about whether she wants her dad to accept the job or not?

∗ Have you ever experienced conflicted feelings about one event?

∗ Do you have grandparents, or other family nearby?

∗ Do you have family members who live far away?

∗ Do you have friends who live far away?

∗ Do you miss them? How often do you get to see them?

∗ How would you feel if your family members lived very far away, in another country?

* Have you ever moved from one place to another? What were your feelings at first? When did you stop missing your old home? What helped you make your new place home?
* Do you think it would be harder if you moved from another country?
* What happy memories does Gita have of Naniji having visited here? What kinds of things did they do together?
* What do you think the nest of dolls symbolizes?
* Why does Gita give her grandmother the smallest doll?
* Discuss the concept of how we all change over a period of time.
* What else might Gita do with her grandmother to show her what her life in Canada is like?
* What activities would you do with a friend from another country or a family member to show them what your life in Canada is like?

6) Writing exercises

* Write a letter that Gita might write to her grandmother after she goes back to India. What would Gita say about Canada being her home?
* Write or tell a story about one of the fun things that Gita and her grandmother did together. Make it exciting and make up details not mentioned in the story.
* List the things that Gita remembers doing here in Canada, that now makes it home.
* Write an account of when Gita and her family took Naniji canoeing. Add plenty of excitement.
* Make up some new fun activities Gita and her grandmother might do together.
* Describe your earliest memory of a time shared with your grandmother or grandfather or any other older family member.
* Imagine the dolls and memories inside you – write about the smallest one inside you.
* Make a list of the trees that grow near or around you.
* If you had a favourite tree, what kind of tree would it be? Describe it and describe what it means to you.
* Imagine you could have a magic tree in your yard. What would it be like? Write about it and describe some of the fun things you could do with it.
* Make a list of all the things you love about your house, and what makes it home.
* Make a list of all the things you love about your street/rtown/city.

* Make a list of all the things you love about Canada, and what makes it home.

* Word Puzzle. Find the words listed below in the puzzle.

S	P	Z	Y	W	M	O	G	S	L	P	M
G	E	R	T	G	K	N	G	A	B	J	H
G	V	I	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	S	E
K	N	C	R	T	S	A	I	J	P	L	M
T	O	O	A	O	C	C	S	D	Y	L	O
Z	F	K	L	N	M	U	S	F	S	O	H
G	S	I	L	E	O	E	I	L	T	D	I
M	A	N	G	O	B	E	M	K	O	Q	N
R	E	H	T	O	M	D	N	A	R	G	D
Y	L	I	M	A	F	T	B	L	I	Z	I
E	L	P	A	M	L	O	V	U	E	N	A
H	B	B	X	Z	J	Y	R	H	S	D	V

BELONG
CANAL
CANOE
DOLLS
FAMILY
FRIENDS
GIFT
GRANDMOTHER
HOME
INDIA
JOB
MANGO
MAPLE
MEMORIES
MISSING
SKATING
STORIES

7) Art Activities

* Draw a picture of one fun thing that Gita did with her grandmother during her visit.

* Make a poster with drawings of the different things Gita and her grandmother did together during Naniji's visit to Canada.

* Collect at least five different kinds of leaves and with poster paint, make leaf prints.

* Make a diorama of Gita and one of the activities she shared with her grandmother.

* Have each student draw a picture of the Canadian flag, write their name on it, cut it out. String them across the class.

* 4) Drama:

* Do a performance of this story for the class.

* Imagine that Naniji visits Gita again. Act out some of the things they could do together.

8) Extra Study and Research activities

* Write up a report on two different kinds of maple trees.

* Research sugar maples and report on how maple syrup is made.

* Class activity: Draw a map of the world and mark where you live. Mark where students have friends and families. Mark where else you have lived. Tie strings connecting your present home with all the other places you have friends and family. Mark the distances.

Copyright © Rachna Gilmore