

3) Story:

When I was nine, I lived in the country with my mom, dad, brother, and sister. A small stream ran through the village, and I spent a lot of time playing by the water, making little boats out of grass, and floating them down the stream.

My younger brother Sam could make better boats than I could. He seemed to have the gift of bending and twisting the grass into very good shapes that would float. He was able to load his boats with lots of little pebbles, which we called goods. This meant that his boats traveled more slowly. Mine would always speed off down the stream and either get stuck in the reeds or be blown by the breeze into the middle, where it would sink or be carried away so quickly that it was soon lost to sight. Sam's, on the other hand, would float slowly and calmly, carrying its cargo safely and gently.

We used to make up stories about the boats. One such story was about a boat, laden with goods, arriving far away where the stream had become a great river. The boat was a real boat filled with fruit, vegetables, and useful household goods. The people, who intercepted and moored the boat to the riverbank, were from a village that was at war with neighbors. The people from the neighboring village had attacked their village one night and burnt their granary and some of the houses. Food was in very short supply. They were starving.

Seeing the boat, they thought that the Gods had sent food supplies to save them. They started to unload it, and no matter how much they took out, there was always more within. They found that whatever they needed was there in the hold. Besides food, which was in abundance, they needed to repair the damage caused to their houses by the fires and, to their delight, found tools, wood, and nails. There was also bedding and clothes: in fact, all their needs were supplied. They were overjoyed with the magic boat. They called a meeting to decide what to do.

"There is only one thing we now need," said a wise old man of the village. "And that is peace. If we have peace, we can continue to live in our village without the fear of having our new possessions taken from us. But will the boat supply us with such a thing?"

"How can the boat give us peace?" said another. "It may be magic, but surely only we can make peace ourselves?" "We must go and talk to the people in the next village and make peace with them," said an elderly woman who had been listening quietly to the discussion. "We must forgive them for what they have done to us, ask their forgiveness for the bad things that we have done to them, and offer to share our good fortune with them. We must give them half of the goods as a sign of our sincerity. Then, we can all live in peace."

And this is what they did. As long as the two villages shared their good luck with each other, they lived happily as friends.

Sam and I were happy for the villagers in the story, but it wasn't always easy to live the way they had chosen to and remain peaceful.

Grade 4

❖ Group Questions:

- 1) What can you learn from the story? How do the actions of the villagers show you the importance of *ahimsa*?
 - 2) What would have happened if the villagers did not make peace with the neighboring village?
 - 3) In our own lives, what can we do to become peaceful?
- 4) Scrapbook Page for *ahimsa*

Lesson 3 Homework

1. How can practicing *ahimsa*, being nonviolent, make you a happier person?

2. Think of one way you can use *ahimsa* (nonviolence) in your own life.
