

Reader's Theater Exercise 15: Double up the Benefits of Reader's Theater With Character Education Themes



The benefits of Reader's Theater are not limited to improving reading fluency and comprehension; Reader's Theater stories are also an engaging tool for teaching character development and academic content. Just as the exciting activity of Reader's Theater keeps students interested in reading so they can improve their skills, it keeps their attention on the story content and effectively teaches imperative social lessons. With Valentine's Day around the corner, what better way to encourage students to care about and help their peers than with Reader's Theater? **This activity teaches important Character Education themes in the powerful format of multi-leveled and colorized Reader's Theater.** The activity also allows students to practice their own creativity and verbal skills by **writing their own Reader's Theater scenes** on a given Character Education topic.

Teacher Instructions: Review the three provided Reader's Theater passages and assign one or more to groups of students for reading aloud. Base your choices upon the ages of your students and their reading abilities. Also assign each student to read a different character part. Below are the Grade Level specifications and the number of readers for the story passages included in this exercise.

Passage 1: Grades 2-5 (Includes parts for 4 readers — "Narrator" read by same person as "Jordache.")

Passage 2: Grades K-2 (Includes parts for 4 readers.)

Passage 3: Grades K-3 (Includes parts for 3 readers — "Narrator" read by same person as "Timmy.")

Pass out the appropriate activity sheets and direct your groups to read the passages aloud several times. If you assign more than one passage per group, allow the students to complete the full activity for each passage before moving on to the next.

When they are done reading the story excerpt, ask them to answer the questions presented below the passages on the lines provided. Next, instruct the students to write their own short Reader's Theater scripts (in groups or individually) showing how the characters in the scenes they read could have acted differently. They may show a way the characters could have made either **better** choices, or **worse** choices.

Select groups to perform the student-written scenes for the class, and explain whether the characters made good or bad choices in regards to the Character Education theme of the passage. Use this as an opportunity to discuss the possible answers to the passage questions. Sample answers are provided on the next page of this document. Students will love playing these roles while learning life lessons and improving their reading fluency.



Reader's Theater Exercise 15: Passage Questions Answer Key (Sample Responses and Points for Discussion)

Passage 1 Questions:

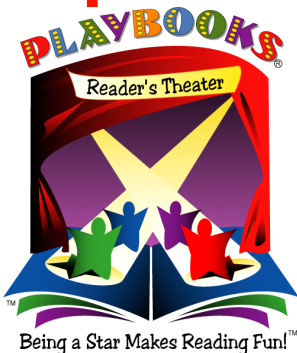
1. Jordache and Espree do the right thing by defending Sundance and telling the Bully Cat to leave him alone. When people stand by and do not help peers who are being bullied, they are supporting the problem. Jordache and Espree also bring attention to the fact that Bully Cat leaves them alone when they are together, showing that bullies are less likely to cause trouble when a potential victim is with others.
2. To avoid being teased by Bully Cat, Sundance could stick with his friends, stand up to Bully Cat by telling him, "Leave me alone," showing kindness to Bully Cat and being the "bigger person," or by bringing the situation to the attention of his humans. (The equivalent of a child telling a parent or teacher about being bullied.)

Passage 2 Questions:

1. I think the frogs' principal will take them on a field trip to visit their teacher at his house and bring the surprise party along! The frogs could also call him and sing "Happy Birthday" or send him a birthday card in the mail.
2. The main idea of this story is working together to accomplish a goal (organizing a surprise party) and helping friends. The story teaches that it is necessary to offer what you can do to pitch in when working on a project with others. We also learn that it is nice to help a friend who is struggling with a task or a problem.

Passage 3 Questions:

1. Timmy is being irresponsible by not keeping his room clean. His room is starting to smell because it is filled with dirty clothes. He probably has no clean socks left at all, and the mess may be causing him to lose important belongings!
2. Timmy tries to make the smelly socks disappear by telling them to go away. He never minded them being there before, so they "think" they are welcome to stay, and the idea does not work. A better way of getting rid of the smelly socks would be to pick all of them up and throw them into the washing machine!



Bullies, Friends, and Responsibility: What Should They Do?



Directions: Your teacher will place you in a group with some of your classmates to read the Reader's Theater story passage aloud. Your teacher will assign your part. After you read the passage, answer the questions about the passage. Then, on a separate piece of paper, write a short Reader's Theater scene showing how the characters in the passage could have acted differently. You may show a way the characters could have made either **better** choices, or **worse** choices. When you are done, your teacher will ask several groups to perform their written scenes for the class and explain whether the characters in their scenes did the right thing or the wrong thing.

Passage 1:

Bully Cat Well, Monkey Boy! Where'd you leave the rest of your monkey friends? Playing in their cages?

Sundance I'm not a monkey. I'm a cat! You are weally big.

Bully Cat (*laughing*) You can't even talk right, zoo boy. And you don't look like a cat either. Only monkeys have tails that long. Your tail is funny looking. I should take you back to the zoo! Your monkey mom might miss you....

Sundance I am not a monkey, and if you keep saying that, I....

Bully Cat (*tough*) You'll what? I can step on you like a bug, and don't you forget it, Monkey Boy. You better....

Jordache Better what, Bully Cat?

Bully Cat Hey, Jordache! When did your humans buy you a monkey?

Espre Why don't you go pick on someone your own size?

Jordache Beat it, Bully Cat! You're not wanted around here.

Bully Cat Well, I don't want to be around all you zoo animals anyway. See YOU later, Monkey Boy.

Narrator The bully cat backed down easily and took off into the open field.

Espre I just can't stand that loudmouthed bully cat!

Sundance What's a bully cat, and why doesn't he want to play with us?

Jordache He's mean, Sundance. He used to call Espre and me bad names, but he hasn't tried to fight us because it would be two against one.

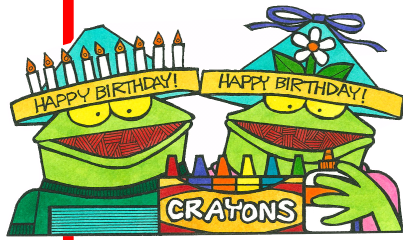
Questions:

1. How do Jordache and Espre do the right thing when they see that Bully Cat is bothering their friend, Sundance?

2. Sundance does not know what to do when the Bully Cat is mean to him. What are some things he could do to stop the Bully Cat from teasing him in the future?



Bullies, Friends, and Responsibility: What Should They Do?



Reader's Theater Exercise 15 (continued)

Directions: Your teacher will place you in a group with some of your classmates to read the Reader's Theater story passage aloud. Your teacher will assign your part. After you read the passage, answer the questions about the passage. Then, on a separate piece of paper, write a short Reader's Theater scene showing how the characters in the passage could have acted

differently. You may show a way the characters could have made either **better** choices, or **worse** choices. When you are done, your teacher will ask several groups to perform their written scenes for the class and explain whether the characters in their scenes did the right thing or the wrong thing.

Passage 2:

- Felix We need a birthday present for our teacher.
- Mr. Franco I have an idea. Mr. Fritz has a lot of pencils. Let's decorate a box for all of his pencils.
- Fifi We can each draw and color a picture on the outside of the box.
- Felix We can each sign our name by our drawing.
- Freddy I have a problem. I can't draw. I will need help.
- Fifi I will help you, Freddy. I like to draw. What do you want to draw for Mr. Fritz?
- Freddy Can you help me draw a dinosaur?
- Fifi Yes! Let me show you how to draw a dinosaur.
- Mr. Franco You all work together very well. I like the way you help each other.
- Today is the day of the birthday party. Today is the big surprise. Everyone is happy.
- Felix Uh-oh! Mr. Fritz is not here!
- Mr. Franco I am sorry to say that Mr. Fritz is not coming to school. He broke his arm, so he must rest at home.

Questions:

1. What do you think the frog kids will do now that their teacher is at home with a broken arm? What would be a nice thing for them to do?

2. What do you think is the main idea of this story? What good things does it teach about how to act with friends and other groups of people?

Bullies, Friends, and Responsibility: What Should They Do?



Reader's Theater Exercise 15 (continued)

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When you are done, your teacher will ask several groups to perform their written scenes for the class and explain whether the characters in their scenes did the right thing or the wrong thing.

Passage 3:

Narrator The next morning, Timmy was surprised to see more dust bunnies had arrived in his messy room.

Dust Bunny Good morning, Timmy.

Timmy There are so many of you!

Dust Bunny Yes, my friends came out from under the bed. They do not like it there anymore.

Timmy Why not? What is under the bed

Stinky Sock We are under the bed!

Timmy Who are you?

Stinky Sock I am one of your socks. My friend is here, too.

Dust Bunny They have many friends under there, and they all stink!

Stinky Sock We like to stink!

Dust Bunny You did not want to put your socks in the wash.

Stinky Sock We have been here for a long time.

Dust Bunny That is why they smell so bad.

Stinky Sock That is our job.

Dust Bunny They will make **EVERYTHING** smell bad.

Stinky Sock It is fun to do.

Timmy I did not say you could do that! Go away! You socks are bad.

Stinky Sock You want us to go away?

Dust Bunny But you did not want to put them in the wash.

Stinky Sock You did not want to pick us up.

Dust Bunny You left them under your bed.

Stinky Sock Yes, you did!

Dust Bunny You do not like to clean, do you?

Timmy No, I do not!

Stinky Sock So here we are!

Questions:

1. How are Timmy's actions not responsible?

2. How does Timmy try to get the smelly socks to disappear? What would be a better way of getting rid of them?

