

LESSON PLAN

My Day with Gong Gong

Story by Sennah Yee

Art by Elaine Chen

Genre: Picture Book - Children's Fiction

Themes: family, communication, language, culture, community, intergenerational relationships, emotions and feelings

Suitable for: Grades Pre-K–2, Ages 4–7

Summary:

May is nervous to spend the day with her grandpa (gong gong) in Chinatown. Gong Gong doesn't speak much English, and May doesn't know much Chinese. May becomes bored trying to keep up with Gong Gong's errands and impatient because he doesn't appear to be listening to her. She feels embarrassed as he speaks Chinese with store vendors, restaurant workers, and friends, not understanding why they are laughing and pointing at her. She is also hungry, but Gong Gong doesn't seem to understand her requests for food! Just as she reaches the breaking point of her frustration, Gong Gong reveals that he's been listening all along.

As they walk home, May's attitude changes, and she sees Chinatown and her gong gong in a new light. When May's mother picks her up from Gong Gong's house, May learns to say "I love you" in Chinese and gives him a big hug goodbye.

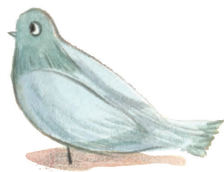




BEFORE STARTING THE BOOK

These activities build the context, introduce the topic of the book, and establish prior knowledge and interest.

1. Ask children if they are familiar with the term “gong gong” (maternal grandfather). If there are Cantonese-speaking students in the group, they can teach their classmates. If all students are unfamiliar, tell them what it means. Make a list of names children have for their grandparents and what the terms mean.
2. If children have names for their grandparents in different languages, use this as an opportunity to discuss the languages spoken by children and their families at home.
3. Ask children to predict where they think the story takes place after examining the cover. They may point out the fountain, the park, or predict that it is in a city when they see the pigeons.
4. To access students’ prior knowledge, ask them to draw a picture of their families. Ask children if they have grandparents, and if so, to include them in the drawing. As children draw, find out more information about their grandparents and record their answers on the board or a large sheet of paper: Where do their grandparents live? How often do they see their grandparents? What is special about their grandparents? If they do not have grandparents, is there an older person that plays a special role in their lives?



WHILE READING THE BOOK

These activities check on comprehension, stimulate interest, involve readers in reflection as they read, and encourage consideration of other readers’ reactions.

1. Help children understand the importance of the illustrations in the book and how they contribute to telling the story by giving them meaningful time to look at the details in the illustrations. Ask the children what emotions are portrayed in the illustrations, particularly by May as she experiences different feelings towards Gong Gong throughout the story. As you read the story, ask children how they think May feels at that moment. Why does she feel this way?

2. Have children compare objects/images in the book with familiar things they already know. For example, when May is in the gift shop, children may recognize items in the store. They may also be familiar with the food in the dim sum restaurant. As the characters walk through Chinatown, children may recognize streetcars, street vendors, and more. Give children opportunities to make these connections verbally while reading the story. Ask questions: do you recognize anything in this store/restaurant? Have you ever been on a streetcar? What do you think Gong Gong will buy at the store?
3. Encourage children to repeat the Cantonese words from the story as you read. This may require practicing how to pronounce them using the glossary at the back of the book. Children may already be familiar with these words, but if not, use the opportunity for children to learn about new languages. You can also ask children if they know how to say the words in their own languages.
4. As May walks home with Gong Gong, her mood changes. Examine the illustrations with the children again. They may point out that it's now nighttime, or that May is feeling happy now. You may also note that May is now speaking Cantonese with store vendors and Gong Gong. Ask the children how it might make Gong Gong feel when May communicates with him in his language.

AFTER READING THE BOOK



These activities inspire continued reflection and responses to the text, bring conclusion to the experience of reading this text, and stimulate further extensions.

1. May was initially frustrated that Gong Gong didn't seem to understand English. What did Gong Gong do to show May he was listening? What are ways that we can show our families we are listening?
2. Ask children to think about a time when they were around people who spoke a different language. What are some things we can do or say to communicate with each other? (e.g., asking parents/relatives to translate, trying to learn new words, drawing pictures, acting out words, etc.)
3. Ask children again what "gong gong" means. Then, invite them to share what favorite things to do with their grandparents/families. Have them draw pictures of their experiences. Prompt their drawings with, "I love my (family member) because . . ." or "My favorite thing to do with (family member) is . . ."
4. Do you know other stories where a character has difficulty understanding another character? Children can bring other stories into class to create a book gallery.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



These activities are only a start. They are designed to support the goal of helping students explore the story and their own creativity.

EMOTIONS PUPPETS

In the story, May experiences various emotions: nervousness, frustration, embarrassment, happiness, silliness, and more. Using paper plates and popsicle sticks, teachers and children can create puppets depicting various emotions. Have children hold up their puppets at the different points in the story where May's emotions change. Have children describe what each emotion can look like. Ask them to reflect on a time when they felt this particular emotion. The puppets can also serve as props for dramatic play areas.

FOOD TRADITIONS/FAMILY MEAL BOARD

One of the recurring themes in *My Day with Gong Gong* is food; all cultures have their own unique foods and food traditions. In the story, food is used to bring May and Gong Gong closer when they share pork buns (May's favorite) at the park.

Ask children about their favorite foods and what they eat with their families. Use this to introduce a "Family Meal Board" to your classroom. Have children bring in a photograph of themselves with their families sharing a meal and make a display using the photos. If students are unable to print photos, have them send the photos digitally and print them at school. Students can also draw their favorite foods to share with their families. Students can look at the wall and feel proud of their cultures and the traditions they come from, while also learning about their peers. Before posting the display, have children present their photos to the classroom as a Show and Share.

WORD WALL

Language barrier is another recurring theme in *My Day with Gong Gong*. As you asked children about their home language when introducing the book, revisit the topic again and create a "Word Wall" of keywords and phrases in your students' home languages. You can represent the languages of your classroom on your current word wall or create a new one. Children's language is strengthened in all areas when their home languages are brought into the classroom. Through this activity, multilingual students will gain confidence by acting as learning resources to both their teachers and peers. We can all learn from each other!

SPECIAL GUESTS

When reading *My Day with Gong Gong*, children may be excited to talk about their own grandparents and family members. This is an excellent chance to bring children's grandparents into the classroom based on the abilities and needs of the room. Building relationships with families is an important way to connect with the classroom and can provide enriching experiences for the students.

FELT BOARD CHARACTERS

Creating characters using felt pieces is a fun and stimulating way to retell stories. Glue together loose felt with craft items such as popsicle sticks, googly eyes, yarn, etc. Whether they are made by the teacher for circle time or by the students as an arts project, children can use these physical objects to retell events of a story from memory or make up stories of their own.

MAP MAKING

As May and Gong Gong go on their walk, children may make connections to their own communities. Have children draw a map of their homes along with their favorite places to go in their neighborhoods. This could include: the park, restaurants, grocery stores, friends/neighbors' homes, etc. Encourage children to be intentional about where they place locations on their maps by asking them questions: how do you get there? Which way/direction do you go? Is it close by, or far away? Felt board characters can also be mixed with this activity as children can tell their stories with their own backdrops.

