

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. "Be careful of frozen feet," one of Nadia's cousins warned. Think of a time you had "stage fright" or "butterflies in your stomach." Write a personal narrative about a time you had to perform in front of a group. Describe the situation. Tell about the people who supported you. Make sure to include Heartwood attributes in your story.
2. Write a poem about Nadia's hands. Begin with the line, "When I look at Nadia's hands I see..." Make a list of nouns, then add adjectives to describe them. Revise your poem.

* Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Culture Keys, for more on the history, culture, and geography of this book.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Research Pakistan to find out more about the country and culture. See if you can find pictures of a bride and bridegroom having their hands decorated with mehndi.*
2. Research wedding customs of other cultures. Report to your class.

SCIENCE

Research mehndi designs and their meanings. Find out how mehndi (henna) is made. What gives it its color? How long does it stay on a person's hands?*

ART

1. Trace around your hands or make a life-size drawing of your hands on paper. Decorate them like Nadia's hands in the book, or with designs you create. Cut them out and make a display for a bulletin board.
2. Revisit the illustrations in the book. Notice how the illustrator portrays Nadia's emotions. With a partner, try drawing each other's faces showing various emotions. You may want to use colored chalk on a rough textured backing to imitate Jonathan Weiner's artistic style.

Nadia's Hands

Karen English
1999
Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mill Press

RESPECT

USA/Pakistan
Realistic Fiction
Reading Time: 9 minutes

CONCEPTS

Respect
Loyalty
Love

SUMMARY

Cultural traditions often weigh heavily on young children. Such is the case when Nadia is asked to be in her Aunt Laila's wedding and have her hands painted as tradition dictates. What will her friends think? This loving story explores Nadia's attitudes of respect and loyalty, which eventually lead her to embrace her cultural heritage. Nadia's emotions are vividly expressed on each page through Jonathan Weiner's colorful textured illustrations.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to define and discuss respect, loyalty, and love as they apply to this story, and will be encouraged to understand and respect traditions different from his or her own.

After the Story

Nadia's Hands

DISCUSSION

1. What was Nadia's dilemma? What might have happened if she had refused to have her hands painted?
2. Decorating hands was important to the adults. Why do you think this was so?
3. Grandma said, "When I look at your hands, it's as if I'm looking at my past and future at the same time." What do you think she meant?
4. What was Nadia thinking as she walked down the aisle at the wedding? How did her feelings change and why?
5. Share a time you did something you didn't want to do because of respect and loyalty for someone.

ACTIVITIES

1. Find Pakistan and the United States on the world map.
2. Look at the illustrations in the book. Write what Nadia might be thinking on different pages. Write emotions she might be feeling in each illustration.
3. In small groups, talk about what Nadia might say when she returns to school. Choose a recorder and write a dialogue. Include questions classmates might ask Nadia.
4. Nadia showed respect for her sister and her family traditions by sitting patiently while she had her hands decorated. List times you showed patience and respect.

HOME CONNECTION

Ask family members at home to share a time they did something out of respect and loyalty for someone. With permission, share with your class.

JOURNAL

1. Write about the turning point in the story, when Nadia's feelings about her hands change.
2. Keeping traditions is one way people show respect for their families. Write about family traditions your relatives observe. Tell about one you will honor when you're an adult.
3. Write about a wedding you attended. What customs were observed?

VOCABULARY

anticipation
intricate
mehndi

sly
pomegranate
scrutinizing

(See Note in the front of the book for Urdu words used in the story.)