



Lesson Plan: Unlocking the Magic of Love Through Art, Secret Messages, and Understanding Dementia

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

Subject: Social-Emotional Learning, Language Arts, Art, and Health Education

Duration: 60 minutes

Standards:

- **English Language Arts:**
 - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1** – Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for answers.
 - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3** – Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
 - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2** – Write informative texts to develop a topic with facts and details.
 - **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1** – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.
- **Health Science:**
 - **Human Body Systems:** Explain how the brain controls body systems, including movement, communication, and emotions, and how changes in the brain (like dementia) can affect these functions.

Objectives

1. **Cognitive:** Students will explain how the brain controls body systems and how dementia can affect memory, movement, communication, and emotions.
2. **Affective:** Students will reflect on the importance of acts of kindness, love, and caregiving in supporting someone with dementia.
3. **Behavioral:** Students will use a decoder to solve pre-made secret messages, create their own coded messages, and design an art project to bring joy to someone with dementia or someone they love.

Materials

- **Book:** *The Magic of Love* by Alyssa Janney.
- **Art Supplies:** Crayons, markers, construction paper, and glue sticks.
- **Printed Decoder Templates** (two circles: one with letters, one with symbols).
- **Symbols Page** (symbols for creating custom codes).
- **Scissors** (safety scissors for cutting out templates and symbols).
- **Brass Fasteners** (for attaching decoder circles).
- **Pre-Made Secret Messages:** Questions and answers based on themes from *The Magic of Love*.
- **Message Templates:** Blank templates for students to create their own secret messages.
- **Brain Diagram:** A simplified visual showing major parts of the brain and their roles (e.g., memory, movement, vision, language).
- **Music:** Soft, uplifting instrumental music.

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction and Discussion: The Brain and the Body (15 minutes)

- **Warm-Up Discussion:**
 - Ask, "What does your brain do for you every day? What happens when it's hard to remember or do something?"
 - Encourage students to share examples of things they use their brain for, like learning, playing, and feeling emotions.
- **What Does the Brain Do?**
 - Use a **brain diagram** to explain that the brain is the body's "control center," responsible for different functions:
 - **Memory and Thinking:** Helps us remember, solve problems, and learn.
 - **Speech and Language:** Allows us to talk and understand others.
 - **Movement:** Helps us walk, run, and balance.
 - **Vision and Senses:** Lets us see, hear, taste, and feel.
 - **Emotions:** Helps us feel happy, sad, or calm.
 - Explain that the brain sends signals through the nervous system to make all parts of our body work together.
- **What Happens with Dementia?**
 - Explain dementia simply:
 - "Dementia is a condition that hurts the brain, making it harder for some people, especially older adults, to remember things, talk, or move like they used to."
 - Highlight how dementia can affect:
 - **Memory** (forgetting names or important events).
 - **Talking and Understanding** (trouble finding words).
 - **Walking and Balance** (difficulty with movement).
 - **Emotions** (feeling confused, scared, or sad).
- **The Arts as a Tool:**
 - Share how **art, music, and storytelling** can help people with dementia express themselves and feel happy:
 - "A favorite song might bring back memories."
 - "Painting or drawing lets them share their feelings."
 - "Making art together can bring joy to both the caregiver and the person with dementia."

2. Read-Aloud and Guided Discussion (15 minutes)

- **Read the Book:** Read *The Magic of Love* aloud, pausing to ask comprehension and empathy-building questions:
 - "How does the grandmother's memory loss affect her and her family?"
 - "What does the granddaughter do to make her grandmother feel happy and loved?"
 - "Why does the granddaughter call love magical?"
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - "How does love help the grandmother, even when she forgets things?"

- “What role does the granddaughter play in caring for her grandmother? How does she act like a caregiver?”
- “What do you think we can do to bring joy to someone with dementia?”

3. Decoder Wheel Activity: Solving and Creating Secret Messages (20 minutes)

Part A: Assemble the Decoder (10 minutes)

- **Distribute Materials:** Provide templates for the decoder circles (letters and symbols).
- **Step-by-Step Assembly:**
 1. **Cut Out the Circles:** Guide students in cutting out the letter and symbol circles.
 2. **Align and Attach:** Show students how to align the circles using the provided **Key Reference Chart** (e.g., ❤️ = A) and secure the two circles with a brass fastener.
 3. **Test the Decoder:** Demonstrate how to rotate the symbol wheel to reveal corresponding letters.

Part B: Decode Pre-Made Messages (5 minutes)

- **Hand Out Pre-Made Messages:** Provide included cards with questions or themes from the book written in code (symbols). Or create you own messages. Example messages:
 - “How does love help the grandmother?” (Answer: "It brings joy.")
 - “What is one way art can help someone with dementia?” (Answer: "It shows feelings.")
 - “What makes someone a great caregiver?” (Answer: "Kindness.")

Part C: Create Your Own Secret Messages (5 minutes)

- **Distribute Message Templates:** Give students a blank message template and a **Symbols Page**.
- **Write and Code Messages:** Students write a message (e.g., “Love is magical.”) and encode it using symbols.
- **Exchange and Decode:** Students swap messages with a partner and decode them using their wheels.

4. Art Activity: Creating Cards of Love and Joy (10 minutes)

- **Explain the Art Project:** Students create a card or artwork inspired by the story to give to someone they care about or someone who might need extra kindness.
- **Choice of Art:**
 - **Draw a Picture:** A happy scene, a family memory, or something designed to cheer someone up.
 - **Make a Card:** Include their decoded or custom secret message inside with drawings or kind words.
- **Work Time:** Play soft instrumental music as students create. Remind them how art can communicate feelings and bring happiness to others.

5. Sharing and Reflection (5 minutes)

- **Share Work:** Invite students to share their artwork or decoded message with the class.
- **Reflect:**
 - “How can acts of kindness and art bring joy to someone with dementia?”
 - “What did you learn about the brain and how it controls everything we do?”

- Reinforce those small actions, like making art or spending time with someone, can make a big difference.

Assessment

- **Formative:** Observe participation during discussions and activities, noting how students express understanding of dementia, the brain, and acts of kindness.
- **Summative:** Evaluate:
 - Decoder assembly and use (accuracy and creativity in custom messages).
 - Art project (connection to themes of love, dementia, and kindness).
 - Reflections (thoughtfulness and understanding).

Extensions and Follow-Up

1. **Creative Writing:** Students write a story about how they could bring joy to someone who feels lonely or confused.
2. **Family Connection:** Encourage students to share what they learned about the brain and caregiving with family members.