

Lesson Plan: Bringing Joy to Grandma Through Art and Magical Messages

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Subject: Social-Emotional Learning, Art, Language Arts, and Fine Motor Skills

Duration: 60 minutes



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Standards:

- **English Language Arts:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3 – Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story.
- **Art:** Understand that artists use a variety of materials to express feelings.
- **Social-Emotional Learning:** Demonstrates empathy and kindness through understanding others' feelings.
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Practice safe use of scissors and basic assembly skills.

Objectives

1. **Cognitive:** Students will understand what dementia is in simple terms and discuss how it can affect memory and emotions.
2. **Affective:** Students will explore empathy by imagining ways to bring joy to someone who might be feeling sad or confused.
3. **Behavioral:** Students will create an art project and assemble a decoder to share secret messages of kindness, reflecting on the joy of giving.

Materials

- **Book:** *The Magic of Love*, a story about special relationships and memory loss.
- **Art Supplies:** Crayons, markers, watercolor paints, and construction paper.
- **Emotions Chart:** Simple visuals to help students identify feelings (happy, sad, confused, excited, etc.).
- **Printed Decoder Templates** (two circles per student: a large outer circle and a smaller inner circle).
- **Scissors** (for safe, first-grade use).
- **Brass Fasteners** (to attach the two circles together).
- **Secret Message Cards** (pre-made with simple “kindness codes” or “helpful hints”).
- **Music:** Soft, happy instrumental music.

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction and Discussion (10 minutes)

- **Start with a Question:** "Who has a grandparent or someone older in their family that they love spending time with?" (Allow students to share briefly.)

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- **Introduce Dementia:** In simple language, explain that sometimes older people have trouble remembering things. Say, “This is called dementia, and it can make people feel confused or even sad sometimes.”
- **Discuss Feelings:** Use the Emotions Chart to discuss how we feel when we’re happy, sad, or confused. Explain that today, they’ll hear a story about a little girl who finds ways to make her grandmother happy through art and love.

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

- **Read the Book:** Read *Grandma Forgets* (or a similar story) aloud to the class, pausing occasionally to check for understanding and engage students with questions like:
 - “How do you think the little girl feels about her grandmother?”
 - “Why do you think she wants to make her grandma happy?”
 - “What are some of the things she tries to do for her grandma?”
- **Discuss Key Themes:** Emphasize empathy by asking, “What are some ways we can help make people feel happy or safe when they’re feeling confused or sad?”

3. Magical Decoder Wheel Activity: Creating Secret Messages of Kindness (20 minutes)

Part A: Introduction to the Magical Decoder (5 minutes)

- **Explain the Activity:** Tell students that they will be building a magical tool—a “decoder”—that will help them find special, hidden messages about kindness and helping others, just like the little girl in the story who found ways to help her grandma.
- **Show an Example:** Briefly show a completed decoder so they know what they’ll be making and explain how it will help them uncover secret messages.

Part B: Decoder Wheel Assembly (10 minutes)

- **Distribute Materials:** Pass out the printed templates of the decoder circles (large outer circle and smaller inner circle).
- **Step-by-Step Assembly:**
 1. **Cut Out the Circles:** Guide students in carefully cutting out the large and small circles using scissors. Assist as needed to ensure safety.
 2. **Attach the Circles:** Show them how to place the smaller circle on top of the larger one, then secure them with a brass fastener in the middle, allowing the smaller circle to rotate.
 3. **Decorate:** Encourage them to decorate their decoders with colors or drawings that represent joy, kindness, or anything they think would make someone smile.

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Part C: Decoding the Magical Messages (5 minutes)

- **Hand Out Secret Message Cards:** Give each student a small card with a coded message. Each message could be written in a simple code, such as matching numbers to letters (A=1, B=2, etc.).
- **Decoding Process:**
 - Show students how to align their decoder wheels with the code on their card.
 - Have them turn the wheel to find the letters that correspond to the numbers, revealing the hidden message.
- **Sample Messages:**
 - “A smile can make someone’s day.”
 - “Kind words are like magic.”
 - “Helping hands bring happiness.”
 - “Art brings joy to everyone.”

4. Art Activity: Creating Gifts of Joy (10 minutes)

- **Introduce the Art Project:** Explain that, just like the girl in the story, they’re going to make something special for someone they care about to make them smile.
- **Choice of Art:** Offer students choices:
 - **Draw or Paint:** They can create a colorful picture that would make someone happy (flowers, animals, or scenes with loved ones).
 - **Make a Card:** Help them create a simple card with kind words or drawings that might cheer someone up.
- **Work Time:** Play soft instrumental music as students work and walk around to offer encouragement and engage them in discussing how their artwork might make someone feel.

5. Sharing and Reflection (5 minutes)

- **Share Art and Messages:** Invite students to share their artwork and decoded message with the class. Let them explain who they would like to give their art to and why.
- **Reflect:** End by asking, “How does it feel to know that you can bring happiness to someone else?” Reinforce the idea that even small acts of kindness, like art and kind words, can make a big difference.

Assessment

- **Formative:** Observe student participation during discussions, decoding, and art activities. Note how they understand and discuss feelings and empathy.
- **Summative:** Assess each student’s artwork, explanation of their decoded message, and reflection to see if they can identify ways their actions and creations might bring happiness to someone else.

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Extensions and Follow-Up

1. **Community Art Wall:** Create a “Wall of Joy” in the classroom where students can post their artwork. Each week, students can add art projects they make for others.
 2. **Family Connection:** Send a note home encouraging students to show their artwork and decoded message to the person they made it for or to find another way to bring joy to someone in their life.
 3. **Social Studies Link:** Discuss intergenerational relationships and the importance of respecting and supporting older family members.
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