

Lesson Plan: Speaking Up for Shiloh - A Creative Journey

Materials Needed:

- Copy of "Shiloh" by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- Notebook or journal
- Pencils, pens, colored pencils/markers
- Construction paper or plain paper
- Optional: computer/tablet for research (e.g., local animal shelters), craft supplies

Lesson Activities:

1. Introduction/Warm-up (15 minutes)

Hello! Today, we're going to dive deeper into Marty's world in "Shiloh" and the big decisions he has to make. This story is all about thinking through tough choices and caring for others, especially our animal friends.

Think about this: Have you ever had to make a really tough choice where it was hard to know what the 'right' thing was? What did it feel like? (Allow for a brief, open discussion. No right or wrong answers, just sharing experiences.)

In "Shiloh," Marty faces some very tough choices. We'll explore these choices, how he feels, and what we can learn from them. Get ready to be a detective of feelings and a champion for what's right!

2. Reading and Discussion (30-40 minutes)

Let's read a chapter or two from "Shiloh" together. (Choose chapters that highlight Marty's dilemmas, such as when he first finds and hides Shiloh, or when he's trying to get food for Shiloh secretly, or his interactions with Judd Travers). As we read, think about what Marty is going through.

After reading, let's talk:

- What is Marty's main problem or challenge in the part we just read?
- What are some of the different things Marty could do? What might happen if he chose each option?
- Why do you think Marty made the decision he did? (e.g., to hide Shiloh, to lie to his parents at first).
- Do you agree with Marty's choices? Why or why not? It's okay to have different opinions!
- How do you think Marty is feeling? What words or actions in the story tell us that? (e.g., scared, worried, determined, loving).
- If you were Marty, what would you do in this situation? What makes it such a hard decision?
- Let's think about Judd Travers. The story shows him as mean to his dogs. Why do you think he acts that way? Do people always have reasons for their actions, even if the actions are wrong?
- What is this story starting to teach us about being responsible and caring for animals?

3. Uncovering the Big Ideas (Theme Exploration - 15 minutes)

"Shiloh" is more than just a story about a boy and his dog. It's packed with big ideas, or themes! A theme is like a message or a lesson the author wants us to think about.

Let's brainstorm some of these big ideas we've seen so far in "Shiloh." I'll write them down. (Guide student towards concepts like:)

- Compassion and empathy (understanding how others, including animals, feel)
- Honesty versus Lying (when is it okay to lie, if ever? what are the consequences?)

- Loyalty (to family, to friends, to animals, to your own beliefs)
- Courage (standing up for what's right, even when it's scary)
- Moral Dilemmas (those tough choices where there's no easy right answer)
- Animal Welfare (how animals should be treated)
- The consequences of our actions

Which of these themes do you think is most important in the story so far? Why?

4. Creative Action Time! (45-60 minutes)

Now it's your turn to use your creativity to explore these themes and Marty's story! This is where you get to show your understanding in a super fun way. Choose ONE of these projects to work on:

- **Option A: Shiloh's Secret Diary:** Write a short diary entry (about half a page to a page) from Shiloh's point of view. What is he thinking and feeling during a specific event in the book (like being hidden in the woods, or his first encounter with Marty)? Try to use words that show his doggy perspective!
- **Option B: "Wanted: A Forever Loving Home" Poster for Shiloh:** Judd Travers might put up "Lost Dog" posters. But you're going to design a different kind of poster for Shiloh! This poster should describe Shiloh (his looks, his gentle personality) and the kind of loving, safe home he truly deserves. Make it colorful and eye-catching! What would make someone want to give Shiloh the best home ever?
- **Option C: A Letter to Young Marty:** Imagine you are an older, wiser Marty looking back at this time in his life. Write a short letter to your younger self (the Marty in the story). What advice would you give him about dealing with Judd, caring for Shiloh, or the lies he told? What would you tell him about the themes we discussed?
- **Option D: Kids Can Help! Animal Advocate Mini-Brochure:** Design a small, foldable brochure (you can fold a piece of paper in thirds). The brochure should be about why it's important to treat animals kindly and list 3-5 simple things kids can do to help animals in their community. You can even include a drawing of an animal who needs care. (Optional: If you have time and permission, you could quickly look up the name of a local animal shelter to include as a resource).
- **Option E: Shiloh's Storyboard Comic:** Create a short comic strip (3-6 panels with drawings and speech bubbles or captions) that shows a key scene from "Shiloh." Choose a scene that really shows one of the themes we talked about, like Marty making a hard choice, or showing compassion.

Remember to think about the feelings of the characters and the big ideas from our discussion as you create your project. Have fun with it!

5. Show and Tell & Wrapping Up (10-15 minutes)

Wow, that looks amazing! Let's see your project. Tell me about what you created and why you chose to do it that way.

- What was your favorite part of making your project?
- What's one important idea from "Shiloh" or our talk today that you think you'll remember for a long time?
- How can we use what we've learned from Marty and Shiloh about being kind, brave, and responsible in our own lives, maybe with our pets or when we see an animal that needs help?

You did a fantastic job thinking deeply about "Shiloh" and being so creative!

6. Bonus Ideas (Optional Extension Activities for another day):

- Research a local animal shelter or rescue organization online. What do they do? How can

people help?

- Read the sequels to "Shiloh" ("Shiloh Season," "Saving Shiloh," "A Shiloh Christmas") to find out what happens next!
- Write a different ending to "Shiloh," or add a new chapter from your imagination.
- Create a detailed "character profile" for Marty, Judd, or another character. What are their good points? Their bad points? How do they change in the story?