

Lesson Plan: Ada's Journey of Courage

A creative exploration of themes in "The War That Saved My Life" for a 3rd-grade student.

Materials Needed:

- A copy of the book "The War That Saved My Life" by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
 - A small box, bag, or pillowcase (to act as an evacuee's suitcase)
 - Paper and drawing/writing utensils (crayons, markers, colored pencils)
 - A large piece of construction paper or poster board
 - Optional: modeling clay, stickers, glitter, or other craft supplies
 - Optional: A jar and small slips of paper
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Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and discuss the feelings of the main character, Ada, at different points in the story.
 2. Explain the historical concept of child evacuation during World War II in their own words.
 3. Create a personal art project that connects the book's theme of "victory" to their own life experiences.
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Lesson Activities

Part 1: Warm-Up - Ada's Feelings Jar (10 minutes)

Goal: To activate prior knowledge of the book and explore the concept of empathy.

1. **Discussion:** Start with a conversation. "Let's think about Ada when we first met her in the book. How was she feeling living in her apartment in London? (e.g., sad, trapped, angry, scared). Why did she feel that way?"
2. **Feelings Jar Activity:**
 - Introduce the empty jar. "This is our Feelings Jar. Let's fill it with all the different emotions Ada felt during her journey."
 - As you discuss the book, have the student write or draw the feeling on a slip of paper and put it in the jar.
 - Prompt with questions: "How did Ada feel when she saw the ocean for the first time? (*curious, amazed*) How did she feel when Susan was harsh with her? (*confused, hurt*) How did she feel the first time she successfully rode Butter? (*proud, free, happy*)"
 - Keep the jar nearby to add to as you continue your reading of the book in other sessions.

Part 2: Main Activity - The Evacuee's Suitcase (15 minutes)

Goal: To understand the historical context of the story in a hands-on, relatable way.

1. **Set the Scene:** "Imagine you are like Ada and Jamie. You are being sent away from your home to a safer place in the countryside. You don't know where you are going or who you will live with. You can only pack what you can carry in this one small bag."
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2. The Packing Challenge:

- Give the student the box or bag. "You have 5 minutes to go around the room (or house) and choose 3-5 items to pack in your suitcase. Remember, it has to be something important to you, but also something you can carry by yourself."
- After the time is up, have the student "unpack" their suitcase and explain why they chose each item. What makes it important? How would it help them feel better in a new, scary place?
- Connect it back to the book: "Ada and Jamie couldn't pack anything. How do you think that made them feel? What was the one thing Jamie managed to bring with him? (*Bovril the cat*). Why was the cat so important?"

Part 3: Creative Application - My Personal Victory Poster (20-25 minutes)

Goal: To connect the book's central theme of overcoming challenges to the student's own life, fostering creativity and self-reflection.

1. **Define "Victory":** "In the story, Ada's biggest victory wasn't in the war. Her victory was learning to walk, learning to ride Butter, and learning to trust someone. A victory is when you work hard to overcome a challenge and feel proud of yourself."
2. **Brainstorm:** Talk with the student about their own "victories." These should be age-appropriate and personal.
 - *Examples:* Learning to ride a bike, learning to read a difficult book, being brave enough to try a new food, making a new friend, finishing a big puzzle, or learning to tie their shoes.
3. **Create the Poster:**
 - Give the student the large paper and art supplies.
 - Instruct them to create a "Victory Poster" celebrating one of their personal achievements.
 - The poster should have a title, like "My Great Victory!" or "The Day I Learned to Swim!"
 - Encourage them to draw a picture of the event, themselves, or how it made them feel. They can use words, pictures, or both. Let them be as creative as they want!

Wrap-Up and Assessment (5 minutes)

Goal: To summarize the lesson and assess understanding through informal presentation.

1. **Show and Tell:** Have the student present their Victory Poster. Ask them to explain what their victory was and why it made them feel proud, just like Ada felt when she rode Butter.
2. **Connecting Question:** End with a final thought-provoking question: "Ada's life was saved not just from the bombs, but from her old life. Who helped save her? (*Susan, Jamie, Butter the pony*). How do we help the people we care about feel safe and strong?"

Differentiation and Extensions

- **For Support:** If the student struggles with writing, focus on drawing. Provide sentence starters for the poster, such as "I felt proud when..." Help brainstorm victories by looking through old photos or talking about recent accomplishments.
- **For Challenge:** Ask the student to write a short paragraph on the back of their poster describing the steps it took to achieve their victory. They could also write a short "diary entry" from Ada's point of view after her first successful ride on Butter.
- **Extension Idea:** Plant a small "Victory Garden" in a pot (herbs like basil or parsley work well).

Discuss how growing food was important for people on the home front in Britain and was a victory for the whole country.