The Giving Tree
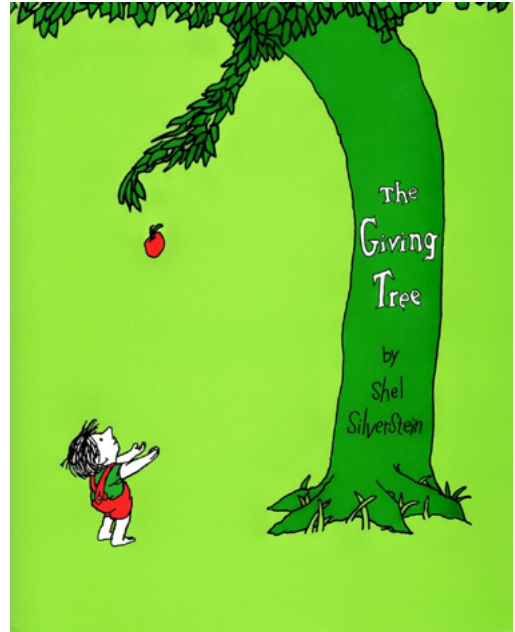
SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 2nd - 3rd |

SYNOPSIS

"Once there was a tree...and she loved a little boy."

So begins a story of unforgettable perception, beautifully written and illustrated by the gifted and versatile Shel Silverstein. This moving parable for all ages offers a touching interpretation of the gift of giving and a serene acceptance of another's capacity to love in return.

Every day the boy would come to the tree to eat her apples, swing from her branches, or slide down her trunk...and the tree was happy. But as the boy grew older he began to want more from the tree, and the tree gave and gave and gave. This is a tender story, touched with sadness, aglow with consolation.

THEMES IN THE STORY

- Friendship
- Greed
- Love
- Nature

Written by: Shel Silverstein

Illustrated by: Shel Silverstein

Published by: Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

Read by: Keith Carradine

Suggested grade level: 2nd - 3rd

ELA COMMON CORE STANDARD

Reading Literature: Students read and respond to works of literature with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.

Standards listed below are for 3ʳᵈ grade but can be adapted to 2ⁿᵈ grade standards.

BEFORE VIEWING

Standards: *CCSS.SL.3.1* - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with classmates and teacher/teacher's aid/parent volunteers on 3rd grade topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Objective: Tap knowledge and build background to prepare for reading the story.

Procedure: Build background by discussing the following points with students:

*   What makes someone a good friend? *Class discussion.*
*   What does it mean to be a giving/generous person?
*   What are things that make someone a friend others would like to have?
*   What does it mean to be greedy or selfish?
*   What do you know about the parts of a tree and what they can be used for? *Turn and talk to a partner.*

DURING VIEWING

Standards: *CCSS.RL.3.1* - Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

Objective: Students will listen to the story and answer teacher posed questions appropriately.

Procedure: Stop story at appropriate parts to ask questions or pose prompts:

*   When the boy was younger, what things did he and the tree do together? *Turn and talk to a partner.*
*   In the beginning of the story, what made the tree happy? What made the boy happy? *Class discussion.*
*   What started to change as the boy got older? *Think-pair-share.*
*   Why do you think the boy stopped visiting the tree?
*   What did the tree sacrifice for the boy throughout the story?
*   Why did the tree keep giving the boy everything? *Class discussion.*
*   Were they happy at the end of the story? Why?

AFTER VIEWING

Reading Focus: Character Traits

Standards: *CCSS.RL.3.3* - Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Objective: Students will pick a trait to describe the characters and find evidence within the text to support their answers.

Materials:

- Teacher-made chart
- Student copies of the text
- **Character Trait Word Cards** *(page 8)*
- *The Giving Tree* **Character Trait** worksheet *(page 9)*
- Pencils

Procedure:

1. The teacher will create a character trait chart and explain what a character trait is. The chart will be divided in half. One side will be for the tree, one side for the boy. Alternatively, the teacher can make one chart for each character. The teacher can either draw a picture of each or write their names.

2. The teacher will print or create **Character Trait Word Cards**. Have these cut out in advance.

3. As a class, students will determine where each character trait card goes, either with the tree or with the boy. Students should discuss, providing reasons to support their decisions. This step should be repeated for all of the character trait cards.

4. After the character trait chart has been created and thoroughly discussed, students will be able to complete their independent worksheet to check understanding.

5. Allow students to use a copy of the text and the posters created as tools to help them complete *The Giving Tree* **Character Trait** worksheet.

READING RESPONSE

Reading Focus: Central Message

Standards: *CCSS.RL.3.2* - Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral, and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

Objective: Students will answer the prompt using details from text to support the response.

Reading Prompt: What is the *central message* or *lesson* of the story? Use at least two pieces of evidence from text to support your answer.

WRITING — OPINION

Standards: *CCSS.W.3.1* - Write opinion pieces on topic or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

Objective: Students will write an opinion piece, using specific details from the story to support their opinion.

Materials:

•   Writing paper

•   Student copies of the text

•   Pencils

Procedure:

1.   As a class, review the major events of the story.

2.   Allow students to use a printout of the story for reference.

3.   Take a class vote where students decide if they would do the same thing as the tree, or if they would respond to the boy in a different way.

4.   Allow students with similar opinions to meet and brainstorm ideas to support their thoughts.

5.   Present students with the following:
     Writing Prompt: If you were the tree, what would you have done in this situation? Do you agree with how the tree responded, or would you respond in a different way?

6.   The teacher should then provide an example of how to write the introduction sentence for opinion writing. "If I were the tree in the story, *The Giving Tree*, I would…"

7.   Remind students to clearly state if they would do the same thing as the tree or if they would respond in a different way.

8.   Students should include several details to support their opinion.

9.   Students can peer edit or conference with teacher when they are done with their first draft.

10. Encourage students to share their opinion writing with the class.

SCIENCE – PARTS OF A TREE/HOW TREES ARE USEFUL

Materials:

- Video about parts of a tree
- Pencils
- Crayons

Video: Search for videos about parts of a tree.

Procedure:

1. Discuss with students the parts of the tree the boy took, and how he used the things he took. Focus on how trees are useful and important.

2. Show a video about parts of a tree.

3. After the video, review ideas discussed and clarify understanding.

4. Next, students can create their own diagram of a tree, where they can draw and label the parts.

5. In addition to their diagrams, have the students write two different ways that trees are important for the environment.

6. Ask for volunteers to share their diagrams and ideas with the class.

SOCIAL STUDIES – FAMILY TREE

Materials:

- Teacher's family tree on chart paper or SMART Board
- **My Family Tree** worksheet (*page 10)*
- Crayons
- Pencils

Procedure:

1. The teacher should introduce their family tree, either on the SMART Board or on chart paper.

2. Discuss with students the different members of our families, family friends, and/or supportive communities and why they are important.

3. Students can begin working on the **My Family Tree** worksheet at school.

4. Allow the students to take the worksheet home if needed to get correct information/ spelling of family, family friends, or community member names.

5. Once the information is filled in, have students add color to their tree.

6. Have students share their tree with the whole class or in small groups.

ART – TREE MOSAIC PROJECT

Materials:

- Construction paper
- Glue

Procedure:

1. Search for examples of tree mosaic projects to get an idea of the activity.
2. Show students examples of mosaic art work.
3. Allow students to choose the colors they want to use.
4. Students will tear tiny pieces of paper and glue them to create their own giving tree.

ART – BROWN PAPER BAG TREE

Materials:

- Brown paper bag
- Green and red construction paper
- Scissors

Procedure:

1. Search for examples of brown paper bag tree projects to get an idea of the activity.
2. Give each student a brown paper lunch bag, as well as green and red construction paper.
3. Cut strips from the top to halfway down the bag.
4. Pull the strips apart and twist each tightly to form the different branches of the tree.
5. Twist the bottom half of the bag to form the trunk.
6. Students can add leaves and apples, as desired.

CHARACTER TRAIT
WORD CARDS

Cut apart and create a chart!

kind	**selfish**
greedy	**proud**
disrespectful	**happy**
loving	**rude**
mean	**generous**

THE GIVING TREE
CHARACTER TRAITS

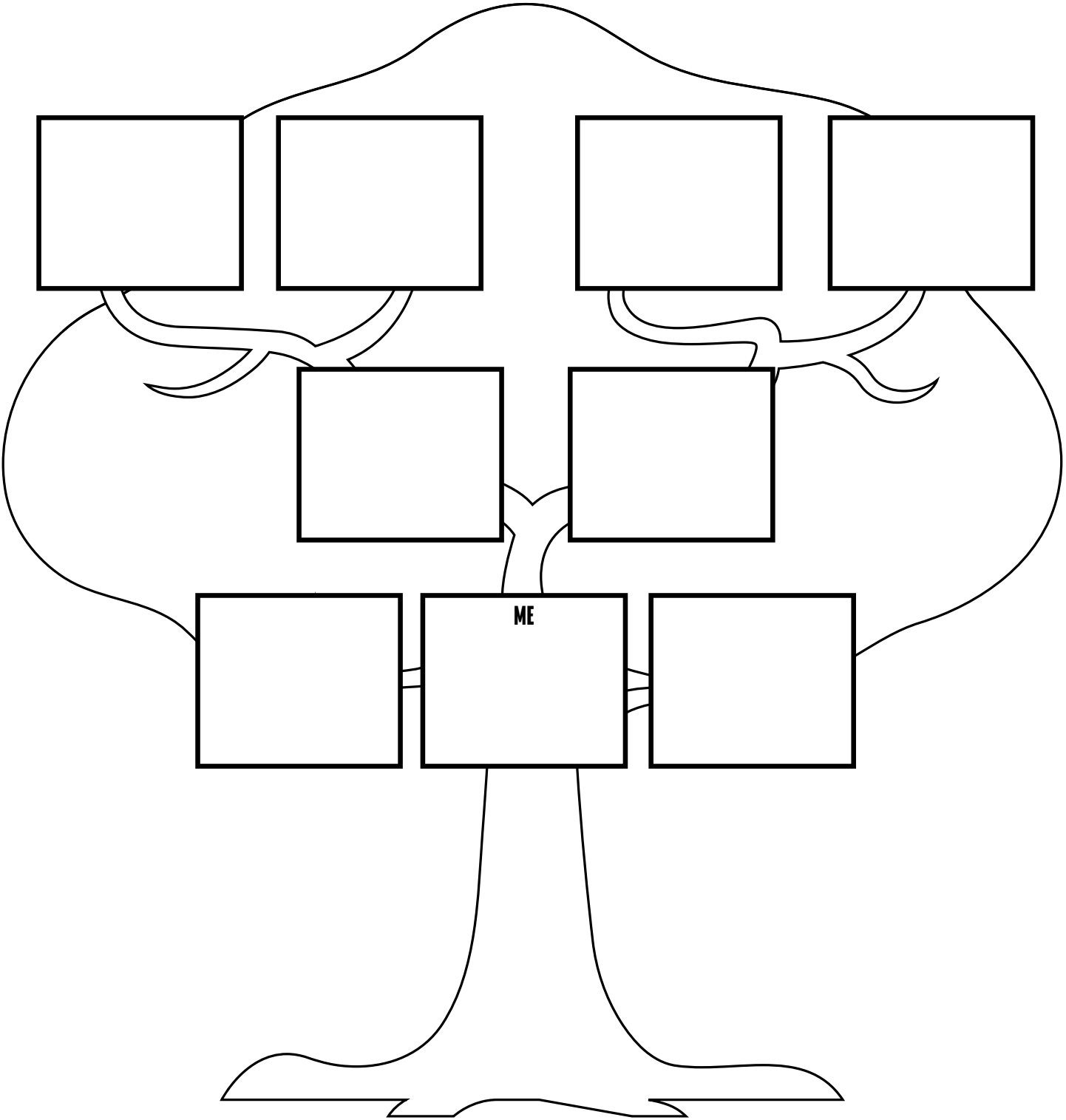**Pick a character trait to describe the tree and provide evidence from the text to support your answer.**

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Pick a character trait to describe the boy and provide evidence from the text to support your answer.

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Why didn't the tree ever say, "No!" to the boy? Would that have changed the story?

_____

_____

_____

MY FAMILY/COMMUNITY TREE

ME

ABOUT **THIS GUIDE**

The purpose of this guide is to enhance the ELA curriculum by providing quality children's literature to engage students in listening to expressive read alouds.

Suggested story related activities are aligned with ELA Common Core Standards.