

Confucian Values Through Chinese Folk Tales

A. The lessons are based upon several folk tales written during the historical period that the great Chinese teacher and philosopher Confucius lived. He lived and wrote during the 6th century BC, a time of confusion and trouble. In order to make sense of his world, Confucius developed ways to teach virtue and goodness. Some of his goals were :

- 1. Moderation in conduct**
- 2. Importance of keeping one's promise**
- 3. Respect for the elders**
- 4. Return to traditional ways**
- 5. Importance of education**
- 6. Avoidance of bad people (The selected folk tales demonstrate these virtues through the actions of the main characters.)**

B. This is a companion lesson to a Social Studies lesson on Confucius, to put into historical context the time he lived, and the values he taught. A Social Studies text, A Message of Ancient Days, published by Houghton Mifflin has a unit on

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China that would be appropriate to use in conjunction with this literature lesson.

C. *Divide the class into cooperative learning groups and read ancient Chinese Folk Tales. (Suggested folk tales listed at the end.) Have students find places in the folk tales that show examples of Confucian values, such as :*

- 1. Keeping promises**
- 2. Respect for elders**
- 3. Traditional ways**
- 4. Avoiding bad people**
- 5. Moderation in conduct**

D. *Have each group come to the front of the class and present (act out) their folk tale. After the presentation, have the balance of the class guess which value the folk tale demonstrates..*

E. *Homework or Follow-up Classwork - As individual students, they are to write their own folk tales in the Ancient Chinese manner trying to incorporate the values of Confucius. Have*

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students pick one of the five values and write their folk tale around it. If students are low (RSP/LEP) try this with partners.

F. Suggested Folk Tales:

1. Rappaport, Doreen Journey of Ming, Dial Books, N.Y. 1988
2. Young, Ed Lian Po Po (Chinese Red Riding Hood) Philomal Books, N.Y. 1989.
3. Legend of, "Tchi-Niu" -- Buck, Pearl, Fairy Tales of the Orient, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1965
4. Chrisman, Arthur. Shen Of The Sea , Dutton, N.Y. 1925