



Stone Soup

IN THIS ACTIVITY, participants describe ways that individuals can contribute to the common good of a community.

TIME REQUIRED: 20 MINUTES | INTENDED FOR GRADES 1-5



language arts



economics



dramatic arts

MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Construction paper and markers, one of each for each participant
- » Locate a copy of the children's book titled *Stone Soup*, or use the version provided in Resource, "Stone Soup Story," found on pages 33-34
- » Objects from the story, such as a large pot, a few medium- to large-size stones, a ladle, a jug of water, etc. (optional)
- » One sheet of butcher paper (create a large image of a pot on the butcher paper)
- » Scissors, one pair for each two to three participants
- » Two or three glue sticks
- » Visit worldvision.org/lp/acsi-teacher-resources for a video you can show to support this lesson. (optional)

Activity Steps

1

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS to sit in a circle on the floor so they can all see you. Place the pot, ladle, stones, and a jug of water in the center of the circle. Arouse curiosity by asking the participants to predict what a story with these items might be about. Allow for a few responses.

2

READ THE STONE SOUP STORY. Pause at various places and ask the participants to predict the next plot detail.

3

ENGAGE THE PARTICIPANTS in a large-group discussion using the following questions:

- » Did you like this story? Why or why not?
- » Why did the main character(s) use stones to make the soup?
- » Was it the stones that made the soup taste good?
- » What happened to the villagers while the soup was being made? What changed about them?
- » What is the main message or lesson of the story?
- » What happens when people in a community don't share what they have with others?
- » Why is it important that they share?

4

PROVIDE PARTICIPANTS WITH a sheet of construction paper and a marker. Ask them to draw an image of a stone on the paper. Then ask them to write one word on the stone describing a nonfood “ingredient” that makes the *Stone Soup* recipe a success (sharing, trust, helping, working together, friends, etc.).

5

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS to cut out their stones and then to come forward and share their ingredients. After they have shared, they should then glue their stones onto the soup pot and display.

6

CONCLUDE BY INVITING the participants to join you in prayer. Pray that all countries will work toward the common good of all. Pray for a day when the resources of the world are shared in a way that no one goes without food, shelter, medical care, or education.

RESOURCE

Stone Soup Story

Three soldiers trudged down a road in a strange country. They were on their way home from the wars. Besides being tired, they were hungry. In fact, they had eaten nothing for two days.

“How I would like a good dinner tonight,” said the first. “And a bed to sleep in,” added the second. “But that is impossible,” said the third.

On they marched until ahead of them they saw the lights of a village. “Maybe we’ll find a bite to eat and a bed to sleep in,” they thought.

Now the peasants of the place feared strangers. When they heard that three soldiers were coming down the road, they talked among themselves. “Here come three soldiers,” they said. “Soldiers are always hungry. But we have so little for ourselves.” And they hurried to hide their food. They hid the barley in haylofts, carrots under quilts, and buckets of milk down the wells. They hid all they had to eat. Then they waited.

The soldiers stopped at the first house. “Good evening to you,” they said. “Could you spare a bit of food for three hungry soldiers?” “We have no food for ourselves,” the residents lied. “It has been a poor harvest.”

The soldiers went to the next house. “Could you spare a bit of food?” they asked. “And do you have a corner where we could sleep for the night?” “Oh, no,” the man said. “We gave all we could spare to the soldiers who came before you.” “And our beds are full,” lied the woman.

At each house, the response was the same. No one had food or a place for the soldiers to stay. The peasants had very good reasons, like feeding the sick and children. The villagers stood in the street and sighed. They looked as hungry as they could.

The soldiers talked together. The first soldier called out, “Good people! We are three hungry soldiers in a strange land. We have asked you for food, and you have no food. Well, we will have to make stone soup.” The peasants stared.

The soldiers asked for a big iron pot, water to fill it, and a fire to heat it. “And now, if you please, three round, smooth stones.” The soldiers dropped the stones into the pot. “Any soup needs salt and pepper,” the first soldier said, so children ran to fetch salt and pepper.

“Stones make good soup, but carrots would make it so much better,” the second soldier added. One woman said, “Why, I think I have a carrot or two!” She ran to get the carrots.

“A good stone soup should have some cabbage, but no use asking for what we don’t have!” said the third soldier. Another woman said, “I think I can probably find some cabbage,” and off she scurried.

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RESOURCE

Stone Soup Story (continued)

“If only we had a bit of beef and some potatoes, this soup would be fit for a rich man’s table.” The peasants thought it over, and ran to fetch what they had hidden in their cellars. A rich man’s soup, and all from a few stones! It seemed like magic!

The soldiers said, “If only we had a bit of barley and some milk, this soup would be fit for a king!” And so the peasants managed to retrieve some barley and milk.

“The soup is ready,” said the cooks, “and all will taste it, but first we need to set the tables.” Tables and torches were set up in the square, and all sat down to eat. Some of the peasants said, “Such a great soup would be better with bread and cider.” So they brought forth the last two items and all enjoyed the banquet. Never had there been such a feast. Never had the peasants tasted such delicious soup, and all made from stones! They ate, drank, and danced well into the night.

The soldiers asked again if there was a loft where they might sleep for the night. “Oh, no!” said the town folk. “You wise men must have the best beds in the village!” So one soldier spent the night in the priest’s house, one in the baker’s house, and one in the mayor’s house.

In the morning, the villagers gathered to say goodbye. “Many thanks to you,” the people said, “for we shall never go hungry now that you have taught us how to make soup from stones!”

(Stone Soup is a popular European folktale that has been told and retold for centuries.)

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