

TEACHER NOTES

'The Giggle Gum Tree'

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Released in May 2009 by IP Kidz

Synopsis: Lily and Amanda Smart are lucky girls. They live in a tall house made of purple bricks, and every day they get to walk to school through a park filled with beautiful trees. Their favourite tree is the Giggle Gum, and they look forward to playing in it. But not everyone likes the Giggle Gum, because it has overgrown a path nearby. Some people complain, and soon the Tree Police put up a sign saying the Giggle Gum Tree is going to be cut down. Afraid they'll lose their leafy friend, Lily and Amanda come up with a plan to save it. But will it be too late?

Themes/Issues for Discussion:

- Conservation/looking after the environment
- Community planning and collaboration
- Problem-solving strategies
- Recycling/re-allocating resources
- Authority and decision makers
- Competing interests/views
- Consequences of decisions

Comprehension Questions:

1. Lily and Amanda have a lovely tall house, but what don't they like about it?
2. What sort of special jobs do Lily and Amanda help with?
3. What are their pets' names and how are they similar?
4. What makes the girls happy and why?
5. Some people don't like the Giggle Gum. Who are they and why don't they like it?
6. Mrs Pritchett loses two things. What are they? Which would be worse to lose?
7. How do Lily and Amanda feel when they read the sign? How can you tell?
8. Do the illustrations reflect how the girls feel? If so, how?
9. Who or what else is affected because of the decision to cut down the Giggle Gum?
10. How do the sisters come up with their 'Great Idea' to save the Giggle Gum?
11. What is their idea? Who else helps them to save the tree?
12. How do they test to see if their idea has worked?
13. When the Giggle Gum is saved, everyone runs under the tree except for two people. Who are they?
14. Who else is happy because the tree is saved?
15. How has the sisters' house changed by the end of the story? Is this change good or bad?

Activity Ideas/Creative Tasks

1. Make a Giggle Gum Tree using only recycled material. Test to see if it can make you giggle.
2. Look at the picture of the community meeting. List everyone there, making up names for them and describing how they know Lily and Amanda.
3. Draw a floor plan of the girls' house before and after the bricks were removed. Describe what was on the third floor and how they have adapted without it.
4. The Giggle Gum is in 'Rosie's Reserve'. Write a paragraph explaining why the park might be called Rosie's Reserve. Don't forget to describe Rosie.
5. What sort of things do the girls discuss when they go home to plan their 'Great idea'? Write out the girls' plan and their 'to do' list.
6. What sort of scraps do chooks like to eat? What sort of food do horses eat? What about dogs? Draw Lily and Amanda feeding their pets, or draw some of the foods the animals might eat.
7. What do you think the girls said to everyone at the meeting to persuade them to help? Write a speech they might have made.
8. What question do you think the people at the meeting had for the girls? Who would have asked each question?

Maths/Clear Thinking

1. Estimate how long it might have taken to build the purple paths around the tree. To work this out consider:
 - How long it would take to walk from the girls' house to the tree.
 - How many trips they had to make altogether.
 - How many people helped to carry the bricks.
2. Why were the bricks taken from the top of the house? Why not from the middle, or the bottom? Describe what would happen in each case.

Research Activities:

1. What is a gum tree? Why are they called gum trees? How many different types of gum trees are there?
2. List some animals that might live in or use gum trees for shelter.
3. What is a reserve? List three other words that are similar to 'reserve'.
4. Do we have Tree Police? Who might have the same role as the Tree Police in Australia?

Debating:

- That the rights of younger people are more important than the rights of older people.
- That trees that might hurt people should be cut down. It doesn't matter if the tree makes other people happy.
- Draw up two columns – headed 'for' and 'against'. In the 'for' column, list all the reasons why the Giggle Gum Tree should be cut down. In the 'against' column, list all the reasons why it shouldn't be.