



ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing

Intergenerational Stories

**A Lesson Developed and Contributed by
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**With a Link to Copyrighted Dick Blick Lesson Plan
“Home Town Map”
www.DickBlick.com**

Objectives (Elders):

1. To encourage reminiscence, which has been shown to be beneficial for elders
2. To increase feelings of self-worth by discovering that elders have interesting stories to tell about their lives
3. To increase feelings of self-worth by passing on their wisdom to young people
4. To brighten moods through contact with young people

Objectives (Children):

1. To bring history lessons they may have learned in school to life through contact with people who have “lived it”
2. To encourage respect for elders by discovering what they have lived through and learned from their experiences

3. To increase tolerance for disability and aging

Audiences:

This is a project to complete with a small group of elderly people plus a small group of school-aged children. It is recommended that you have group facilitators for both the elders and the children (i.e., at least two—one for the elders and one for the children). Elders should be high-functioning and be able to tell their stories. Elders with mild dementia, but still good long-term memories, can be involved if there is extra staff or volunteers available to work one-on-one with them and the children to encourage and guide.

Supplies/Materials:

- Drawing paper (11" x 14" is a good size)
- Pencils
- Markers in assorted colors
- Pens
- Paper for writing
- Copies of the Topic List (see below); one for each elder

Prior to Class: Make enough copies of the Topic List for each elder

Class Instruction:

1. Begin the class with greetings and friendship. If necessary, introduce (or reintroduce) yourself to your group, putting everyone at ease. Introduce the children to the elders and vice-versa.
2. Divide the participants into pairs—one child to one elder.
3. Give each elder a Topic List and each child a sheet of drawing paper, a sheet of writing paper, a pen, a pencil, and a set of markers.
4. Encourage each elder to select a topic from the Topic List. Tell the child he/she is paired with the elder to hear and learn a story from their partner's life based on the selected topic.
5. Have each child write a brief story (it doesn't need to be really long; just a few sentences will do) based upon the story told to them by their elder partner. The child should then read the story back to the elder to check for accuracy, making any suggested corrections from the elder.
6. Each child then draws a picture based upon the story.

7. When everybody is done, have them all share their pictures and stories with the group. Have the children share with the elders what they have learned from this process.
8. The written stories with illustrations will make an excellent display. I recommend word processing the children's stories so they will be easier to read and then displaying stories with pictures on the wall.
9. If an elder seems reluctant to share a story, have a group facilitator work with that pair to provide encouragement. Go through each item on the topic list with the elder and ask about each topic specifically until you find a topic about which that the elder has something to say. Many elders have no idea how interesting their stories can be to young people, and need encouragement to share.

Topic List:

- Corner Grocery Store
- Drive-In Movies
- Drugstore Soda Fountain
- Dust Storms
- Feed Sack Dresses
- Going Shopping Downtown
- Homemade Ice Cream
- Ice Man
- Keeping Cool Without Air Conditioning
- Listening to the Radio
- Milk Man
- Movie Shorts
- One Room Schoolhouse
- Our First Television
- Phonograph Records
- Walking to School
- Wartime Home Front During World War II

NOTE: These topics are things that were common for elders when they were young, but are uncommon now. Feel free to add other topics you might think of that would be appropriate for your elders.

Adaptation and Extension:

Check out the YouTube video:

<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=youtube+video+about+kids+teaching+senior+citizens+to+use+facebook&ei=UTF-8&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-002>

This video shows high school students helping senior citizens to “connect” with family and friends using the internet. This is another great way to bridge together generations to form relationships.

Also, check out Dick Blick’s lesson plan “Home Town Map”

www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/home-town-map/ . This lesson was designed for children in Grades K-6 to help the children create maps of their route between their homes and their schools. Students learn about distance, signs, symbols landmarks and safety. This plan could also be adapted for senior citizens and those living in retirement communities to create maps of their current and past neighborhoods. It may be a fun intergenerational project for children and senior citizens to work on together!



***Christine Hennig, MA, LMHP, ATR** is a registered art therapist and a licensed mental health practitioner in private practice in Omaha, Nebraska. Christine’s passion is to help people heal and grow by harnessing each person’s natural creativity. She provides art therapy, counseling, creative coaching, and creative life review services in her practice. Check out her website at www.christinehennig.com for more information.*

*Special Thanks to **Dick Blick** for graciously allowing Hildegard Center to link to DB lesson plans in conjunction with its “Art Bridges” Project. Dick Blick’s commitment to the educational community extends far beyond providing high-quality products at low prices. DB offers art lesson plans created for all ages and skill levels. Every project also meets several National Standards for Visual Arts education. PDF downloads and videos of these original lessons are available free of charge. Visit www.dickblick.com to see the many ways DB support schools, communities and art education and make DB your one-stop shopping destination for art supplies.*

If you have used this lesson plan, we’d love to hear from you! Please send questions or comments through our website www.hildegardcenter.org .

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