Continue activities following the story - Bone Button Borscht



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Illustrations
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Age Group: **Preschool (3-5)**

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Classroom discussion and activity ideas:

- "Strange, what is happening here?" the beggar asks. You might want to stop the reading mid-way and allow the children to express their thoughts and opinions: What is happening in the town? Why does no one invite the beggar into their home? The children can take turns pretending to knock on the doors of the townspeople and ask them, "How are you? Why aren't you opening the door to the beggar?" The children can invent different responses that the townspeople may give.
- Young children should not open the door to a beggar, or to any stranger. In today's world, we need to warn children against opening the door to strangers. What is the best way to help others? Discuss the ways in which we can help others without inviting them into our homes. Think together how and whom children can help.
- After eating the soup, the townspeople sing, laugh, and dance. They even invite the beggar to sleep in their homes. Re-read the description of the townspeople together. What did the townspeople gain from their contribution to the soup that made them so happy? Try to think of a case when something new and better is created as a result of every person giving up something.
- Draw or paint a community center (real or imaginary) on cardboard. Cut the

picture to create a jigsaw puzzle, which can then be put together. Show the children how each piece of the puzzle helps complete the picture.

- Prepare Bone Button Borscht with friends (but without the buttons!): You might want to divide the kindergarten children into groups of three or four, each of which would prepare soup at the home of a different child. Ask each group to write and illustrate their soup's recipe, and compile a classroom soup cookbook.
- Prepare soup in the classroom: Ask each child to bring in a vegetable or a spice, to ensure that everyone takes part in contributing to the group effort of preparing the soup. The recipe of the soup prepared in kindergarten can be the first one to appear in the kindergarten's cookbook described in the previous activity suggestion!
- In order to bring the abstract concept of a "community" closer to the children, start with the joys of being a part of our kindergarten community:Who is a part of it? What do we like to do together? What do we do together that we can't do alone? What special or added value do we achieve by being a community as opposed to each person being alone in his or her home? What other thoughts do you have on the topic?
- One idea for solidifying the feeling of community is to sing with the children the song "HinehMah Tov U'MahNa'im, ShevetAchim Gam Yachad" (How goodly and pleasant it is for brothers/friends to sit together).
- Community institutions: Suggest to the parents that they take a walk with their children in the neighborhood in order to take specific note of the community institutions in it (community center, library, school, synagogue, etc.), and afterwards to draw these buildings. Ask the children to bring their drawings to the kindergarten. By hanging the children's pictures on the wall, you can create a model of the actual community and its institutions, or even an imaginary community. Or, you may want to build a model of such a community by using blocks, Lego or some other construction material.
- What can five buttons achieve? Divide the children into two groups. One group draws a collective picture of the darkened town (houses, inhabitants) as it was when the beggar arrived in the beginning of the story, while the other group draws pictures of the town after the people ate the soup together. You can hang the two pictures on a bulletin board on the wall in order to emphasize the change.
- **"Receive everyone with a kindly countenance"** [Haveimikabel et kul ha-adamb'severpanimyafot(Avot, 1)]: At an in-service-training workshop, "Tali" kindergarten teachers discussed the difference between "Bone Button Borscht", and Jewish tales that deal with the importance of receiving people with a kindly

countenance and the mitzvot of welcoming guests (hachnasatorchim). The behavior of the townspeople in Bone Button Borscht demonstrates the exact opposite of welcoming guests and of "receiving everyone with a kindly countenance".

Receiving guests is one of the most important and beloved mitzvot of the Jewish tradition. In the Book of Genesis (ch. 18), it is told how Abraham welcomes three strangers, feeds them, and invites them to stay as guests in his tent. Abraham's behavior teaches us how we should behave in our homes.

- During the holiday of Sukkot it is customary to invite guests ("Ushpezin"), and for people to visit one another in their sukkot. And each year on Passover we invite guests to a meal and read: "Koldichfin yeti v'yachol, kolditzrich yeti v'yifsach" (Every hungry person may come and eat, every one who is in need may come and observe). We invite others to come and eat with us, in order that no one remains outside, hungry and alone on the Seder night.
- You can share with the children the tale relating that in the tents of Abraham, our forefather, the first Jew, there were four openings. Each opening opened out to a different direction in order that every guest, no matter where he came from, would feel comfortable to enter.
- How do we host a friend? What is the duty of the host or hostess, and what is the duty of the guest? Accepting guests is part of the everyday life of children, but sometimes it's difficult for them to host because they don't know what to do with the guest, or because it is difficult for them to share their possessions. You can take such an opportunity for discussing the ways in which to make the guest feel comfortable.
- The mitzvah of welcoming guests is most meaningful when inviting one who is needy. You can carry out a "campaign" in the kindergarten in which every child invites a new friend, someone who has not yet visited him or her at their home. This is an excellent opportunity for creating new connections between children, and to help children who have difficulties with social skills.
- "Bone Button Borscht" is distributed in the month of Adar. Purim is approaching, and with it, mitzvot that are directly connected to community action and to helping the needy – mishloachmanot and gifts for the needy. As a class you can prepare mishloachmanot for all members who serve the community (security guards, the kindergarten staff that works in the after-school/afternoon program, etc.). You might also organize gifts for the needy. Your classroom community

can collect and organize food, games or any other useful items that come to your mind that could gladden the hearts of those who in need.

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