



#10052

# CHRYSANthemum

WESTON WOODS STUDIOS, 1998

Grade Level: Ps-4

15 mins.

## DESCRIPTION

A little mouse thinks her name is absolutely perfect until she starts school. Some of the kids make fun of her, and the bullying and teasing make each day harder than the last. But when Mrs. Twinkle comes to class, things change. Animated version of the story by Kevin Henkes. Narrated by Meryl Streep.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Health

- Standard: Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health
  - ♦ Benchmark: Identifies and shares feelings in appropriate ways (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)
- Standard: Understands the relationship of family health to individual
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows characteristics needed to be a responsible friend and family member (e.g., participating in family activities, assuming more responsibility for household tasks) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1.)

### Subject Area: Language Arts–Reading

- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
  - ♦ Benchmark: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of familiar literary passages and texts (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, legends, fables, myths, poems, nursery rhymes, picture books, predictable books) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)

## INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To explore the meaning of friendship and the positive effects of kindness.
2. To investigate feelings of envy.
3. To promote the reading of children's literature.

## VOCABULARY

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|------------------|------------------|
| 1. absolutely    | 9. named after   |
| 2. chrysanthemum | 10. perfect      |
| 3. delphinium    | 11. pick         |
| 4. dreadful      | 12. scarcely     |
| 5. dreamed       | 13. school       |
| 6. flower        | 14. sounded      |
| 7. giggled       | 15. welcome home |
| 8. loved         |                  |

## BEFORE SHOWING

1. Discuss first names.
  - a. What do you like about your name? Dislike?
  - b. Do you know why you were given this name? If so, what was the reason?
  - c. If you could have another name, what would it be? Why?
2. Read the book *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes. Discuss the feelings of the characters throughout the story.

## AFTER SHOWING

### Discussion Items and Questions

1. How did Chrysanthemum's parents feel about her when she was born? Why did they name her Chrysanthemum?
2. How did Chrysanthemum feel about her name in the beginning of the video?
3. What changed Chrysanthemum's feelings about her name? What did the kids at school say about her name on the first day of school?
4. What did her parents tell her to make her feel better? What else made her feel better?
5. What did Chrysanthemum do on her way to school the second day? How did the kids tease her at school? How did this make her feel? What made her feel better?
6. Describe the bad dream Chrysanthemum had after the second day of school.
7. Discuss why Chrysanthemum took the longest way to school.
8. How did the kids feel about Mrs. Twinkle, the music teacher? Why? What did the music teacher share with the students that helped Chrysanthemum feel good about her name?
9. Describe how the play turned out.
10. What did Mrs. Twinkle name her baby?



### Applications and Activities

1. Have a "Change Your Name Day."
  - a. Bring a variety of artificial flowers to class and identify the names of each one.
  - b. Each person should choose a flower with their eyes closed. The name of the flower they chose becomes their name for the day.

## C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

- c. Wear name tags with the name of the flower printed on it. Refer to each other by the flower names all day.
  - d. At the end of the day, discuss how it felt to have a different name.
2. Recall the ways that Chrysanthemum's parents supported her throughout the story. Discuss personal experiences related to this.
  - a. Think of problems you have had and the ways that your parents or other family members were supportive or helped solve the problems.
  - b. Describe what it feels like to have the support and understanding of others.
  - c. Think of ways that you might be more helpful to or supportive of your family members or classmates.
3. Research to find the meanings of each person's name. Create a bulletin board with the name meanings and pictures of the students.
4. Review the ways Chrysanthemum's classmates treated her before Mrs. Twinkle entered the story. Discuss:
  - a. Why do you think Chrysanthemum's classmates teased her about her name?
  - b. How do you think Chrysanthemum felt?
  - c. What would you have done if you were Chrysanthemum?
  - d. How do you think Chrysanthemum felt when Mrs. Twinkle told the class how much she loved the name Chrysanthemum?
5. Research a variety of flowers. Paint or draw pictures of the flowers. Label each flower.
6. Discuss the feeling of jealousy. Share personal stories about feeling jealous. Role-play appropriate responses to feelings of jealousy.

### SUMMARY

Chrysanthemum's only problem, once she reaches school age, seems to be her name, which becomes the object of ridicule by jealous classmates. Chrysanthemum begins to feel that her name is "absolutely dreadful" instead of "absolutely perfect" as it once was. But with the help of supportive parents, and an especially wonderful music teacher, Chrysanthemum soon learns to appreciate the beauty and melodious sounds of her name again.

### CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [\*Ashok by Any Other Name\* #3333](#)
- [\*Christopher Changes His Name\* #9679](#)
- [\*Goggles\* #2286](#)



### World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

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- **KEVIN HENKES**

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/henkes.htm>

Meet Kevin Henkes, the author of *Chrysanthemum* and numerous other children's books. From this Web site you can choose links to read about his life and work or access strategies for teaching this book with many activities related to it. Perfect lesson plan ideas for the very young student.

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- **CLASSES OF CHRYSANTHEMUM**

<http://www.mums.org/journal/articles/classifications.htm>

Thirteen varieties of chrysanthemums in photographs with descriptions which can be transformed to black and white sheets for kids to color by clicking the highlighted link at the top of the page. Perfect for reinforcing the differences in color and shape of these beautiful flowers.

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- **COMMON FLOWER NAMES**

<http://www.flowers.org.uk/flowers/facts/common-names.htm>

If kids think Chrysanthemum's name is unusual, take a look at this list of common flower names. Listed alphabetically using both common and botanical references, you're sure to find some you know already and plenty you don't.

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- **WHAT'S IN A NAME**

<http://www.kidsturncentral.com/topics/hobbies/names.htm>

This Web page has some general information for kids about first names, a link to a list of Web sites that find name meaning, and a link to a site that "analyzes" first names to tell what kind of person you are.

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- **GARDENING FOR KIDS!**

<http://www.geocities.com/enchantedforest/glade/3313/>

Why stop at growing a simple chrysanthemum with kids when you can grow an entire flower garden? No matter where you live or what time of year, this Web site will encourage anyone with a love of flowers, children or both, to start up a garden.

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- **FRIENDSHIP**

<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/resources/friendship%20unit/>

This site from a school district in Canada provides a 42-page unit plan on friendship using children's literature. It contains activities for reading, writing, speaking, listening, the arts, math, and social studies and covers making friends and friendly behavior, difficulties in friendships, mixed-gender friendships, intergenerational friendships, interracial and cross cultural friendships, imaginary friends, and loss of a friend.