

TOO MANY TOYS

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by David Shannon

Themes: Problem Solving, Family, Growing Up,
Creativity, Humor

Ages: 4 - 8; Grades: Pre-K - 3

Running Time: 11 minutes

SUMMARY

Is it even possible? Can a kid have too many toys? Spencer's mom and dad certainly think so. Spencer's toys are taking over the house and creating safety hazards. Finally, Spencer's mom has had enough. But when it comes to giving some toys away, what stays and what goes? As Spencer evaluates each toy, he realizes that they're all his favorites. How can he let go of them? As he works to persuade his mom to let him keep his toys, he discovers among them, the best toy of all.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will bring important personal items to school to share with their classmates.
- Students will discuss giving and generosity.
- Students will write about a favorite toy.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Invite students to bring in an important personal item for show-and-tell. Tell them that this could be something that they have had since they were a baby or something that they care about very much. For some students this may be a blanket or book, for others, a toy. During the show-and-tell, allow the student to speak about why the object is so important to him/her and then allow three students to ask questions. Encourage students to speak in complete sentences. One of the objectives of this activity is to give students practice at oral language development.

Lead a discussion with students about giving and generosity. Guiding questions:

- What does it mean to be generous?
 - Why is it important to be generous?
 - When was a time that you gave something away that you cared about? How did that make you feel?
 - How do you feel when people give you things?
- How do you feel when you give things to others?

Tell students that they are going to watch a movie about a boy who has to decide to give away some of his toys. Encourage them to think about how the boy feels and why he feels that way. Guide students to make connections with Spencer's experience.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Revisit the important personal item that students brought in. Using an important item of your own, model writing the story about how and when you acquired this favorite thing. Think aloud as you write, and scribe your story for the students. Then, give students the opportunity to orally tell their stories to a partner. After they have practiced saying their stories aloud, encourage them to draw and write their stories on paper. Display this writing in the classroom with a photograph of the student with his/her special thing.

Use recycled items to make new "toys". Recall the end of the movie when Spencer transforms the box holding his give-away toys into a spaceship. Provide students with various recycled "trash" items such as boxes, toilet paper and paper towel rolls, and containers. Challenge them to use other art supplies to make these items into toys. Leave time for a share and play time where students can describe what they made and play with each other's toys.

Revisit the Before Viewing discussion about generosity. Organize a toy drive for a local charity or children's hospital. As you collect toys, continue the discussion about generosity and how the children feel about giving their toys away. If possible, arrange for students to accompany you on donation day. Culminate the activity with a shared writing piece where students recount the experience and their feelings about it.

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