

The Golden Fish

A folktale from China

Recommended Key Stage: KS1/2

Synopsis

A fisherman catches a very special golden fish who asks to be released. When the fisherman refuses the golden fish promises a rope of pure gold as long as he lets the fish go. The fisherman casts his line out and sure enough hooks a golden rope. The fish pleads for release but all the fisherman can think of is reeling in all the golden rope. He pulls and pulls and pulls until his boat, heavy with the weight, sinks out of sight taking the greedy fisherman with it.

Part 1: Share the Story

Share the audio of **The Golden Fish, told by Jackie Singer** on The Story Museum website or tell the story yourself.

Top storytelling tips:

- Learn the story beforehand so that you can be expressive and maintain eye contact with the students.
- Use actions and sound effects and encourage the students to join in.

Find one or two moments in the story to stop and ask the students to predict what is going to happen next, or how they would feel if they were the characters.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

KS1	KS2
• What did you think of the story? • How would you describe the fisherman? • What would you do if you were in the same position as the fisherman? • What do you think happened to the fish at the end of the story? • What happened to the fisherman?	• What three words would you use to describe the fisherman? • If you were describing the golden fish, what words would you use? How are they different to the ones used for the fisherman? • What do you think the story is trying to tell/teach us?

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities	
Phone call Retell the story in pairs, or in small groups with an adult leading. Pretend you are on the phone together and one person is telling the story of The Golden Fish as if they are a character in the story (could be the fisherman, the fish or even a non-related onlooker). This will be conversational, so might sound like: 'You won't believe what happened today! So, I caught the most amazing fish...' The other person on the phone can 'react' and ask questions, such as: - What did it look like? - What happened next? - How did you feel? - What did you think about that? If working in pairs, swap over when instructed, if working in a group, the adult might 'hang up' and call on another child to tell the story until it is finished. The child could act as another character in the story to get their point of view.	Tell Me More Divide the class into pairs, with a storyteller and listener in each pair. The storyteller begins telling the story from any point – for example, the moment when the fisherman decides to go out in his little boat. The listener chooses something they hear that they would like to know more about and stops the story, for example: Stop! Tell me more about the boat. The storyteller does so – for example: The boat was an old wooden boat. The paint was peeling off but you can tell it was a bright blue colour originally. The storyteller continues the story. As the storyteller arrives at something else the listener would like more detail on, the listener interrupts again 'Stop! Tell me more about...' Continue for a few minutes and then swap roles.
Emotion Graph Take one of the characters and think about the different emotions they feel throughout the story. As a class list them. e.g. Weary - because they've got up early and it might be cold and dark Tired - rowing out onto the lake Bored - when waiting for a fish to bite Excited - when he realises he's hooked a fish, etc The emotions are added along the y axis of a graph (the emotions don't have to be in order). Key moments of the story go across the x axis. Plot points on the graph to match the character's emotion to the moment in the story. Join the points to make a line showing the character's emotional journey through the story. The emotions of the golden fish could be added to the same graph in a different colour. This will show how the two characters were feeling different things at the same moment.	Persuasion In the story the golden fish tries to persuade the fisherman to let it go by promising something good would happen. How would you persuade the fisherman if you were the golden fish? Think up some arguments for being let go. In pairs one person become the fisherman and one becomes the fish. The fish has five minutes to persuade the fisherman that he should be let go and so shares all its tactics and arguments. The fisherman can offer rebuttals to the arguments. Swap over (or change partners completely) and see who is the most persuasive.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities	
Apology Letter The fisherman was incredibly greedy and foolish to keep hauling in the golden rope. How might he apologise for his actions? Write a letter as if you were the fisherman and you were apologising to the golden fish. Think of how you might make amends for your actions.	Innovation Take the structure of The Golden Fish story and change the main elements to see where the story might end up. For example: A woodcutter chops a tree branch down and finds a golden bird's nest in the leaves. The bird offers to make the woodcutter's axe into a magical one that can effortlessly chop wood, as long as the woodcutter places its nest back into a tree. The woodcutter decides to sell the magical talking bird at the market and begins to cut some wood to take along as well. Unfortunately he loses track of the time and finds he can't stop chopping wood.

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

The Pedlar of Swaffham (UK)

The Foolish Wishes (Europe)

How the Beetle Got Her Coat (South America)

Boastful Hunter (Asia)

Wider Curriculum Links

PSHE

KS1

- about different feelings that humans can experience
- how to recognise and name different feelings
- how feelings can affect people's bodies and how they behave
- how to recognise what others might be feeling
- to recognise that not everyone feels the same at the same time, or feels the same about the same things
- about ways of sharing feelings; a range of words to describe feelings
- how to manage when finding things difficult
- about what is kind and unkind behaviour, and how this can affect others
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KS2

- to recognise that feelings can change over time and range in intensity
- about everyday things that affect feelings and the importance of expressing feelings
- a varied vocabulary to use when talking about feelings; about how to express feelings in different ways;
- strategies to respond to feelings, including intense or conflicting feelings;
- how to manage and respond to feelings appropriately and proportionately in different situations
- about how to manage setbacks/perceived failures, including how to re-frame unhelpful thinking
- that personal behaviour can affect other people; to recognise and model
- respectful behaviour online