

Restorative Approaches

Lesson 8: New Look at an Old Story

Key Take-Aways:

Restorative approaches require a paradigm shift—a new way of looking at situations we have always accepted as “the way we do things here.” Sometimes when we apply new paradigms to old stories we can get a broader vision of what is possible.

Participants’ Learning Objectives:

Building on Lesson 7, students now understand the structure of restorative interventions, who they include, and how the three phases engage participants. In this lesson, they will apply their understanding to a case study using the fairytale, Jack and the Beanstalk.

Materials:

1. Choose an object to serve as a talking piece. The object should fit in students’ hands and can be easily passed from person to person. The object should have some meaning to you that you can imbue it with by telling a story or describing how it fits with the activity or why you value it.

Examples:

- a. “This package of bean seeds applies to our activity in today’s lesson.”
 - b. “We will use this old pair of glasses for today’s circle, because restorative approaches are about seeing things differently. Hopefully you will have a new perspective after today’s activity.”
2. Have enough copies of the case study sheet to provide one piece to every small group of up to six students for this lesson.
 3. Pull up Lesson 8 PowerPoint on your computer and project it on your classroom screen so everyone can see it.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson in your regular classroom arrangement so students can all see the slides. No circle is needed at the start of this lesson.
2. Follow the instructions on the PowerPoint slides as you take your students through the exercise. Be sure to review the NOTES section of each slide for more detailed instructions.
3. If possible, have your students collaboratively read the fable out loud. Then invite students to form groups of 6, if possible, and have each choose one character from the fable.
4. Once every group has one Jack, one Giant, and one of every character each student can adopt, have them use the circle process to apply the three restorative questions to their chosen character’s experience from the story. They can do this as a role play or case study—whichever format they choose is fine.



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5. After they have had time to work through all the questions in their small groups, ask them to quickly form one large circle so that everyone can see and hear each other, facing toward the center.
6. Bring your chosen object into the circle so you can use it as the talking piece and explain why you chose it.
7. Once you have completed the lesson, have students return their chairs to the regular classroom configuration.

Approximate Time: about 20 minutes

Timing will vary depending on how quickly students jump into the activity, and how long they take to answer the various prompts. If you run short on time, you can jump right into the large circle processing and skip slides 9 and 10 since your students should already know the circles process.

Pro Tips: Sometimes we accept “wisdom” passed down through generations without questioning it. The earliest printed versions of this fable date back to 1734 in England, though it was probably shared by families for many generations before that. The printed version, and those retold since, center on Jack’s experiences. If we look at the situation from the perspective of the different characters, specifically the giant who was living his life in the clouds, we can understand how some could interpret the story differently.

That is the beauty of the restorative process. It forces us to examine situations through the direct experience of others and whose experiences are not our own. Often when we hear other sides of the story, we gain understanding and develop empathy. The restorative interventions take participants a step further and engage those same people in collaborating to heal the harm or solve the conflict as much as possible.

Extend the Learning:

Since the Giant has died, it may not seem that any healing can happen in this case study, but that isn’t true. There are characters still living who can work together to heal some of the harm that took place in this story. Here is [an interesting story](#) about a young man, Oshea Israel, who has worked to heal the harm he caused Mary Johnson after he took her son’s life. Their relationship began when Oshea was still in prison for the murder as part of a restorative justice intervention. Invite your students to listen then discuss their thoughts about it in circle.

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Jack and the Beanstalk Case Study

Now that you have listened to the fable and moved into your small group, each of you should choose a different character from the story. Thinking about the story from your character's perspective, you will answer the three restorative questions based on what happened to your character in the story. They are:

- **What happened?**
- **Who has been affected and how?**
- **How can we make things right, as much as possible?**

Go through the questions one at a time in circle so that everyone shares what happened to their character before you all move on to the next question. Follow the same process a third time so everyone shares, from their character's perspective, what they think can be done to make things right.

If you need to refer back to the story, it is printed below. Have fun!!

Jack and the Beanstalk (Wikipedia abbreviated version)

To his starving mother's dismay, Jack, a poor country boy, trades the family cow for a handful of magic beans. Distressed, Jack's mother throws the beans out the window. Overnight, the beans grow into a massive, towering beanstalk reaching up into the clouds.

Jack climbs the beanstalk and finds himself in the castle of an unfriendly giant. The giant senses Jack's presence and cries,

Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman.

Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread.[\[8\]](#)

With help from the Giant's spouse, Jack is able to retrieve many goods once stolen from his family, including:

- a bag of gold,
- an enchanted goose that lays golden eggs, and
- a magic golden harp that plays and sings by itself.

When the Giant realizes Jack took his treasures, the Giant pursues him. Jack then escapes by chopping down the beanstalk. The giant falls to his death, and Jack and his family prosper.