

Buddy's Special Star

Dear Sisters n Stitches,

I recently used your "Buddy's Special Star" felt piece set in my kindergarten classroom. The story, conveniently typed and enclosed with the felt pieces, mesmerized my students as they puzzled over the riddle that Buddy's mother posed: where could they find "a little red house with no doors and no windows, a chimney at top, and a star in the middle"? As the story unfolded, I asked selected children to find the appropriate felt piece that should be displayed next. This was a coveted responsibility and the children listened far better because this was an interactive process in which they were able to tangibly manipulate the felt pieces. At story's end, some children did not believe that the little red house with a star in the middle referred to an apple, so of course, we had to cut open a real red apple to test our hypothesis. With all doubts laid to rest, I brought out yellow and green apples and asked the children to predict whether they, too, would have a star in the middle; about half the children were absolutely sure that only red apples would have a star. When I cut through the yellow apple there was a gasp and then a round of applause!

After we had also assured ourselves that the green apple had a star, we cut some apple halves into smaller chunks and had a taste test to discover our favorite type of apple. We made a class graph and were able to meaningfully talk about concepts such as one-to-one correspondence, more, fewer, and equal. We saved a few apple halves so that we could make apple prints of AB patterns using tempera paint. We also discussed how apples could be prepared (applesauce, apple pie, apple juice, etc.). The next day I asked the children if they could remember the sequence of the story and we recounted the story's events. The children especially loved the pieces that had glitter (the owl's sparkling glasses were especially popular).

Because of the time constraints of a half day kindergarten program, I appreciate a set like this that lets me integrate science, math, and reading readiness skills in an enjoyable way. The students could simply not get enough. Thank you for providing such wonderful opportunities to make learning fun and meaningful for the child in all of us.

Gratefully,

A Kindergarten Teacher