Purpose:

Sometimes it is wise to follow the advice of others and at other times it will only bring disaster. To know when to obey can be the problem. This lesson will focus on stories from South Africa, Morocco and Nigeria and character traits valued in those cultures.

Duration:

Two Fifty-Five Minute Class Periods

Objectives:

The learner will:

- use the geographic themes of location and place to describe settings and cultures represented in folktales.
- identify the type of folktales represented by the stories.
- recognize and describe character traits that are valued in the culture.
- explain how folktales teach.
- determine when to follow the directions of others and when to disregard them.
- describe why it is never too late to show gratitude for a kindness.
Experiential Component:

Emmett Carson, the CEO of the Minneapolis Foundation, pointed out the following ideas:

Prior to the 1960s, philanthropic activities of African American focused on philanthropy among friends—churches, mutual aid societies and fraternal organizations that provided aid to people in their own communities. After the 1960s, the philanthropic activities of African Americans expanded to include strangers—money was raised and dispensed for persons outside of the community through such vehicles as the National Black United Fund.

Jean Fairfax, a civic leader in academia, civil rights and philanthropy, stated the following about African American giving:

The concept of philanthropy as a communal enterprise, whose members care for each other, contrasts with the concept of noblesse oblige or the rich giving to the poor.

We also know that historically the Black church has been the main source of philanthropy for most African Americans.

Using these three ideas as a starting point for researching African American philanthropy, let the learners narrow their focus on a local or other group that is of interest to them. If possible, ask a representative of that group to speak to the class. If there is interest in supporting the organization, a fund raiser may be organized.

Materials:

- **Collared Crow (The)**
- **Cruel Creditor and the Judge's Wise Daughter (The)**
- **Ostrich Egg Wife (The)**
- **Selekana and the River God**
- **Gratitude: The Hunter and the Antelope**

Instructional Procedure(s):

*Put the following sentence on the board or overhead: “The main purpose of folktales is entertainment.” Ask the learners to agree or disagree and support their points of view with examples.*

- Explain that it is important to understand people and their environment when studying folktales. The stories for this lesson are African folktales. “The Collared Crow,” “Selekana and the River God” and “The Ostrich Egg Wife” are from South Africa. “The Cruel Creditor and the Judge’s Wise Daughter” is from Morocco and has Jewish roots. “Gratitude: The Hunter and the Antelope” is from the Nupe people of Nigeria. On a map, locate South Africa, Morocco and Nigeria and give their absolute locations (longitude and latitude). Give their relative locations (general descriptors of where the places are located).

- In a brainstorming session, have the learners describe the countries of South Africa, Morocco and Nigeria as places by listing recognizable physical characteristics (landforms, water bodies, climate, soil, natural vegetation, animal life) and human characteristics (inhabitants, settlement patterns, languages, religions, government, how inhabitants make a living). Compare and contrast the two countries. (If necessary, use the Internet or other sources to obtain needed information.)

- Split the class into five groups and assign each group one of the folktales. As teams, have them read their own stories and discuss the following questions:
What type of folktale is it (fairy tale, myth, legend/epic, tall tale, fable, religious story/parable)?

Is the name a good one for the story?

What is revealed about the generosity of spirit of the characters? Would they serve as models for others to follow?

Using as many of the following qualities (caring, courage, civic virtue and citizenship, giving, honesty, justice and fairness, perseverance, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness) as fit the story, what character traits seem to be valued in the story and culture?

What is the lesson of this folktale?

What is revealed about the country’s culture through the folktale? Do the stories have common elements with other places and people or are they specific to this culture?

What lesson is taught about listening to the words of others and following them? How did the character decide whether or not to follow the suggestions of others? (This question may not be applicable to all the stories.)

Were there instances where the character’s actions could have produced an entirely different effect if he or she had acted differently (choices/consequences)? How likely was it that the character might have acted differently? Why or why not?

Have each team provide a summary of their story before they report their discussions to the whole group.

While in a whole group format, discuss the following questions:

In the story “The Cruel Creditor and the Judge’s Wise Daughter,” the merchant’s son is reckless with his inherited wealth and makes a bad business agreement when he becomes penniless. Some people would say that it is his own fault that he has come to ruin. He should not be saved from his fate because he agreed to it. What argument would a person with a generous spirit use to disagree?

In the story “The Ostrich-Egg Wife,” a man loses everything because he breaks a promise. Was his punishment just or would a more generous wife have forgiven him?

In the story “The Collared Crow,” the farmer and his wife were asked to be generous even though they had little to share. In what ways can those who have little be generous?

In the story “Selekana and the River God,” Selekana is kind but also trusting of others. How does a generous person know when the need is genuine or when others are taking advantage? Should this be a consideration when deciding whether or not to be generous?
In the story “Gratitude: The Hunter and the Antelope,” a trusting man helps a crocodile out of his difficulty but then is placed in danger of losing his life to the crocodile. There are really five stories of gratitude/ingratitude in the story. Could the author have kept out the colored oval woven mat known as the Asubi, the old torn and worn dress, and the old mare from the story and still have had the same effect? Often we are not aware of the effect others have had on our lives until years later when we have lost contact with them. Is there a way gratitude can be shown in circumstances when there is little or no chance of contacting the person again?

- Working individually, have the learners reflect on their lives and apply the lesson of one of the stories to real life. Using a real-life scenario, have the learners write descriptions of how the story fits a situation they have encountered or may encounter in the future. What insight does the story provide in assisting a person to do the right thing?

**Assessment:**

The team discussions/reporting and real-life applications may be used as assessments of learning.

**School/Home Connection:**

**Interactive Parent / Student Homework:**

Ask the learners to discuss with their families the idea of knowing when to follow and when not to follow the advice of others. What ideas/tips will help a young person evaluate the advice and take the proper course of action?

**Extension:**

There is a vast wealth of folktales from other countries in Africa which were not part of this lesson. Have learners select another country from the continent of Africa and become familiar with one of its stories. Use the same questions for discussion as were used for the previous stories.

**Bibliographical References:**


State Standards:

*Learning to Give* lessons incorporate National and Philanthropy curriculum standards. Please choose a state then press "View Standards" to have the standards correlated to this lesson displayed.

State: 

Philanthropy Theme Framework:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Philanthropy and Civil Society</strong></td>
<td><strong>PCS01. Self, citizenship, and society</strong></td>
<td><strong>HS 4. Describe and give examples of characteristics of good citizens in a democracy.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. Philanthropy and the Individual</strong></td>
<td><strong>PI 01. Reasons for Individual Philanthropy</strong></td>
<td><strong>HS 9. Describe the concept of volunteerism in different world cultures.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesson Developed and Piloted by:

Evelyn Nash  
Curriculum Consultant  
Learning to Give

*This lesson may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial uses only, all other rights reserved.*  
© Learning To Give