

- How to use photographs in the classroom.
- Caring for pets this holiday season.
- Remember our armed forces this season.
- Personalize something meaningful.

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

National Day of Listening 2

My Favorite Photo 2

Memories 2

“Paws” for Pets 3

A Poem for You 3

Remember Our Americans 3

Resources & Information 4

The Gift of Giving

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 5

DECEMBER, 2009

What Can I Do For Others?

The television commercials have commenced their grand appeal to kiddos and what they can't live without this holiday season. In tough economic times like these, gift giving may be much more limited than in years past but the holiday season can be just as joyous.

When we give to others, their appreciation often makes us want to do more. This holiday season, ask your class how they can make the holiday season better for someone else. Brainstorm ways we can help by giving our time:

- Write a letter to our armed forces serving overseas.
- Ask a student who usually sits alone at lunch to sit

with you and your friends.

- Write a thank-you note to a relative, friend or neighbor telling them how much you appreciate what they do.



This holiday season, choose to do something for others.

- Ask the class to donate canned goods for a food shelter.
- Read a storybook to a younger grade level.

- Make a huge classroom banner that reads, “Get Well Soon” and deliver it to a children’s hospital. Decorate with handprints, stickers, markers and glitter.
- Write a letter to your postal worker, thanking him or her for delivering mail in all kinds of weather.
- Donate a book to your school library by collecting pennies in your classroom for a month or semester.
- Choose one promise you must keep (I will hang out with someone different at recess time, I will talk to someone who looks like they are having a bad day, etc.).

A Holiday Activity

This holiday season a fun classroom activity that can encourage students to learn more about each other involves the use of photos.

Ask students to bring a baby or “toddler” picture to school in a sealed envelope. For younger students, ask parents to write the name of the child on the back

of the picture as well.

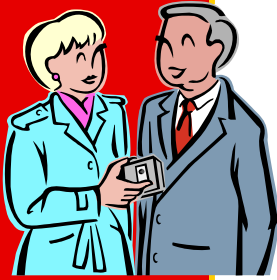
When you have collected the photos, place a sticky note with a designated number by each photo. Ask students to number their paper and write the name of the student next to the corresponding number.

When finished, look at each

photo and reveal who the student is. What student was guessed most accurately? Which student did others have a hard time revealing? What percentage of the class guessed correctly?

For older students, offer an added challenge. Copy all photos into black and white prints.

National Day of Listening



**“I learned things about my parents that I never knew before.”
(StoryCorps, 2009)**

In 2008, the first annual National Day of Listening was launched by the StoryCorps. StoryCorps is a non-profit organization whose mission is to honor as well as celebrate one another's lives by listening (StoryCorps, 2009). The goal of this day is to record and share conversations with family, friends, and even neighbors.

StoryCorps challenges each person the day after Thanksgiving to “set aside one hour to record a conversation with

someone important to you” (StoryCorps, 2009). You can interview a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, a friend, teacher or someone who lives in the neighborhood.

To preserve the interview, StoryCorps encourages using equipment that can be found in most homes: cell phones, tape recorders, computers or the old fashioned way, pen and paper (StoryCorps, 2009).

If you would like to learn

more, visit www.nationaldayoflistening.org and download a free Do-It-Yourself Instruction Guide. If you've missed the “designated” day, you can still honor the tradition during the month of December.

If students would like to share their “story,” set aside a special time for “heritage day.” Recording stories of historical significance can also contribute to social studies skills.

My Favorite Photo

With the increasing popularity of posting pictures on web pages such as Facebook and MySpace, students are certain to have a favorite photo.

Ask students to bring a favorite photo to school. Each student will describe where the photo was taken, who is pictured, and why the photo is meaningful. Ask students to

choose one “caption word” for their photo (awesome, chillin', memories, fun, family, friends, smiles, us, pets, etc.). Photos should be current, taken within the last year.

When students are finished, volunteers may share their photo with the class, reading what they have written and describing why the photo was

chosen for this activity.

For older students, take the opportunity to speak on internet safety.

*Why are photos taken? (for good memories, for fun)

*When can a photo become troubling? (when it's used to hurt another person, when you regret taking or posting it)

“Ask students to bring a favorite photo to school.”

A simple thank you can go a long way in making a difference.



Memories

Ask students to think of a special day they've had in 2009. It may have been a family celebration, time shared with a friend, or help from a neighbor. Some students will have many meaningful days while

others know immediately which day they'll choose.

Ask students to write a special thank you note to a person who “made their day.” Students may begin their note by saying, “You made my day in 2009 when...” or “I'll never forget 2009 because you...”

and write a descriptive note on why this day stands out.

When students are finished, you may make large, colorful envelopes or place the letter in a ready-made envelope to be delivered. Students may decorate the envelope if time allows.

“Paws” for Pets



Many students have pets. As cooler temperatures approach, discuss how caring for our pets will change.

*They will need a warm place to sleep.

*Offer your pet a worn out towel

Pets require attention ~ something you have time to give.

or some old clothes to snuggle into.

*Check water daily and make sure it's not frozen or icy.

*You may not spend as much time with your pet as it's cold

outside. Bring your pet indoors for a few hours or bundle up and play outside. A nice, brisk run or walk is healthy for your pet as well.

*When shopping for others, remember to pick up a rawhide bone

or toy for your pet to enjoy.

When you bring a pet into your home and promise to care for it, we often forget important medicines your pet needs annually or monthly.

*Donate some of your holiday money towards your pet's rabies shot or heartworm medicine.

*Ask your family to place spare change in a labeled "pet jar" for emergencies.

“Ask students to write their favorite poem, or verse, on a sheet of colored paper.”

A Poem for You

Children often enjoy poetry. They may have a favorite poem or found significance in a single verse.

Ask students to write their favorite poem, or verse, on a selected sheet of colored paper. If there's room, attach a photo next to the poem as well.

Students can frame the poetry sentiment with decorated cardboard and give it to someone special this holiday season.

Older students may write the poem, or simply find a particular verse moving, in one color and a special message in another color. The special mes-

sage may reveal why the poem holds meaning, or why it was chosen.

Ask students to place their “signature” on their work of art. Students may write their name and the exact date, or they may choose to write 2009.

Remember Our Military

Most of us are fortunate enough to have our family with us this holiday season. Those who serve in our military are frequently separated from their families during the holidays while serving our country.

If your classroom would like to take or make donations, you can purchase a care package for an American overseas by contacting the United Service Or-

ganization (USO). Packages contain anything from toiletries, to snacks to scarves or hand warmers. Each package is \$25 and will be delivered with a letter from your class.

Our troops also like to hear from us, to know that what they are doing is appreciated and supported. A simple holiday card with a sincere message

means more to some than a care package.

If you have military students in your school, remember to say “Thank You” this season. The families of those who serve make sacrifices as well.



Reach out to our armed forces, and their families, this

**The Trevor
Romain Company**

4412 Spicewood Springs Rd.
Suite 705
Austin, Texas 78759
Phone: 512-480-8818
Fax: 512-480-8815

We want to hear from you!

Please tell us how our newsletter is
benefiting you.

(502) 477 - 1693

**Promoting social & emotional fitness
for kids.**

Daphne Morris, M.Ed., met Trevor Romain in 1992 when he visited a school as a guest speaker. Impressed by Trevor's profound and meaningful impact on students and educators, Daphne joined The Trevor Romain Company in 2006. A former elementary school principal, Daphne holds two Master's degrees in education.



Resources:

Garlock, Jody. "What Matters Most." Better Homes and Gardens Special Interests Publications, December, 2009.

Reimer, Sara. "Simply Thankful." Midwest Living, December, 2009.

StoryCorps. "National Day of Listening." <http://www.nationaldayoflistening.org> (accessed November, 2009).

*Happy Holidays from
The Trevor Romain Company*

