

Lesson 35

Purpose: To introduce the positive actions for creative thinking.

Materials Needed Classified section of a newspaper; felt-tip marker

Materials Provided “Lightbulb” Poster 33-2-3

Procedure

Teacher *Open the newspaper and pretend to read a want-ad.*

Say “Wanted: Creative Thinkers to come up with new and interesting ideas; Reward: Good Feelings.” Today’s *Positive Action* lesson is about our need to be creative, which means that we are able to make something new, to stretch our minds to produce interesting and unique thoughts. We all need to think this way, and we are all capable of it.

Today I want to read you a story about what happened to a girl named Angela when she thought creatively. Then you will have a chance to do some mind stretching of your own.

Teacher *Read the story, and then elicit discussion with the questions that follow.*

NOTHING TO DO

Angela Arguello sat in her father’s overstuffed arm chair, her legs draped over one of its arms, her head propped up against the other. The television blared rock music while dancers pranced across the screen. Angela didn’t even see them, although she appeared to be completely consumed by their movements. She was a million miles away, lost in the boredom of the last hot weeks of summer.

“Angela!” Her mother’s voice snapped her back to the muggy heat of the living room. “What is wrong with you? This is the third time I’ve called!”

Angela looked embarrassed as she scrambled from the chair. “I’m sorry, Mama,” she said. “I just wasn’t listening.”

“Yes, I agree.” Mrs. Arguello looked annoyed. “That’s been happening a lot lately. Now, please, help me put away the groceries.”

Angela and her mother were silent as they moved from kitchen to pantry, from cupboard to refrigerator to freezer. When everything was in its place, Mrs. Arguello poured two glasses of icy lemonade and filled a plate with freshly sliced fruit and sweet crackers. “Come out back with me,” she said to Angela. “We’ve earned a break.”

They sat in the shade of the patio, enjoying their refreshments and the brilliantly colored flowers in the garden. Finally Mrs. Arguello broke the afternoon quiet. “What’s going on, Angela? You’ve been moping around here for days, now.”

“Oh, Mama,” Angela replied. “I’m so bored. There’s nothing to do.”

“Nothing to do?” Her mother sounded surprised. “Swimming, working in the garden, playing with Fran and Lupe—you call that nothing to do?”

“But I’ve done those things all summer. I want to do something new.” Angela looked at her mother helplessly.

“Ah, I see.” Mrs. Arguello’s face lit up with understanding. “You are bored and you want me to find something new for you to do.”

Angela nodded her head energetically.

“I think what you need,” her mother continued, “is a different way of seeing what’s in front of you. You need to make something brand new out of what’s around you every day. I’ll bet you’ve never even seen everything that’s in our garden.”

Angela looked confused as her mother continued. “Now, there’s something for you to do. Take inventory of the garden. Go get a pencil and some paper.”

She did as she was told but she thought her mother was acting strangely. Besides, counting the plants in the garden wasn’t exactly what she’d had in mind. New toys, perhaps, or a trip to the lake—but counting flowers and vegetables? Angela felt she might as well go back to the silly shows on television.

When she came back out to the patio, Angela began making a list of everything in the flower bed along the fence. Almost before she’d started, her mother stopped her.

“Not like that,” she said. “What you need to count are the things you can’t see.”

Now Angela was really confused. How could she possibly count something she couldn’t see?

Her mother took the pencil and paper from her. She erased what Angela had written, then printed “poinsettia” in big letters at the top of the page. Handing them back to Angela, she said, “See how many words you can make out of this part of our garden.” Angela had her doubts, but she started writing. “Point,” she wrote, then “set” and “station.” Before long Angela had found a dozen more words: in, pin, taste, stop, and pot. Top, post, test, nest, state, pest, and paste. “Hey, this is fun,” she said as she kept on writing.

When she had found as many words as she knew, Angela asked her mother to start her on another one. “Not now,” Mrs. Arguello said. “You can do that on your own. Let’s go inside. I want to show you something else.” They went back in the house and sat at the kitchen table. “Did you know there are poems in this room?” Mrs. Arguello smiled mischievously. “Well, maybe not real poems, but rhymes, anyway.”

Angela looked around. She didn’t see any rhymes, much less poems.

“Try this out,” her mother said. “In this room I see a broom which sweeps the floor—”

And so much more,” interrupted Angela, “right out the door.”

“Good!” Mrs. Arguello smiled happily.

“There’s pots and pans and garbage cans,” Angela continued. “For every fish there is a dish,” she said, pointing to the trout her mother had set out to thaw for dinner. “For every cook there is a nook,” and she pointed to the little telephone desk her mother used.

“You’ve got the idea!” Angela’s mother sounded pleased.

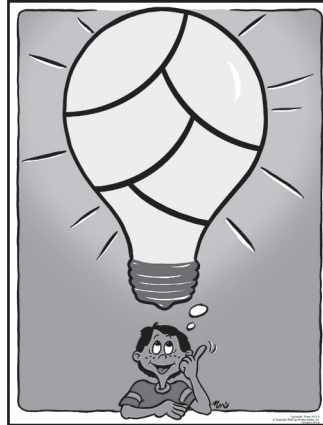
By dinner time, Angela had learned even more ways to find new things in what was around her every day. More importantly, she’d learned to create her own fun when it seemed that there was nothing to do. She shared what she had learned with her parents and the three of them played with their world until it was time for Angela to go to bed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why was Angela bored in the beginning of the story?

- Who did she depend on to keep her entertained?
- When Mrs. Arguello showed Angela how to find things in the garden that she couldn't see, what important lesson was she teaching her?
- Once Angela had learned to think creatively, do you think she ever complained about having nothing to do again?
- Have you ever felt like Angela did in the beginning of the story? What did you do about it?

NOTE: Write "Gaining New Information" on the "Lightbulb" Poster before the next lesson.



Word of the Week Alert!

Creative: Acting in advance to avoid a challenging situation.