

Planting the Seed of Honesty



Suggested Age Range: 4 - 5 years; 5 - 6 years; 6 - 7 years;

UK Curriculum: Early Years Foundation Stage; Key Stage One

Suggested UK Year Group: Year One, Year Two

UK Primary Curriculum Link: Living Things and Their Habitats

Science Subject: Plants

Science Questions: What do Plants need to live on the Planet Earth?

Suggested Science Activity: Balloon Rockets

Children with SEND: Use to boost comprehension of science vocabulary

EAL children: Beginners Level

Country of Origin: China

Source: The Empty Pot by Demi

Long ago, in China ...

There was a King, the King of all China, the wealthiest of Kings, in all the lands.

Now, this King, he had everything that money could buy.

Except ...

For the one thing he really wanted, which was a child.

A son or a daughter to be Queen or King after him.

Now China was full of children, there were many children to choose from, to be the next Queen or King. How could he decide which was the right child to choose?

He decided to have a competition, open to all the children of China.

Any child who wanted to be King or Queen, was told to go to the King's palace, at sunset on the first day of the first month.

And so on that day, just as the Sun was beginning to set and the Moon beginning to rise,

A long, long, long line of children stood in front of their King.

And the King said: "I will give each of you a seed and you must plant that seed."

"Whoever grows the most beautiful flower from that seed, will be next Queen or King after me."

Well, each child took their seed and rushed home at once to plant it.

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Including a young boy, at the end of the line, who stood their hand in hand with his grandfather.

The boy took the seed home and his grandfather said:

"Now, can you remember, what I have taught you? How do we plant a seed?"

"Grandfather, first I take a pot" "Yes that's right"

"Then I fill the pot with soil" "Yes that's right"

"I make a hole and put the seed in the hole" "Yes that's right"

And then I water it. "Yes thats right"

"And then I put it on the window sill in the sunshine"

"Yes thats right!" said Grandfather,

"That is what seeds usually need, water, soil and sun to grow. Well remembered!"

So the boy carefully put the pot on the window sill and waited and waited and waited and waited.

But did the seed grow? No!

"Grandfather, my seed hasn't grown! I will never be King!"

"Never mind" said Grandfather. "Remember - not all seeds are the same."

"Some seeds don't need water to grow. Try again"

So they boy tried again.

"Grandfather, first I take a pot." "Yes that's right"

"I fill the pot with soil" "Yes that's right"

"I make a hole and put the seed in the hole" "Yes thats right"

"And then I don't water it!" "Yes thats right"

"And then I put it on the window sill in the sunshine"

"And so we try again!" said Grandfather.

So the boy carefully put the pot on the window sill and waited and waited and waited and waited.

But did the seed grow? No!

"Grandfather, my seed hasn't grown and I will never be King!"

"Never mind" said Grandfather. "Remember - not all seeds are the same."

"Some seeds need the dark to grow" "Try again"

So the boy tried again.

"So, Grandfather, first I take a pot" "Yes that's right"

"I fill the pot with soil" "Yes that's right"

"I make a hole and put the seed in the hole" "Yes that's right"

"And then I water it!" "Yes that's right".

"And then put it under my bed". "Yes that's right."

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"And so we try again! And no peeking!"

So the boy carefully put the pot under his bed and waited and waited and waited and waited.

But did the seed grow? No!

"Grandfather - my seed hasn't grown and I will never be King"

"Never mind" said Grandfather. "Remember not all seeds are the same."

"Some seeds need a lot of sunshine to grow. Try again."

So the boy tried again.

"Grandfather, first I take a pot" "Yes that's right"

I fill the pot with soil. Yes that's right

"I make a hole and put the seed in the hole." "Yes that's right"

"And then I water it!" "Yes that's right"

"And then I put the pot outside into the sunshine" "Yes that's right"

"And so we try again!" said Grandfather.

So the boy carefully put the pot outside in the sunshine and waited and waited and waited and waited.

But did the seed grow? No!

"Grandfather, my seed still hasn't grown and I will never be King."

"Never mind" said Grandfather. "Remember not all seeds are the same."

"Some seeds never grow, whatever we do to help them!"

"But, I will never be King!" said the young boy sadly.

"Yes that is true, but you will always be my Grandson!" said Grandfather.

Well, the young boy wasn't at all sure that this was as good as being King, even though he loved his grandfather very much!

When the day came to show the King what he had grown, the boy did not want to go.

"Grandfather, I will look stupid!"

"No, you will never be that!" said Grandfather "You must tell the King that you tried.

There is no shame in failure. You did your best."

"But grandfather! I don't want to go!"

But the grandfather insisted and dragged the boy along to the palace where they stood, last in line.

And the King walked down the long, long, long line of children, looking at each flower in turn. There were roses, and daffodils, and bluebells and tulips.

There were flowers in all shapes and sizes, each one looking and smelling so beautiful.

Until, the King came to the small boy at the end of the line, holding out his empty pot.

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"Where is your flower?" asked the King.

"Sire" said the young boy "I tried, but my seed would not grow."

"I tried everything, with water, without water, with sunshine, without sunshine. "

"But, whatever I tried, my seed did not grow! I am very sorry."

And then the King did a very strange thing.

He smiled! And smiled and smiled.

"Boy - you are the only one here who is telling the truth."

"You see I played a trick on you all"

"Before I gave you out the seeds, I put them in an oven and roasted them."

And roasted seeds taste very nice, but once roasted, they cannot grow!"

"All these flowers are false. They did not come from the seed I gave you all"

"Only you have brought me the gift I wanted"

"You may have thought all you had was an empty pot."

"But what you have given me is the gift of honesty." "You will be the next King."

And so the boy grew up in the Palace and with help of the King and his grandfather, he grew to become a very wise King.

And in his garden, every year to remind him, he always grew the plant which we now call "Honesty".

Honesty grows the most beautiful silver globes of seed, which are the shape and colour of the Moon. And because they look like the Moon, they are also called "Lunaria" which means "Moon flower" And these silver globes of seed are so thin, they are what is called transparent, which means, you can see right through them.

And the King's honesty shone as brightly as his flowers.

And so everyone in his land lived - happily ever after!

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