

# The Friendship Train

## Extension Activities

### *THEMES THEMES THEMES*

#### *FRIENDSHIP*

The Friendship Train, the food drive for Europeans, grew from the idea of extending friendship to a neighbor in need. Discuss the meaning of friendship. Who are our friends? What does it mean to be a friend?

#### *COMMUNITY*

*The Friendship Train* explores different types of communities, from the large community of the United States giving to the community of Europe, to the small communities of classrooms, local neighborhoods, religious and ethnic groups, humanitarian organizations, and family units. What defines a community? Do communities have written and unwritten rules? Are there written or unwritten rules for the group? Discuss various types of communities in the book and the pros and cons of each type.

#### *HELPING OTHERS*

The children of America played a huge role in collecting food for the children of Europe. What can one person do to help others in need? Look at these websites and learn about two young people who saw a need and made a difference: [www.ryanswell.ca](http://www.ryanswell.ca) and [www.alexlemonade.org](http://www.alexlemonade.org). Using the internet, find other children and teens who have found ways to help others. Brainstorm ways you can make a difference.

#### *ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY*

Jimmy learns to accept responsibility for actions taken and actions he chooses not to take. Knowing our responsibility is sometimes easy; other times it is a puzzle. Discuss how responsibilities change as we age. What does being responsible mean to you? Is being responsible a choice?

# *INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES*

## *LANGUAGE ARTS*

Jimmy says Billy is his best friend. Using the text, find examples of how Billy shows he is a good friend to Jimmy. Then, write a paper telling what characteristics you value in a friend and why they are important.

Jimmy has never been out of California before his cross-country journey. He is amazed by the beauty of the United States. Write a descriptive passage describing a favorite place. Your special place could be on the opposite side of the country or close to your home.

Jimmy says he's learned about solving mysteries by reading the Hardy Boys. What is your favorite book? Why? What did you learn when you read that book? Consider what you learned about yourself as well as knowledge gained about a skill, a different time period, or place.

## *MATH*

Create word problems based on the book. Jimmy says teachers don't know how many cans of evaporated milk would be needed to fill a boxcar. How about bags of wheat? Create some mileage problems, i.e., train travels x miles per hour/day, how far will it travel in a day/week.

## *GEOGRAPHY*

Both Jimmy and Billy are strong geography students. They were able to identify all the states and capitals. Make a word search using some of the states, then one for capitals. Create a 20 question quiz with the answers being either states or capitals. For example, list state capitals named for presidents, and which states have panhandles?

## *MUSIC*

Jimmy plays a harmonica. Find some harmonica recordings and share them with the class, or learn some songs on the harmonica and showcase the talent.

Find a copy of popular song lyrics of 1947. Analyze common themes. What do they lyrics tell you about the time period?

## *DRAMA*

Movie stars helped promote the Friendship Train. Find pictures of movie stars of the 1940s. What were the trends in hairstyles? Make-up? Attire? Design a complete Oscar outfit for a 1947 female movie star. Choose material swatches for the gown, and select jewelry and shoes.

Jimmy enjoys baseball and Abbott and Costello movies. Find the Abbott and Costello comedy routine about baseball, and with a partner, present it to the class.

## *SOCIAL STUDIES*

Do some presidential research. Harry S Truman became the president after the death of FDR. Name other men who became president because of the death of a sitting president. Write a two-page paper explaining how history might have been different had the elected presidents not died in office.

The Negro Baseball League had many outstanding players. Why was Jackie Robinson chosen to break the color barrier of baseball? What were some of the problems Robinson faced on and off the field?

Make a collage of items advertised and used in 1947 that are obsolete today.

Make a chart of advertised items that are still in use today. Show the original design and price and today's design and price. In a separate column, tell how the products have been modified.

Find political campaign buttons, speeches and advertisements for candidates then and in our last national election. Do a compare and contrast study on the campaigns.

## ***GROUP ACTIVITIES***

### *THEN AND NOW NATIONAL FEAR*

In 1947, one of America's fears was Communism. Joe McCarthy and his hearings gained impetus because of this fear. Research the hearings. Who were some of the famous people requested to appear before the Senate Committee? What happened to people named by McCarthy? What did it mean to be blacklisted? What happened to McCarthy?

What are some of our national concerns or fears today? How are these issues being addressed by our government and by individual citizens?

Explore world connections then and now. The school students in 1947 sent letters to students in France and Italy in the food boxes. Choose a school in a foreign city and send letters to the students. What information will you include about yourself? What would you want to know about your overseas pen pal?

Brainstorm problems children face today. Examples might be lack of good water, not enough food, rampant disease, forced child labor, or lack of educational opportunities. Is there anything an ordinary student could do to help? Find out about individuals who have adopted a cause.

## *THEN AND NOW BUDGETING*

In groups, compare 1947 to today. Using 1947 newspapers, find pricing for house or apartment rental, cars, clothing items, groceries, and medicines. Look in the help wanted ads and find salaries listed for different jobs. Create a monthly budget based on salary and living expenses. Repeat the process with current-day dollars. Present your findings to the class.

## *FAMILY CONNECTIONS*

Write a description of some of the family units mentioned in *The Friendship Train*. Include Jimmy's family, Samuel's family, and Danny Metz's family. What do you know about these families? What problems do they face? What are the positive things about these families? How can family connections make you stronger? Remember both positive and negative family situations can serve to strengthen a person.

How do you define a "family" unit? Do you think families can be formed by persons who are not related by blood or marriage? Looking back through history, find examples of how and why has the family structure changed? Remember to include the changing roles of males, females, and children in the family structure.

## *MAP THE ROUTE OF THE FRIENDSHIP TRAIN*

Label all the states on a blank map. Then mark the stops of the first Friendship Train as it crossed the United States collecting food.

Do additional research and find the routes of other Friendship Trains which collected food in this humanitarian effort of 1947. *Who* is a good friend to Jimmy. Then, write a paper telling what