Teaching with Robert Munsch Books

WE SHARE EVERTHING!

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WE SHARE EVERYTHING!

Q: "How long did it take you to write *We Share Everything!?*"
Jessica, Grade 3

A: "It took me six years to get it right!"
Robert Munsch ..... slow!

Summary:

On the first day of kindergarten, Amanda and Jeremiah fight about books, blocks and paints. The teacher reminds them that in kindergarten, they should share everything. Amanda and Jeremiah interpret her message literally, and share their clothes with each other.

Questions:

Before

Look at the front cover.
- Where are the children?
- What is the book in the illustration?

Look at the back cover.
- What information can we find about the author and the illustrator?

Read the dedication page.
- Who are Amanda and Jeremiah?
- Where is Pontiac, Michigan?

During

- p. 10: Will Amanda give him the book?
- p. 15: Why would the illustrator draw birds and flowers around the teacher?
- p. 16: What is going to happen next?
- p. 26: What else are they going to share?

The story behind We Share Everything!

Robert Munsch told many versions of *We Share Everything!* for several years. The children at the schools and daycares where he told these stories liked them, even though he didn't think they were very good. Then one day in 1992, while he was telling the story in his daughter Tyya's Grade 1 class, he used the line, "This is kindergarten. In kindergarten we share!" The children loved this line, and joined in whenever it came up in the story. Now he thought he was onto something! He kept telling the story, improving parts of it every time. In 1998, he decided to turn it into a book, but he didn't really have any specific children in mind to feature. He found the children on a visit to a class in Pontiac, Michigan. Amanda and Jeremiah wanted to be in the story, and they loved to share!

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After

- What might your parents say if you came home wearing different clothes?
- What problems did Amanda and Jeremiah have? How might they have solved their problems?

Take a look

How many of Robert Munsch's books can you find in the illustrations?

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Activity #1

Sharing Rules!

Amanda and Jeremiah's antics in *We Share Everything!* provide an amusing demonstration of inappropriate classroom behaviour. This activity gives children an opportunity to explore the reasons why we share in school, the kinds of things we share, and why it is important to have rules.

Curriculum Link:

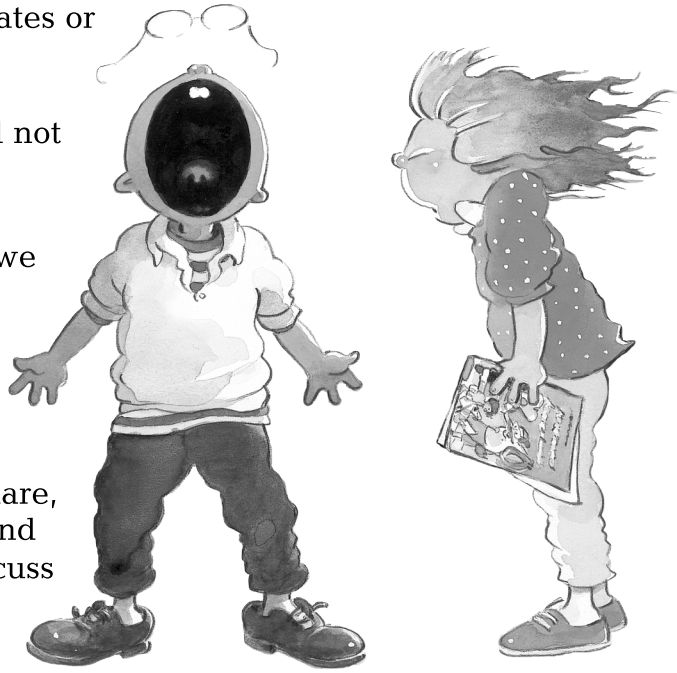
Language Arts — effective story-writing tools, listmaking
Social Studies — classroom rules and responsibilities
Art — promotional art

Materials:

Large paper
Coloured pencils or felt pens

Procedure:

1. Discuss what makes this story funny. Emphasize that Robert Munsch stories are often funny because he exaggerates or writes about things that are too ridiculous to ever happen. For example, children in class would not actually exchange their clothes.



2. Discuss what kinds of things we would share in a classroom (supplies, toys at centres) and what kinds of things we would not share (personal items).

3. Note that when they didn't share, Amanda and Jeremiah argued and did things that were unsafe. Discuss how the rest of the children in their class must have felt.

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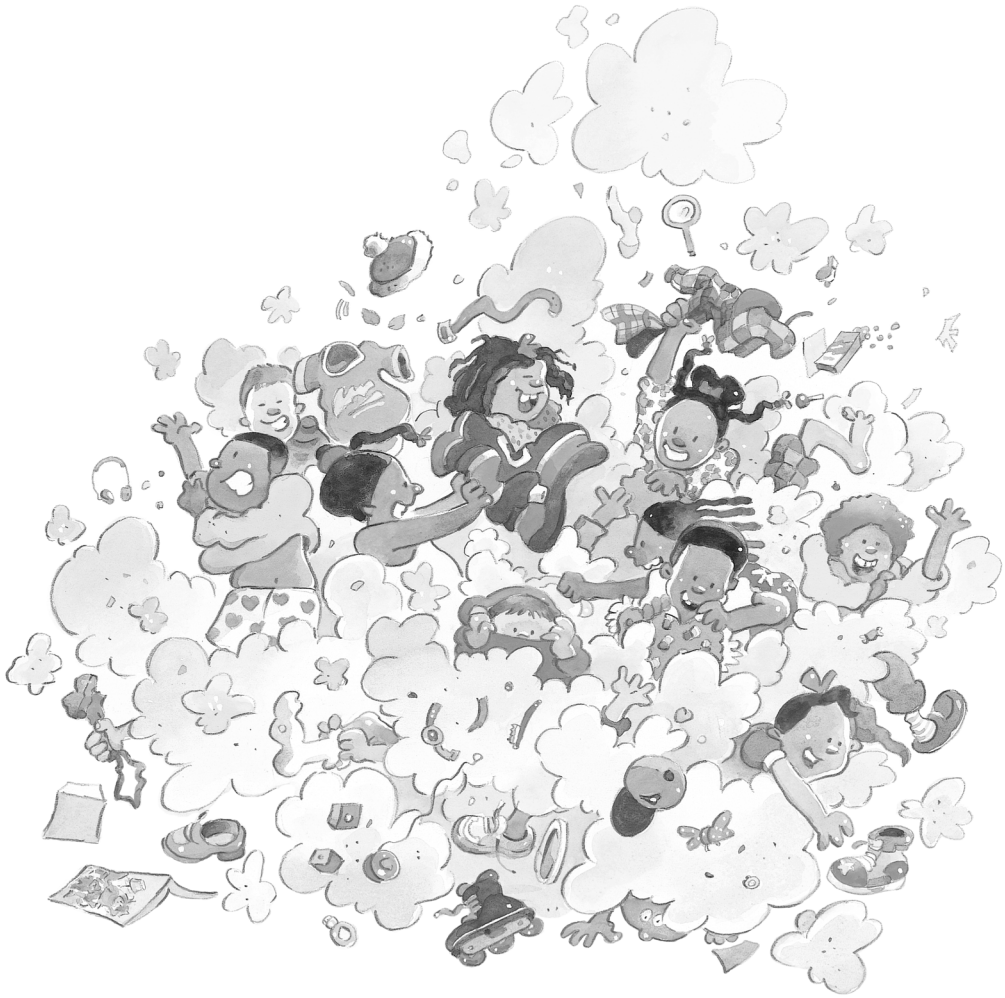
4. Explain that in order to avoid these situations, we have class rules. Brainstorm rules that the class should have and list them on chart paper. (Add some visual cues if necessary).

5. Ask students to choose one rule and illustrate it. They could be provided with a caption or write their own if appropriate.

Extensions:

- Students can draw a picture of Amanda and Jeremiah cooperating and sharing in their kindergarten class.
- Students could use magazines and other materials to make a collage about sharing.



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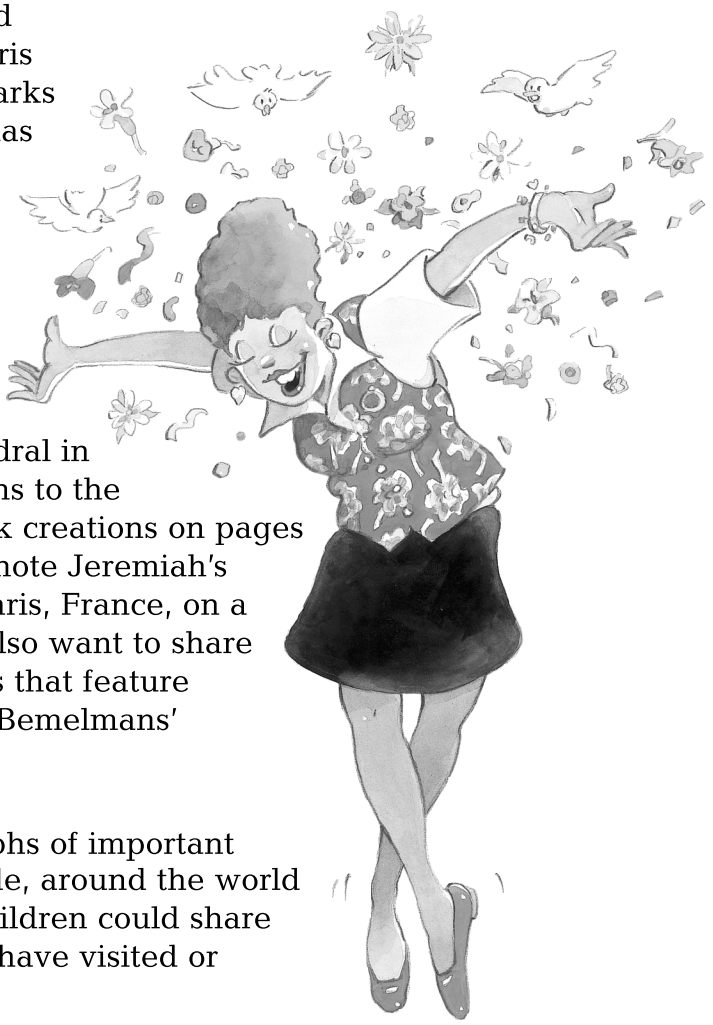
Activity #2

Building Monuments

Jeremiah builds some impressive structures with the blocks in the kindergarten class. Challenge students to build some other important world landmarks at the block centre.

Curriculum Link:
Social Studies — geography
Science — building things

Materials:
Pictures of the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris
Pictures of other global landmarks (*World Famous Landmarks* has some useful suggestions)
Blocks
Atlas for young children



Procedure:

1. Show the children photographs of the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Compare the photographs to the illustrations of Jeremiah's block creations on pages 17 and 32. You might want to note Jeremiah's beret on page 17 and locate Paris, France, on a map of the world. You might also want to share other picture books set in Paris that feature these landmarks, like Ludwig Bemelmans' *Madeline.*

2. Share some other photographs of important landmarks, natural or manmade, around the world or around your community. Children could share information about places they have visited or landmarks they have seen.

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3. Leave the photographs at the block centre and give children the opportunity to build various landmarks. You could challenge them to use specific shapes of blocks to create specific landmarks such as the Great Pyramid in Egypt, Prince Edward Island's Confederation Bridge or the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

Extension:

- Ask students to mark the locations of their landmarks on a map of the world that can be left at the block centre.

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