The Classroom Lottery

Based on the short story, *The Lottery*, by Shirley Jackson, the students will be participate in a similar mock classroom drama using a different scenario for the “choosing”, while writing answers to thought-provoking questions.

Grade Level: 7th Grade
Subject: English/Language Arts
Length of Time: One or More 45 Minute Class Period

Common Core Alignment

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1** - Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2** - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.3** - Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.9** - Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.10** - By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Objectives & Outcomes

The students will be able to read the short story, “The Lottery”, form opinions, identify similar situations in society today, and use role-playing to better understand the feelings of characters in a story.

Materials Needed

One copy of the short story, *The Lottery*, by Shirley Jackson (one per student); one or two 5” x 8” index card for each student or lined paper, a clipboard or similar item so students can write while standing in the classroom or outdoors, one blank slip of paper

Prepare ahead of time: Using the board, white board, or poster-sized paper write these questions one at a time: 1) *How are you feeling right now?* 2) *Was there ever a time in your*
life when you felt this way about being chosen or not chosen? 3) How does it feel to be chosen, or not chosen? 4) How do you think those whose names have been picked/not picked today feel? 5) What have you learned from the book or the activity today? (If outdoors easel or tape to post on a wall may be needed for poster w/questions)

**Procedure**

**Opening to Lesson**

Opening to Lesson: (NOTE: It is very important not to answer any questions about a “prize” for the classroom lottery, simply keep students on task and focused. They know there will be no stoning, but it is important for them not to know what the “winner” receives. Do not announce the exercise ahead of time. It must be as suspenseful as possible. The “winner” in this lottery will be the last name left in the barrel.)

- As each student enters the room, hand them one blank slip of paper
- Explain to the students, “We will be having our own lottery today, like the one in the short story by Shirley Jackson.” (The story must have been read ahead of time.)
- Once all are seated or gathered, have students write their name on the slip of paper. Teacher will write his/her name on a slip of paper as well.
- As they do this, the teacher will give one or two index cards to each student.
- One at a time, when called, they walk up to the front (teacher checks name) and drop the slip into a barrel or other similar container.
- Continue until all names are in the barrel.

**Body of Lesson**

**Modeling and Guided Practice**

- Be very formal and announce, “The Lottery will now begin.” (Allow students to converse quietly with each other, but it must only be about the lottery.
- Before drawing the slips reveal question number 1 and have students respond on their index cards. Have them use complete sentences and effective communication skills. (Give 5-7 minutes for each response.)
- Draw one-fourth of the names. Reveal question number 2. Students respond.
- Draw another quarter of names. Reveal question number 3. Students respond.
- Draw another quarter of names. Reveal question number 4. Students respond.
- Draw the rest of the names to reveal the “winner” of the lottery. Reveal question number 5. Students respond.
- Teacher now leads a classroom discussion based on responses to each of the five questions, probably taking place the next day. This will also give students overnight time to reflect on the classroom lottery.

**Independent Practice**

- Short story comprehension questions, teacher-made, or by commercial publisher
- Collect students’ response to the five questions. Check for grammar, clarity, etc.

**Closing**

Reveal the “prize”. Use your imagination, perhaps a candy bar, homework pass, etc. If necessary, further discuss how not knowing vs. knowing what the prize might be might
change how a person feels. A discussion of bullying may take place, when students “choose” someone to pick on, etc.

**Assessment & Evaluation**

Collection of responses to questions during the classroom lottery. The teacher may also create their own, or use a commercial publisher’s, comprehension questions based on the short story. Classroom discussion.

**Modification & Differentiation**

Groups may pair up to discuss questions/responses. Indoor or outdoor lesson. Have a student draw the slips with different questions to respond to. Group students as “family units.”

**Related Lesson Plans**

**Debate an Environmental Issue**

Students will read an article about the sale of tropical fish. Students will analyze the information given and discuss their opinion based on facts from the article.

**Present Perfect Tense**

Students will be able to explain clearly the rules on the present perfect tense of verbs as differentiated from the simple present and past tenses.

**Controversial Environmental Issues**

Students will research and debate multiple topics in the topic of environmental health. The class will take sides on whether they are for or against the controversial issue.

**Reducing Every Day Plastic Use**

Students will research and write a persuasive essay about the effects of plastic in every day use. They will be encouraged to send these letters to officials who could make a difference.