

# I Give the Giving Tree

Sophie Daws

**Education Level:** Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> grade

**Time Frame:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Paper leaves, two large posterboards (one white, one green), markers, and glue

## Class Prep:

- Make the leaves! Start by making a stencil of a leaf, big enough that it can fit about 15 words. I drew leaves that were about 5 inches long and 3 inches wide.
- With the stencil, draw however many leaves on the green poster board as students are in your class.
- Draw the tree! Draw just the trunk of the tree on your white poster board—make it big so that it takes up most of the poster board. Then paint the trunk of your tree brown.
- Make sure to bring a copy of *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein to class! I checked mine out from the library.

This activity is a great one to do outside!

## Sequence of Activities:

### Warm-up:

Take the students outside—on the playground or school garden—and have them sit in a circle. Ask the students to point at all the trees they see. Have a quick brainstorm about trees and their features. Ask the students questions about trees, emphasizing what trees provide us. What do trees have? What do you think of when you hear the word “tree”? What do trees provide us?

### Literary Model:

Read *The Giving Tree* to students. Allow students to feel their feelings and give space for emotions that might come up. When I read this book to a class of kindergarteners, there were definitely some tears.

### Discussion:

I asked the students about their feelings once we finished the story.

- At what part in the story did you start to feel sad?
- Why does this story make you sad?

I followed our discussion about feelings with comprehension questions:

- What did the tree give the boy?

- Why did the tree give the boy so much?
- Why did the tree want the boy to be happy?
- How did the boy treat the tree?
- Why did the boy keep coming back to the tree?
- What would you do if you were the boy?
- How would you treat the tree?

**Prompt:**

What would *you* give the tree?

**Exercise:**

Hand out leaves to each student and ask them to write on their leaf what they would give the tree.

Once the students have finished writing on their leaf, tell them we are going to make our own Giving Tree but, in our story, we are giving *to* the tree! Show them your poster board with the tree trunk on it and have the students line up with their leaf. Ask them where they would like their leaf to go on the tree—asking allows students to feel part of the process—and glue their leaf onto the trunk of the tree.

Voilà!

Below is an example of a Giving Tree poem I completed with Terra Bennett’s kindergarten class at Pueblo Gardens Elementary School:

I give the tree hugs  
 I give the tree water, oranges, leaves, apples, coconuts  
 I give the tree water and gold  
 I give the tree hugs, and 1,1000 coconuts  
 I give the tree 1,000 oranges  
 I give the tree flowers and leaves  
 I give the tree 1 coconut  
 I give the tree apples, coconut water, apples carrots, hugs + wishes + kisses  
 I give the tree a 1,000 hugs, coconuts and 10,000 hearts  
 I give the tree apples  
 I give the tree water, I will give the tree kisses, I will give the tree a hug, I will give the tree a lot  
 I give the tree 10,022 hugs  
 I give the tree a *big* cup of water