

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Retelling & Central Message

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Stone Garden

Layla and her grandfather visited the community garden every Saturday. While other plots bloomed with tomatoes and tall sunflowers, **Grandpa's garden was different**—it was filled with small, smooth stones. Each stone had a word written on it: *hope, strength, patience, kindness*.

"Why don't we plant real things?" Layla asked.

Grandpa smiled. "These stones tell a different kind of story."

One Saturday, Layla came to the garden alone. Grandpa had gone into the hospital. She sat by the stones, unsure what to do. Then she noticed a boy standing nearby, crying. His basketball had rolled under a fence. Layla hesitated, then remembered one of Grandpa's stones—*kindness*.

She helped the boy retrieve his ball. He smiled and ran off. Layla added a new stone: *bravery*.

Weeks later, Grandpa came home. When he saw the new stone, he chuckled. "Your stone garden is growing."

"It's *our* garden now," Layla said, "and I'm learning how to plant, just like you."



Name: _____

The Stone Garden

1. Why does Layla add a new stone to the garden?

- A. She finds it while digging
- B. She wants to replace a broken one
- C. She helps someone and wants to show it
- D. Her grandfather tells her to

2. What do the stones in the garden represent?

- A. Different flowers they plan to grow
- B. Emotions Layla is trying to ignore
- C. Important values and character traits
- D. Secrets from Layla's past

3. Fill in the blank:

Layla added the word _____ to the garden after helping a boy.

4. What is the central message of this story? Use two details to explain how it's shown.

5. How do the stones in the garden help Layla grow emotionally, not just as a gardener?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: P

Lexile Level: 645L-795L

Grade Level: 3rd Grade, End of the Year

Genre: Realistic Fiction with Symbolism

Introducing the Text

"This story is about a girl who learns that sometimes we grow through experiences, not just through plants or flowers. As we read, let's pay close attention to how Layla changes and what the stones in her garden might really mean."

Vocabulary: symbol, plot, kindness, bravery, values

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you think a "stone garden" might be?
 2. What do you know about stories that use symbols to show big ideas?
 3. Have you ever been inspired to act kindly because of someone you admire?
-

During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does Layla notice about her grandfather's garden?
 2. Why does she choose to help the boy with the basketball?
 3. What does Grandpa say when he sees the new stone?
-

After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does the garden represent in the story?
 2. What does Layla learn about herself through her actions?
 3. How does the author use the stones to help teach the story's lesson?
-

Activity Idea

Give students flat stones or paper cutouts shaped like rocks. Ask them to write one word that represents a value or personal goal (like honesty, courage, curiosity). Then, create a "**Classroom Stone Garden**" by placing them in a display. Throughout the week, encourage students to reflect on how they've lived out their word.

