

FRIENDS / AMIGOS / ZANMI

Mini- lesson Using the Creative Dialogue Process

Friends (in Spanish **Amigos**, in Haitian Creole **Zanmi**) by Alma Flor Ada describes the life of squares and rectangles, circles and triangles who live in the same town but keep very separate lives from each other. One day, two little circles went for a roll into town and met a small rectangle. Together they formed a wagon. Later with young squares they made a train and when little triangles joined them they could make a plane and fly. They learned that together in friendship they could do what they could not do separate.

CREATIVE DIALOGUE

These questions are samples that can prompt the dialogue for each phase. Of course, the beauty of the real dialogue is that it will incorporate real life situations and experiences of the children. The questions are only suggested as dialogue starters. They need not be asked separately, but in a normal conversation format. We separated them into phases to give an idea of the different purpose of each phase, particularly because the conversations in the class tend to remain at the **Descriptive** and **Personal** phases and not reach the very important **Critical Reflective** phase and the essential **Creative Phase** that leads to action.

Descriptive Phase

Questions to ascertain the comprehension of the story and its concepts.

- How many sides does a square have? Are all sides the same size?
- How many sides does a rectangle have? A triangle? Do circles have sides?
- What did the large figures say to the little ones?

Personal Interpretive Phase

Questions to invite sharing personal experiences, feelings and emotions.

- How does it feel when other children want to play with you? When they don't?
- How does it feel when other people treat you badly? When you treat others badly?

Critical Multicultural Anti-Bias Phase

Questions to promote critical reflection and anti-bias awareness.

- Was the big squares' reason to forbid the little ones to play with others valid? Why??
- Do all people who have long hair (or live in the same street) think alike? Have the same taste? Can we tell the feelings of a person just by the way the person looks? By the person's language? The person's origin? What do you think of this?
- Why do you think the shapes had such a wonderful time playing together?
- What difficult things that can happen when people who are different play together? What good things can happen? How can we promote the good things?

Transformative Creative Phase

Questions to promote transformative attitudes.

- What can we do when there are children who do not want to play with us?
- What can you do if you see someone treating someone badly?
- Is there someone you have not been friends with that you can invite to play with you? Someone you can learn to know better?

CONNECTIONS WITH THE HOME

- Invite parents to share with their children their own experiences with friends, now and when they were children. What were their favorite games and activities? Ask them to discuss their concept of friendship. What do they value in their friends? Can these qualities be found only in people of the same age, the same sex, the same language, the same ethnicity?