

Garden of Hope

Grade Level: Pre-K – 2nd

Overview:

The Garden of Hope concept is for younger children to express through art their hopes and joys to girls suffering from Rett Syndrome. Each student decorates their individual flower for the Garden in advance of Dress Up 2 Cure Day (April 1st). On the day of the event, display the students' flowers together as a garden.

Required Materials:

Flower Template (included)

Scissors (if you will not be pre-cutting)

Glue

Your choice: markers, colored pencils, crayons, paint

Extras: stickers, glitter, magazines to cut up, etc.

Goal/Purpose:

- To allow the children to express their hopes and wishes to someone in need through art
- To reach out to the world around them (i.e. the petals around the center of the flower)

Your class will create this Garden of Hope to display unity in understanding those with special needs. As an option, you are invited to mail us your flower creations for us to give to girls newly diagnosed with Rett Syndrome.

Background:

Girls with Rett Syndrome are severely disabled. They have no hand function or speech. Most cannot walk and suffer from uncontrollable seizures and pain. Yet these girls are very smart and very brave. They thrive on visual art, as their eyes are about the only things that have not failed them.

Procedures:

STEP 1: Brainstorm

Ask your students the following:

- What makes you happy?
- What kinds of things do you like to tell someone when they are not feeling well?
- What kinds of things can you do to cheer someone up?
- What kinds of things can you do to wish someone luck?
- Have you ever felt nervous, sad or sick?
- What did someone do to help you feel better?

STEP 2: Create

Given the appropriate materials, ask students to decorate the center of their flower first. The center of the flower should focus on the student's personal reflection of him/herself, i.e. self-portrait, family photos, favorite items, colors, animals, etc.

Next, give each student an opportunity to think of SIX messages to someone with special needs, one for each flower petal. Using drawings, words, photos, magazine pictures, etc., each student can decorate their petals to express each message.

Alternate Ideas:

- Work on the flowers in small groups.
- Come up with the six messages ahead of time or as a result of a class discussion, and have every student use the same set up messages, but with their own artwork.
Examples: Be strong. Stay brave. We love you. Smile.

STEP 3: DISPLAY

Once your students have completed their flowers, it is time to create the garden! This is a wonderful hands-on method for the students to understand their individuality within a larger group.

- Attach the flowers to a wall
- Add stems
- Hang the flowers from the ceiling or on a clothesline with pins
- Combine all classes' gardens to show how each individual flower combined with others makes a bigger impact
- Take a photo (class or individual) with each student and their flower
*if your class is participating in the Dress Up 2 Cure event on April 1st, it would be great to get a photo of each student in their "outfit" along with their flower(s).

STEP 4: SHARE

Here are some different ways for your students to share their messages:

- Take them home to give to someone to cheer them up
- Send them to us and we will give them to girls diagnosed with Rett Syndrome

Mail to:

Girl Power 2 Cure, Inc.
95 Lane 148
Crooked Lake
Angola, IN 46703

Or, do both! You can email us the photos for us to send to the girls, and your students bring home their original, or vice versa.

Either way, it is important for your students to know their messages have been “heard.”

If your class would like to “adopt” a particular girl with Rett Syndrome (if you are not already aware of someone in your community), we can help you find someone. Or visit www.girlpower2cure.org/thegirls to pick someone to “adopt” for your Garden of Hope.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

Please contact:

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