**Amazing Grace**

by Mary Hoffman

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**Overview**

When her class decides to do Peter Pan, Grace wants to play Peter.  With the support of her family, Grace learns that she can be anything she wants to be, and the results are amazing!

**Grade 3**

**LEARNING TARGETS**

* I can identify how Grace’s grandmother made a difference in the life of her community by the way she helped Grace.
* I can explain how civic discourse is a part of the story of Grace through speaking, listening, voting and respecting diverse viewpoints.
* I can explain how Grace was effected by issues involving minority rights.
* I can explain how majority rule had a positive impact on Grace.

**STANDARDS**

**Grade 3**

**Civics**

**3.1.1.1.1** Identify ways people make a difference in the civic life of their communities, state, nation or world by working as individuals or groups to address a specific problem or need.

**3.1.2.3.1** Explain the importance of civic discourse (including speaking, listening, voting and respecting diverse viewpoints) and the principles of majority rule and minority rights.

**3.1.1.1** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

**Grade 3**

**Language Arts**

**3.1.3.3** Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

**3.1.7.7** Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

**GUIDE**

1. In the first scenes of the book Grace is shown pretending to be a variety of characters she has heard stories about. Why? What do these pictures tell us about Grace? (she loves stories, she is a good actress) Why is that important to the story overall? (We believe that Grace would do a good job playing Peter Pan and that she is sincere in wanting to play Peter Pan.) Do a whip share with the class, allow students to share something that they enjoy and feel they are good at doing. When they are done, ask if they feel that if the opportunity arises they should be given a chance to do the things they shared. Would there ever be a time when someone wanted to do something, and was good at it, but still couldn’t do it? See if you can think of examples. (There is only one task to be done, two people want to do it and could do it – a choice must be made about who gets to do it.) What if the part had been Cinderella and a boy wanted to try out for it? Would we feel differently about that? Why? (The character of Cinderella is supposed to look like a young woman, and so a boy playing it would not look right. Since Peter Pan is a young boy, it is a male character that has often been played by a female. You may want to share a photo of Mary Martin, one of the most famous Peter Pans (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Pan_(1954_musical)> for an image). What if the play had been about Martin Luther King Jr. and a white man had wanted to play the part? Would we feel differently about that? Why? (Being black is important to Martin Luther King’s life story and couldn’t really be left out. Peter Pan’s race is not really important to the story.) Think again about the talents the children shared, if there is no good reason to not allow them to share the talent, should they be allowed to try? Should being different than what was expected keep them from trying?

Civics Standard: 3.1.2.3.1

Language Arts Standard: 3.1.1.1 3.1.3.3 3.1.7.7

1. Look at the picture of Grace and her mother and grandmother when Grace tells them that Natalie said she couldn’t be Peter Pan. How does Grace look? Do you think she is doubting whether she should try out for Peter Pan? Why does Grace’s grandmother take her to see the ballet? (To show Grace someone who has reached her goal. To show her a black woman playing a part usually played by a white woman. To give Grace courage.) Grace’s grandmother doesn’t talk to the other children in the class, but does she make a difference with what goes on in the class play? (Without her help Grace might not have tried out for Peter Pan.) Does she make a difference in how the children in the class think about how people can participate in their community? (The children learn that Grace can be the best choice to play Peter Pan, despite being a different choice than they expected.) What are some things that we can do that are small, but can make a difference to more people? Make a list as a class of examples. (Examples might include: picking up trash on the playground makes it safer for everyone in the school, helping a younger student at school with their homework helps that student participate more fully in his class, behaving well in the hallway allows all the students in other classrooms focus on their work.)

Civics Standard: 3.1.1.1.1 3.1.2.3.1

Language Arts Standard: 3.1.1.1 3.1.3.3 3.1.7.7

1. How does Grace get the part of Peter Pan? Who decides? (The class votes.) Why did Raj and Natalie vote for Grace to be Peter Pan, when they had said she shouldn’t get the part? (Her acting was so good that she convinced them.) What if Raj and Natalie had not changed their minds and had voted NOT to have Grace get the part. Should she still get the part? (Yes, because the rest of the class would still have voted for her.) Explain that this idea is called “majority rule.” When voting the side with the most votes wins. Ask the students if this seems fair to them. What if the story was different? What if the class had voted not to allow Grace to audition for the part of Peter Pan because she was a girl and black. If the majority of the class had supported not allowing Grace to audition, would that have seemed fair? (No, because it wouldn’t have allowed her to even take a chance and there was not a good reason why she couldn’t play the part.) This idea is called “minority rights,” that sometimes a person should be given the chance to do something even if the majority of people don’t want them to. Can the students think of any other examples of the conflict between majority rule and minority rights? (The majority of people in the Southern states did not want schools integrated, but black children deserved a chance to attend good schools close to their home.)

Civics Standard: 3.1.2.3.1

Language Arts Standard: 3.1.1.1 3.1.3.3

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

1. Grace’s grandmother has a big impact on the classroom community because she encourages and supports Grace. Have the children think of someone who encourages and supports their goals. Make a bulletin board celebrating these people. Students should write a paragraph describing what the person has done to help them. They can either bring in a photograph of the person, or draw a picture. Talk about how the whole class does better when each student does better, and so these people are helping your whole community.
2. There are many famous people who were the first to do something. They might be different because of their race, gender, physical condition, age or for some other reason. The main thing is that they were different than what was expected, but they succeeded. Have the children choose one of these people to write a paragraph about, explaining what made them different and what goal they reached. Examples might include:

* Barak Obama
* Oscar Pistorius (Olympic runner amputee)
* Sally Ride (woman astronaut)
* Zac Sunderland (youth sailor)
* Jackie Robinson (black Major League baseball player)
* Sandra Day O’connor (Supreme Court Justice)
* Connie Chung (Asian to anchor a news program)
* Halle Berry (Black to win Oscar for Leading Actress)
* [Dimitrion Yordanidis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimitrion_Yordanidis) (Oldest to ever finish a Marathon)

1. Grace listens to people who have different viewpoints (Raj, Natalie, her mother and grandmother) and then decides what she wants to do. Listening to other viewpoints is hard, but helps us make good decisions. Have all of the students each pick a favorite book. Each student should write a paragraph explaining why the book is good. Break the class into small groups. In each group have the students share the book they chose and their explanation. Based on the explanations that they heard, have the students choose which book they would most likely read. What was it about that explanation that convinced them? Was it hard choosing between the books? What different viewpoints did they hear?

**Notes**