Dear Educators and Counselors,

The year is progressing so quickly! It’s already time for the March/April issue of YCteen. This issue, titled “It’s All Relative,” tackles family in many forms—good parents, not-so-good parents, absent parents and everything in between. You and your students will read real-life stories about writers who struggle to connect with their parents and get the love they deserve, as well as writers who overcome language and other barriers to find the love they need.

Writer L.F. focuses on her strained relationship with her largely absent father in “Gone, Daddy, Gone,” and in our accompanying lesson, your students will explore how L.F. uses metaphors to communicate about this difficult relationship. They’ll then write their own metaphors to describe their parents.

In Natalie Castelan’s “Saying ‘I Love You’ in Spanglish,” the writer explores the difficulty of communicating with her parents when they have limited English proficiency and her Spanish proficiency has waned. Our lesson for that story focuses on students exploring the many ways we communicate our love to others.

Lastly, we have a lesson to go along with Natalie Betances’s story “Growing Up Without My Father.” In this touching story, Natalie learns how holding onto the memory of her father helps her deal with the grief, and your students will reflect on strategies for dealing with loss.

We’d love to hear how these lessons work for you and any other ways you use YCteen in your work with young people.

Sincerely,

Janelle Greco & Tim Fredrick
Co-Directors of Education
jgreco@youthcomm.org
tfredrick@youthcomm.org

ycteen.org
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**ELA and Social & Emotional Learning**

**Parents Be Like . . .**

**Story to Use:** “Gone, Daddy, Gone” by L.F., p. 16

**Story Summary:** After the unexpected death of her mother, L.F. is left to be taken care of by her father, an alcoholic who disappoints her and makes her feel lonely. She’s eventually placed with her aunt, and her father remarries, creating a wider gulf between them. L.F. acts out as a result and engages in dangerous behavior. Because of a helpful therapist, though, L.F. is able to turn her situation around.

**Lesson Objectives and Standards Connections:**

Students will be able to:
- Annotate a text during the reading process in order to develop an understanding of the text’s main idea and supporting details (CCS R.1 and R.2)
- Discuss their interpretation and analysis of, as well as personal connections to, a narrative nonfiction text (CCS SL.1)
- Determine the literal meaning of figurative language and write their own metaphors/similes (CCS R.4)

**Before Reading the Story** (10 minutes)

*This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.*

1. Welcome students to the group. Direct their attention to the board or a piece of chart paper that says, “If one of your parents was an object, what object would they be and why?” Tell students that the object should represent the personality of the parent. Give students five minutes to write in response to the prompt.

2. After students have completed writing, ask for several volunteers to name their object and their rationale for selecting it to represent their parent. On the board or a piece of chart paper, write down the objects and student’s name.

3. Ask students if they know the difference between a simile and a metaphor. Write the definitions of each on the board: A simile is a comparison between two things using “like” or “as.” A metaphor is a comparison between two things that is directly stated. Use the objects they named in the freewrite to give examples of each.
**During Reading** (20 minutes)
*By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.*

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the group leader, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to underline any similes or metaphors in the text.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. You can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. When you finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the metaphors and similes they found. They can turn and talk to a neighbor before you discuss as a whole group.

**After Reading the Story** (20 minutes)
*During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.*

1. After reading the story, ask students what metaphors and similes they identified. Keep track of the metaphors on the board or chart paper under two columns—one for “mom” and one for “dad.” (They should find four: One comparing her mother to a boat, one comparing her father to a bird, another comparing her father to a scientist conducting experiments, and a last comparison of her father to an addiction.)

2. Draw students’ attention to the metaphors about the father and facilitate what all metaphors/similes communicate about how the father treats his daughter and how she feels about him. (He treats her with disregard and like she’s an object. These aren’t metaphors that communicate love.)

3. After about five minutes of discussion, ask students to return to the object they selected at the beginning of the session. Tell them to first construct a sentence in the form “My [parent/mother/father/etc.] is a [name of object].”

4. After they create this sentence, have them write a poem or paragraph—or for those with very low literacy levels, draw a picture—that extends the metaphor and explains more about how they feel about this person. Give them 10 minutes to work, circulating to offer support and encouragement.

5. After everyone is done, ask for volunteers to share what they created.

6. Thank group members for sharing and listening.
ELA & Social and Emotional Learning

**Living with Loss**

**Story to Use:** “Growing Up Without My Father” by Natalie Betances, p.14

**Story Summary:** Natalie struggles with the loss of her father and describes how she copes with not having such an important person in her life anymore. In exploring her grief, Natalie finds that her father lives on in her memory.

**Lesson Objectives and Connections:**

Students will be able to:

- Write in response to a prompt (CCS W.10)
- Annotate a text during the reading process in order to develop an understanding of the text's main idea and supporting details (CCS R.1 and R.2)
- Discuss their interpretation and analysis of, as well as personal connections to, a narrative nonfiction text (CCS SL.1)

**Before Reading the Story** (15 min)

*This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.*

1. Welcome students to the group. Introduce the lesson by telling them they will be reading a true story about a teen whose father has died and how she dealt with that loss.

2. After welcoming the group, ask students (or post on the board) the following prompt and question:
   - “Think of a time when you lost a person, pet, or object you loved. Describe what or who you lost and how you felt. How did you cope or handle the loss?”

3. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils. Give students three to five minutes to write down responses on paper independently.

4. After time is up, explain to the group that they will be doing a Pair Share. Ask them to turn to a person next to them and take turns sharing their responses to the question.

5. Each member of the pair should take about a minute to share. Cue partners to switch roles after the first minute. Use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before re-gaining students’ attention.

6. Ask several pairs to share what they discussed.

7. Thank students for sharing.
During Reading (20 min.)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the group leader, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called reading for a purpose. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to identify parts of the story that stand out for them, or when they have a reaction to something that happens. When this occurs, students should write an “**” in the margin.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote a “**” next to and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. When you finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the questions it raised for them. They can turn and talk to a neighbor before you discuss as a whole group.

After Reading the Story (15 min)

During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. Introduce the **Dear Teen Writer** activity by explaining to the group that they will write a letter to Natalie that shares some of their reactions to her story.

2. Tell the group that if they want, it’ll be possible to mail in their letters to the Youth Communication office and to potentially get published in an upcoming issue in our “Letter to the Writer” section.

3. Write the **Dear Teen Writer** guidelines on the board or read them to the class.

4. Begin with the greeting “Dear Natalie,”

5. Describe what you learned from her story about losing someone and sharing memories of them.

6. Share any personal reactions or connections you had with her story.

7. Describe the strategies that you think helped Natalie get through this time, and how those strategies could help you as well.
8. Ask Natalie a question or two based on her story.

9. End with a closing: “Sincerely, (Your Name)”

10. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the group and working to make connections to Natalie’s story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.
ELA & Social and Emotional Learning

Showing Instead of Telling

Story to Use: “Saying ‘I Love You’ in Spanlish” by Natalie Castelan, p.9

Summary of Stories: As Natalie learns more English, she finds the gap between her and her Spanish-speaking parents widening. She tries to balance gaining a new language with finding ways to honor her relationship with her parents.

Lesson Objectives and Standards Connections:

Students will be able to:

- Annotate a text during the reading process in order to develop an understanding of the text’s main idea and supporting details (CCS R.1 and R.2)
- Discuss their interpretation and analysis of, as well as personal connections to, a narrative nonfiction text and to a poem (CCS SL.1)
- Write in response to a text and to other students’ written responses (CCS W.4 and W.10)

Before Reading the Story (5-10 minutes)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Welcome students to the group. Tell them that before reading a story, you are going to do an activity that allows you to do some anonymous writing on a topic related to a story you’ll be reading together.

2. Introduce the Toss One, Take One activity by explaining they are going to do an activity that gathers everyone’s ideas and allows them to hear multiple perspectives.

3. Pass out pieces of scrap paper and pencils. Tell group members not to write their name on their paper. This is an anonymous activity.

4. Ask group members to write a response on their paper to this question:
   - Aside from saying “I love you,” what’s one way you show love for those around you or one way those around you demonstrate their love for you?

5. Give group members three minutes to think and then write their responses. If some group members are struggling, ask them to write about why they find it difficult to answer the prompts.

6. Write your own responses to the prompts to model the activity.

7. After group members have written their responses, tell them to crumple them into balls and toss them into the middle of the circle, or a container you have available.
8. Model for the group how you expect them to crumple and toss their responses into the center of the circle.

9. After everyone has tossed, each group member should retrieve an anonymous response from and return to their seats. As an alternative, walk around the circle with the responses and have each group member blindly pick a paper ball. (If a group member happens to choose their own response, it's okay because no one will know.)

10. Go around in a circle or ask for volunteers to read aloud the response from the paper.

11. Write responses on flip chart paper to save for a later activity.

12. Invite group members to comment on what they heard, such as similarities, differences, or personal connections to their peers’ responses.

13. Thank group members for sharing.

**During Reading** (20 minutes)
*Students will read a story by one of our youth writers and use in-text annotation to read actively.*

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary above).

2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the group leader, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.

3. Tell students they will practice an active reading strategy called **reading for a purpose**. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.

4. **Reading for a purpose** directions: Ask students to underline any places in the text where Natalie or her parents show their love for one another through actions.

5. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Stop to discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. You can pose an open question such as “What stands out to you in this section and why?”

6. When you finish the story, ask the group to discuss their reactions to the story, including the actions they found. They can turn and talk to a neighbor before you discuss as a whole group.
After Reading the Story (20 minutes)

During this post-reading activity, students will use written notes passed back and forth as a way to talk about what they read.

1. After reading the story, remind students of the actions of love they discussed at the beginning of the session, pointing to the flip chart paper from earlier.

2. Tell students that, using a combination of drawing and writing, they are to create a “Guide to Showing Love” brochure based on the actions discussed during this session—from the beginning of the session as well as the story. They can create these pamphlets in pairs or individually.

3. Provide students with paper, colored pencils, and markers.

4. Show them how to fold the paper in thirds to create a brochure. Explain that the cover should have a title, their name, and an engaging image. Then, on the inside, they should highlight 4-6 methods of showing love, including images and text (in full sentences).

5. Give students about 15 minutes to work and create their pamphlets, walking around to offer support and encouragement.

6. After everyone is done, ask for volunteers to share what they created.

7. Thank group members for sharing and listening.
Open-ended questions you can use with any story in YCteen:

1. What main problem or challenge did the writer face?
2. What choices did the teen have in trying to deal with the problem?
3. Which way of dealing with the problem was most effective for the teen? Why?
4. What strengths, skills, or resources did the teen use to address the challenge?
5. If you were in the writer’s shoes what would you have done?
6. What could adults have done better to help this teen?
7. What have you learned from reading this story that you didn't know before?
8. What connections from your own life, the world, or other text you have read, can you make to this story? This reminds me of…. (text-to-self, text-to-world, text-to-text)
9. What surprised you in this story?

Do you have a different view of this issue, or see a different way of dealing with it, after reading this story? Why or why not?
SUMMER WRITING WORKSHOP

July 8 - August 15, 2019
FOR NEW YORK CITY YOUTH
AGES 15-20

WE CAN MAKE IT RIGHT

Our theme this summer is justice with compassion. How can we move beyond rigid concepts of right and wrong, blame, and punishment? We will explore new ways to address wrongdoing in personal relationships, schools, and society: What would be fair to everyone and help us heal?

WRITE ABOUT IT!

Be part of Youth Communication’s 40th annual summer writing workshop. Get one-on-one mentoring from a professional editor, write personal stories about your life, go on field trips, and make friends with other writers. Participate in writing lessons and group activities exploring your own experiences with injustice and how to address it.

No prior experience is required, but you must be able to attend for all six weeks. Our stories are read by thousands of people and have been used in the New York Times Learning Network and Huffington Post. Workshop alumni have gone on to win Posse and Gates Millennium Scholarships and to attend colleges from Hunter to Harvard. All participants receive a $600 stipend plus a daily MetroCard and $10 for lunch.

APPLY ONLINE BY MAY 17, 2019
bit.ly/ycteenwrite

We will respond to all applicants by June 7
Applications for the 40th Annual Youth Communication Summer Writing Workshop

Youth Communication publishes personal narratives by teens in two award-winning magazines: YCteen, by and for New York City high school students; and Represent, by and for young people in foster care. This is a competitive program—we only accept 12 students—so start working on your application essays now!

Dates and Times: The workshop runs Monday through Thursday from July 8 to August 15. The hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Stipend: $600, plus daily MetroCards and $10 for lunch.

Location: Youth Communication office, 242 West 38th Street, 6th fl. The office is easily accessible by many subway lines.

Eligibility: Anyone ages 15 to 20 who lives within commuting distance is eligible to apply. We're interested in your writing skills, but when we judge your essays we will also look for your ideas and willingness to write deeply personal stories. Youth Communication’s most essential job is to amplify youth voice in a compelling way.

Deadline: Applications must be received by May 17, 2019. We will respond to all applicants by June 7.

Apply online at: bit.ly/ycteenwrite

Or mail to: Youth Communication, Summer Writing Workshop
242 West 38th St., 6th floor, New York, NY 10018

Today’s date________________________ Your age__________

Name_________________________________________________________

Address_________________________________________ Apt._________

City_________________________ Zip___________________________

School_________________________________________ Grade_______

Phone (__)________________________ Date of birth______________

E-mail______________________________@________________________

Male _____ Female _____ Other ________

Race/ethnicity (check all that apply)

____Black _____Latino _____White _____Asian

____Other______________________________

Where did you hear about the workshop? (e.g., teacher, ad in YCteen or Represent, website, foster care agency, social worker, etc.)

_____________________________________________________________

If you’re in foster care, what is your agency?

_____________________________________________________________

WE CAN MAKE IT RIGHT

A student who bullies her classmates may be suffering from abuse at home. Someone might steal because they need necessities like clothes or food. A teen might join in racist behavior to fit in with friends.

When someone’s actions have hurt others, they should be held accountable. But traditional forms of punishment and discipline don’t necessarily make things any better for the victims of wrongdoing, or help the offenders change their behavior. In fact, they may just perpetuate a cycle of hurt and injustice.

We want to spend this summer workshop thinking about how to respond in a way that’s fair to everyone and leads to healing when people break rules or mistreat others.

Answer the following questions. Please be thorough.

1) Good personal stories include many details, sometimes painful, sometimes embarrassing, and your thoughts and feelings. Think of one personal story you’d like to work on and write at least six well-developed paragraphs as a first draft.

2) Please write an essay on ONE of these two topics:

Write about a personal experience you have had—as a victim, bystander, or offender—where someone felt wronged and you don’t think all sides of the story were considered. What part of the story was missing that you think should have been considered? How was the situation resolved? Did it get to the root of the problem? What could have been done differently to ensure a more fair and just solution?

OR

What practices are your school or community (after-school program, Close-to-Home program, foster care agency) already implementing to make it a place where everyone feels safe and respected? How does this help build a culture of respect among students and/or between students and adults? This could be anything from a student justice council to a circle in an advisory class.