One Ordinary Day with Peanuts
By: Shirley Jackson
Adapted by Lisa Melamed for Mekor Haim 2018

Pre-reading

Questions for Discussion:
  a. How do we tell the difference between good and evil?
  b. Is it difficult to tell the difference? Why or why not?
  c. What is the difference between the first two pictures and the second two pictures?
Some words from the text, defined:

1. detour - a long, roundabout way
2. genial – friendly and cheerful
3. solemnly - in a serious manner
4. comradely - friendly
5. to repress - to restrain/prevent
6. counterfeit - fake
7. impertinent – rude
8. to quarrel - to fight/argue

Basic Understanding – LOTS & Vocabulary

I. List, in order, the good deeds that Mr. Johnson does.

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2. Who did he help?

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______________________
______________________
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3. List, in order, Mrs. Johnson’s “bad” deeds.

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______________________
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______________________
4. Who did she hurt?

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____________________________
____________________________
____________________________
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5. Match the vocabulary words to their meanings:

1. to radiate ________________________________ aware
2. conviction ________________________________ an event regarded as a sign (of good or bad)
3. to beckon ________________________________ moving along
4. harassed ________________________________ shyly
5. to endeavor ________________________________ in a way that suggests something bad is about to happen
6. civilly ________________________________ in a hurried, excited, or disorganized manner
7. frantically ________________________________ certainty
8. ominously ________________________________ stressed out
9. to estimate ________________________________ guessed
10. to intercept ________________________________ in a polite way
11. unwittingly ________________________________ suggesting/implying
12. timidly ________________________________ not clearly – could be understood
13. to disregard ________________________________ in more than one way
14. insatiable ________________________________ to show an emotion or quality outwardly
15. to encompass ________________________________ impossible to satisfy
16. to proceed ________________________________ to move your hand in a way that tells someone to come closer
17. omen ________________________________ to catch/stop someone who is moving
18. ambiguously ________________________________ unintentionally (not on purpose)
19. to indicate ________________________________ to ignore

6. Complete the sentences with the appropriate vocabulary word:

a) I don’t know when class will end but I can a. indicate b. estimate c. intercept it will be around noon.

b) She didn’t realize the woman she was confiding in at the gym was her new boss. She a. ambiguously b. frantically c. ominously d. unwittingly revealed her strategy for getting people at work to cover for her while she sneaks out to the gym during work hours.
c) I was not interested in the office gift exchange and so, I a. radiated  
b. endeavored c. disregarded d. proceeded the email about it.

d) She was so happy about her new puppy, she seemed to a. radiate  
b. endeavor c. disregard d. proceed joy.

7. Write meaningful sentences for 3 of the following words:
   timidly
civilly
conviction
omen
to encompass
insatiable
to beckon
harassed

   • _______________________________________________________________
   
   • _______________________________________________________________
   
   • _______________________________________________________________

   o Analysis and Interpretation – HOTS & Literary Terms

   The two HOTS that we will use for this story are:
   o Evaluating
   o Comparing and Contrasting.

   Evaluating
   Go back to the pictures from the pre-reading.

   Which of the two villains, Mr. Hyde or Darth Vader, is more dangerous? Why?
   _______________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________

   When we make judgements, using some degree of analysis, we are EVALUATING.
**Evaluating in literature:** When we make judgments about different aspects of the text and justify our opinions with proof from the text.

We answer questions like:
- What makes this a good story? Explain.
- Is ___ a believable character? Explain.
- Is the resolution of the conflict satisfying? Explain.

1. **Mr. Johnson** is described as being “more like a puppy than a man intent upon business”. What does this tell us about him?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

2. **Mr. Johnson** acts as a matchmaker; although, he knows nothing about their private lives. Do you think that he did the right thing? Explain.
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

3. **Look back at all of the things Mr. Johnson** does (use your notes from the LOTS activity). Is it believable that one person could act this way? Why or why not?
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________

**Comparing and Contrasting in literature:** Finding similarities (comparing) and differences (contrasting) between the characters and their actions and drawing conclusions.

4. **Compare and contrast the impact Mr. and Mrs. Johnson’s actions had on people** this day. Give at least two specific examples.
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________
5. Compare and contrast Mr. Johnson’s behavior toward the mom and son moving to Vermont with that of the crowd around her. Explain. Use the text to support your answers.

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Literary terms

- **Point of View** – The focus from which the story is told. It can be told:
  - In the first person (if the narrator is a full participant in the story)
  - In the third person (if the narrator is not a character in the story)

6. From what point of view is One Ordinary Day with Peanuts told? Does the narrator know what is inside everyone’s head?

________________________________________________________________________

- **Paradox** – a situation or statement which seems to contradict itself, but really doesn’t. For example:

  In the television show *House*, the main character is a rude, narcissistic, and abrasive man who constantly alienates those around him. However, he is a brilliant doctor and deeply committed to saving his patients’ lives. Thus, he combines a gruff, mean exterior with a deep sense of compassion and morality.

7. Find an example of a paradox in One Ordinary Day with Peanuts.

________________________________________________________________________

- **Symbolism** – something which is both (literally) itself and also represents an idea. For example, a rose may represent beauty. The color black may be used to represent death or evil. White may be used to symbolize life or purity.

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________________________________________________________________________

9. What is the message of this story?

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Bridging Text and Context

Read this popular quotation, attributed to Marcus Aurelius (Roman Emperor from the years 161-180 CE):

“Life is neither good nor evil, but rather a place for good and evil.”

How does this quotation connect to the story?

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Post Reading Activity (choose ONE)

a. Write a dialogue between two of the characters who received “help” from Mr. or Mrs. Johnson. Your dialogue should reflect what they think about the Johnsons.

b. Film this story with actors and dialogue.

c. Write an essay on the meaning of evil and how we can combat it (3 paragraphs).