

Be the Shining Star

A Modern Day Parable inspired by Matthew 5:1-12

Ms. Collins saw that the class was getting restless so she sat down in her chair at the front of the Reading Circle. Her kindergarten students came to her and took their seats on the colored squares of the reading mat. She began to teach them, saying:

"It is time to hand out Class Awards. Our class awards are different than any other. We are going to build a wall of shining stars in all colors for the beautiful things each of you do to make the universe a better place." She had painted one wall a deep blue to represent the dark, dull world of trying to fit in and be like everyone else. Across the top she stenciled the words, "The sky would be dull without our shining stars."

"Today is an exciting day," Ms Collins said. "Let me see your happy faces. Let me see you raise your hands in the air and wiggle your fingers if you are ready to begin." She did the same and had the biggest smile of all! "OK," she continued. "Now, hands on your knees, if you please. It is time to brighten up that dull wall! It is time for you to shine!"

The classroom was ripe with anticipation. This is a joyful, friendly space that inspires the children. They know it is good to be yourself and that no one is better or more special than the others. Ms. Collins had spent months cultivating this attitude. Next to her, she had a basket filled with foil stars cut out in many different colors. Each was bright and beautiful and a unique color.

"You are the stars that shine in unexpected ways," she announced. Each one of you is special and unlike any other person who has ever existed!" Ms. Collins reached into her basket like a child reaching into a Halloween treat bag anticipating the surprise inside. She pulled out the first star. "Look at this lovely yellow star! This star says: 'You shine because you are poor in spirit, yet you will inherit the kingdom.' This shining star is Brandon. He is always willing to share what he has, and he doesn't worry about having more. He would rather give what he has to those who have less.

Next, Ms Collins selected a precious pink star. This star says: 'You shine because you mourn, yet you bring comfort to others.' This star goes to Camille because she makes others feel better when they are sad, and she doesn't think its unfair when good things happen to others and not her. She celebrates with them!

This brilliant **blue** star is next. This star says: 'You shine because you are meek, yet you will inherit the earth.' This star goes to Jasmine because although her family has the biggest house and she has the most toys, she never brags about it.

Out came the fire engine **red** star and the children were excited even by the color's name. This star says: 'You shine because you hunger and thirst for righteousness, yet you are satisfied.' This star goes to Connor because whenever he breaks a rule or does something not so nice, he always admits it, then he says he's sorry and asks for forgiveness.

Now, look at this glorious **green** star! This star says: 'You shine because you are merciful, and you are shown mercy.' This star goes to Beatrice because she is always taking of others. She helps you up when you fall. She forgives others when they bump into her or cut in line. She helps everyone get along better.

Here is a pretty **purple** star that says: 'You shine because you are clean of heart, you see God in everything.' This star goes to Hannah because she shares her positive view and wants everyone to be included.

Who likes this bright **orange** star? It says: 'You shine because you are a peacemaker, and you are good example to others.' This star goes to Danny because he gets along with others and he helps others calm down when they are angry and start to argue and fight.

Have you ever seen the color turquoise? This is a nice **turquoise** star, and it says: 'You shine because you are sometimes persecuted for righteousness, yet you see beyond that to the kingdom.' This star goes to Michael because he isn't bothered when sometimes gets teased about reading his Bible during reading time and for saying a prayer of blessing before lunch. But, the teasing doesn't worry him or make him change what he does and believes.

Now, let's decorate our drab, boring wall with all your bright & colorful stars. See how beautiful you make the world! Wouldn't it be terrible if we didn't have so many different kinds of people, and if we each didn't let each other shine? I am so proud of each and every one of you. Let us rejoice and be glad for each of you and your uniqueness. These attitudes will bring great reward for your life, and for the whole world!

