

grade level 4-6

Famine curriculum

Lesson Aim: To compare two texts on the theme of hospitality rewarded.

New York State Standard: Language Arts. 2. Students will present personal responses that make references to plot, characters, ideas, vocabulary and text structure.

Background: The Irish people have always valued hospitality and generosity. Before the Irish famine, people travelling the roads could almost always be sure of a meal or shelter in any household. The Famine with its hunger and especially its Famine-related diseases changed that custom. Still there were people, usually women, who gave what they had to the poor. They were rewarded with good luck. Stories are still told about such women today.

Lesson:

1. Read "Mrs. Fitzgerald and the Milk" and "A Meal for a Stranger." How are the stories alike?
2. Write down some words that describe Mrs. Fitzgerald. Would you like to have her for a neighbor?
3. Write down what Mr. Fitzgerald was thinking when he saw the pans full of milk. Why did he decide not to interfere with his wife's help to her neighbors after that? How did the man in "A Meal for a Stranger" feel about his wife's hospitality to the stranger?
4. Do you know any stories about people who help their neighbors? Are they rewarded? How? Is it a reward to know you helped someone else? What do you think?
5. Make a picture book of one of the two stories.