

## Interdisciplinary Ideas

### LANGUAGE ARTS

1. The author describes the boy's feelings ("feet felt like heavy stones") when he wanted to apologize and couldn't. Make a list of figurative phrases that describe feelings.
2. Talk about Mr. Bellavista's name—Italian for "beautiful view." Do you know what your name means? Research or make up names that describe good character.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Research intergenerational programs linking students with retired or senior adults, e.g., mentoring, volunteering, or "phone pals." Choose one your class would like to promote and implement in your community.
2. Research the problems in Italy that led to high immigration to America in the 1900s.\*

### SCIENCE

1. Using gardening books, find out about growing Mr. Bellavista's plants: tomatoes, peppers, onions, flowers.\* Learn about seed germination time, growing conditions required, time to maturity, etc.
2. Plant a garden.\* Invite parents who love gardening to help. Try to find an elderly person who would like some help in his or her garden.

\* Visit [www.heartwoodethics.org](http://www.heartwoodethics.org) and choose Teaching Heartwood, Culture Keys, for more on the history, culture, and geography of this book.

## The Summer My Father Was Ten

Pat Brisson  
1998  
Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press

**JUSTICE**  
USA  
Realistic Fiction  
Reading Time: 10 minutes

### CONCEPTS

Justice  
Honesty  
Respect

### SUMMARY

**When a lost baseball ends up in Mr. Bellavista's garden and a tomato fight ensues, a young boy faces a dilemma involving honesty, justice, and reconciliation. This tender story portrays sadness and quiet joy as the boy strives to make amends. Beautifully detailed watercolor illustrations capture the moods as the story unfolds.**

### OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to define and discuss justice, honesty, and respect as they apply to this story. The student will recognize personal experiences that involve admitting errors and making restitution.

## After the Story

### The Summer My Father Was Ten

#### DISCUSSION

1. Were you surprised when the boys destroyed the garden? Why do you think they did it? Talk about Mr. Bellavista's reaction to the tomato fight. How do you think he felt? What do you think you would have said or done if you were Mr. Bellavista?
2. How did the boy feel after the tomato fight? How do you know he felt that way?
3. The boy didn't apologize right away. Why is it hard to apologize? How did the apology change things? What do apologies have to do with honesty? Was it enough to just apologize? What did the boy do to make things right?
4. Think of a time you admitted a wrong and then did something to make it right. Share.

#### ACTIVITIES

1. Locate Italy and a small coastal town in New England, USA, on the world map.
2. Role play situations where a wrong is made right. Include both words and actions.
3. In groups of three or four, discuss what it means to be honorable and just. Write a few sentences about being honorable and report back to class. Post writings for all to see.

#### HOME CONNECTION

1. At home, talk about times when family members admitted wrongs and made them right.
2. With your family, make a plan to help a neighbor. Celebrate "Help Your Neighbor Week" or "Make a Difference Week."

#### JOURNAL

1. Write two paragraphs, one titled "Reconciliation" and the other "Justice." Use a dictionary to find out about the two terms. How are they different? Give examples of each.
2. Write a personal narrative about a time you or someone you know did something wrong and then apologized and took action to make it right. You might want to paraphrase the title, e.g., "The Winter I Turned Nine."

#### VOCABULARY

**pulp**  
**trudged**  
**accent**

**mulch**  
**reconciliation**  
**honorable**