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 **Prestwick House**
Activity Pack
Literature Made Fun!



The Joy Luck Club
BY AMY TAN



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-reading**Characterization****Objective:** Analyzing parental relationships

The author uses the motif of mother-daughter relationships throughout the novel to demonstrate the complexities of parental relationships. The mothers in Tan's novel have undergone many hardships to try to raise their daughters in an environment better than the one they grew up in. Unfortunately, many times the daughters fail to realize the efforts that their mothers have gone through, and this causes tension between the generations.

Activity

Write a letter to your parent in which you discuss a time that you failed to appreciate the effort your mother or father went through to give you something special. Some topics that you might wish to consider could be:

- planning a birthday party
- a family vacation
- getting you out of trouble
- helping you with a difficult school project or homework assignment
- spending time with extended family
- participation in sporting events or school activities

These are just a few ideas for your consideration. You may choose to write about any incident you remember. In the letter, clearly state what your parent did for you, your reaction to their efforts, and how you feel about the event now. Be sure to follow appropriate letter writing format.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Feathers From a Thousand Li Away
The Joy Luck Club

Personal Planning

Objective: Relating the book to real life

In this chapter, June Woo remembers the conversation her mother had with her about the Japanese invasion of China. Her mother recalls many painful, tragic memories: the fear of being bombed, people suffering from diarrhea and other diseases, and the lack of food that made people resort to eating rats.

After an army officer warned her to leave Kweilin, she was forced to put her babies and belongings into a wheelbarrow. While trying to flee, the wheelbarrow broke and she was forced to strap her babies to her sides and carry her belongings. "By the time I arrived in Chunking I had lost everything except for three fancy silk dresses which I wore one on top of the other," she told June. (Pg. 26)

Activity

After such horrific events as the attacks of September 11th and our ongoing "war on terrorism," the United States could face biological or nuclear attacks in the near future. Natural disasters, such as the tsunami in Asia and hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast, and landslides in Guatemala, can occur without warning. Many of the victims of these tragedies faced hardships in evacuating affected areas and reuniting with family members. Because serious man-made threats and natural disasters could happen at any time, it is important to have good evacuation procedures and an emergency plan in effect.

Perhaps your family has already created a plan in case of an emergency. Many people have already purchased generators, bottled water, and antibiotics. After talking to your family, fill out the following worksheet and be sure that all family members know the plan.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Feathers From a Thousand Li Away The Moon Lady

Writing

Objective: Changing the setting

Ying-Ying St. Clair describes summer in terms of human senses as she opens her story of *The Moon Lady*. She describes the way the heat and humidity affect the way she feels physically and the ways in which the smells affect her emotionally.

Activity

An excerpt has been taken from St. Clair's story. She is writing about the summer, but you need choose a different season. Fill in the blanks below to describe the way your season affects Ying-Ying's physical and emotional feelings. You may wish to look at a copy of the original text on page 68 to get a deeper sense of her experiences.

Earlier in the (season)_____, the servants had covered all the windows with (noun)_____ to drive out the (temperature)_____. Every bed was covered with a (noun)_____, our only bedding during the months of constant (temperature)_____. And the (adj.)_____ bricks of the courtyard were crisscrossed with (noun)_____ paths. (season)_____ had come, but without its (adj.)_____ mornings and evenings. And so the (adj.)_____ (temperature)_____ still remained in the shadows behind the curtains, (-ing verb)_____ the (adj.)_____ smells of my chamber pot, (-ing verb)_____ into my pillow, (-ing verb)_____ the back of my neck and (-ing verb)_____ up my cheeks, so that I awoke that morning with a (adj.)_____ (noun)_____.

Next, write a couple of sentences that explain why the season is so important to the setting. In what ways does changing a simple thing, such as a season, affect the entire mood of the setting?

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Twenty-six Malignant Gates The Voice from the Wall

Drama

Objective: Performing a skit based on research findings

Lena St. Clair, in *The Voice from the Wall*, tries to explain the mysterious death of her grandfather and a beggar. She imagines that the beggar is called a traitor for his actions and is sentenced to die “the death of a thousand cuts.” (Pg. 102)

Activity

A traitor is a person who betrays another's trust or someone who attempts to overthrow the government or assist enemies during war. Countries have harsh penalties for those deemed as traitors. Depending on the laws of the government, traitors can be jailed, tortured, or executed. Methods of dealing with traitors have changed over time due to legislative decisions.

Step 1:

Break into small groups. By using the library, the Internet, or both, find out how the government deals with traitors in the country your group was assigned. You may want to split questions between group members to make research easier. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- What specific actions are deemed treacherous?
- How many treacherous actions must a person commit to be called a traitor?
- Is there a law that says witnesses must verify a traitor's activities? How many witnesses? What actions must be witnessed?
- What court processes must be taken before a punishment can be enacted?
- What types of punishments are given to convicted traitors?
- How severe are these punishments?
- Do punishments vary according with the severity of the treason?
- Who gives the punishment?
- In the country, what is the most popular act of treason?
- Can minors be tried for treason? What is the minimum age?

Step 2:

Now that you have gathered all of your information, meet with your group members and compare notes. Discuss what information you have discovered.

You are now going to present your findings to your classmates in the form of a skit. Since each group has chosen a different country, you will want to teach your classmates as much as possible. Your skit should be at least three minutes long. Be sure that each member has a part.

Name: _____

Date: _____

American Translation (introduction)**Research****Objective:** Learning about infertility

The mother in this story is worried that her daughter may not have “peach-blossom” luck if she does not rearrange the mirrors in her room. (Pg. 147) “Peach-blossom” luck is the mother’s code for fertility, since she discusses her grandchild’s birth next spring.

Activity

Infertility is a problem for both sexes throughout the world. Many factors can contribute to this problem. Scientists and researchers have come up with many new methods to help couples with fertility problems conceive.

Using the library, the Internet, or both, research the myths and facts about infertility. Make a list of at least three myths and three truths about infertility. Be sure to label each as myth or fact. For example, the mother in this story was afraid that the couple would not conceive a child because of the way the room was arranged. This would be characterized as a myth.

Name: _____

Date: _____

**American Translation
Best Quality**

Research

Objective: Exposing the myths about AIDS

While June is celebrating Chinese New Year with her relatives and friends, she has a fight with Waverly. Waverly and June have known each other most of their lives. Often feeling like they are competing with each other, though, they argue about many issues throughout the novel.

During the dinner, Waverly comments on June's new haircut. Read the excerpt from their conversation:

“You mean you still go to that guy on Howard Street?” Waverly asked, arching one eyebrow.
“Aren't you afraid?”
I could sense the danger, but I said it anyway: “What do you mean, afraid? He's always very good.”
“I mean he is gay,” Waverly said. “He could have AIDS. And he is cutting your hair, which is like cutting a living tissue. Maybe I'm being paranoid, being a mother, but you just can't be too safe these days...” (Pg. 204)

Activity

In their squabble, Waverly has made many false assumptions about people with AIDS. Locate some facts about AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and then write Waverly a short email exposing her misconceptions.