


The Growing Seed

Classroom Guide

"Yet" is the most powerful word in any language

CASEL Competency: Self-Management

Grade Level: Pre-K–2

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Category: Growing Up

Learning Objectives

- Understand that "I can't do it YET" is different from "I can't do it"
- Recognize that golden scuff marks (effort) are proof of bravery, not failure
- Learn that every expert was once a beginner who kept trying
- Practice adding "yet" to self-limiting statements

Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Yet • Growth • Effort • Scuff marks • Practice • Patient • Sprout • Struggle • Bloom • Breakthrough

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Small pots and seeds (or paper cups)
- Gold stickers or gold crayons
- Paper and drawing supplies
- Optional: watering can prop

Before Reading

Connection Question

Is there something you can't do yet that you really wish you could? What does that "yet" feel like?

Background Building

Discuss growth mindset: the word "yet" changes everything. "I can't ride a bike" feels like a wall. "I can't ride a bike YET" feels like a door that's about to open. In this story, the hero discovers that all those golden scuff marks on other people's shoes — those aren't mistakes. They're proof that someone tried, fell, got back up, and kept going.

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the hero fails at the exciting new thing and wants to quit** — The hero wants to give up! Have you ever felt that way? What happened next for you?
- **When the hero notices golden scuff marks on others' shoes** — Look! Everyone who's good at something has golden scuff marks — that means they fell down and got back up. What do you think those scuff marks mean?
- **When the hero adds "yet" to their sentence** — Did you hear that? "I can't do it YET." Just one tiny word changed everything. How does adding "yet" feel different?

Discussion Questions

1. The hero noticed golden scuff marks on everyone who was good at something. What do those scuff marks represent?

↳ Do you have any "golden scuff marks" from something you've been practicing?

2. How did adding the word "yet" change how the hero felt about failing?

↳ Can you change one of your own "I can't" sentences by adding "yet"?

3. The hero wanted to quit after falling. What made them try again?

↳ Who or what helps you keep going when something is hard?

4. At the end, the hero's effort turns into something beautiful — like a constellation of all their tries. What would YOUR effort constellation look like?

↳ What are the brightest stars in your constellation — the moments you tried hardest?

Facilitation Tips

Avoid praising only success — praise the EFFORT and the "yet." When a child says "I can't," gently add "yet" and watch their face change. Celebrate scuff marks: "Look at all those golden marks — that means you're really working hard!"

Emotional Payoff

The word "yet" transforms every limitation into a promise. Golden scuff marks become badges of honor — proof that someone tried, fell, and got back up. The hero's effort assembles into a constellation overhead, every failed attempt now a bright star in a pattern only visible when you step back and see the whole journey.

After Reading Activities

Plant a "Yet" Seed

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Small pots or cups, soil, seeds, markers

Each child plants a real seed and writes an "I can't _____ YET" goal on the pot. As they water the seed daily, they practice their skill. When the seed sprouts, they check in on their own growth too. The seed is a living reminder that growth is invisible before it's visible.

Golden Scuff Mark Awards

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Gold stickers, certificate paper

Children nominate themselves or classmates for "Golden Scuff Mark Awards" — given for trying something hard, not for getting it right. Each award says: "This golden scuff mark proves that [name] tried really hard at _____ and didn't give up." Display on a class wall.

My Effort Constellation

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Dark blue paper, gold star stickers, white crayons

Each child creates their own effort constellation on dark paper. Each star represents a time they tried something hard. Connect the stars to make a pattern. Label the brightest star with their biggest "yet" goal. Display as a class galaxy.

Writing Prompts

- Write three sentences that start with "I can't _____ YET." Now draw yourself doing those things in the future.
- Draw your golden scuff marks. What did you get them from? Why are you proud of them?
- If your effort was a garden, what would be growing in it? What's still a seed?

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "The Growing Seed," about discovering that the word "yet" is magic. "I can't do it" is a wall. "I can't do it YET" is a door about to open. Your child learned that golden scuff marks — the evidence of trying and failing and trying again — are badges of courage, not proof of failure. They planted a seed with an "I can't yet" goal and will be watching it grow alongside their own efforts.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- When your child says "I can't," gently add "yet" together and notice how the sentence changes
- Start a family "Yet Board" — everyone writes one thing they can't do yet and updates it as they practice
- Water the class seed together and talk about what growth looks like before it's visible

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires
- Beautiful Oops! by Barney Saltzberg
- After the Fall by Dan Santat
- Rosie Revere, Engineer by Andrea Beaty