



The Wishing Tree

Classroom Guide

Real wishes aren't granted — they're grown, one patient day at a time

CASEL Competency: Self-Management

Grade Level: Pre-K–2

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Category: Growing Up

Learning Objectives

- Understand that meaningful growth takes patience and daily tending
 - Learn the difference between wanting something instantly and nurturing it over time
 - Discover that the waiting IS part of the wish, not an obstacle to it
 - Practice patience through hands-on planting and tending activities
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Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Wish • Patience • Tend • Sprout • Root • Nurture • Growth • Invisible • Trust • Bloom

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Small pots, soil, and fast-growing seeds
- Watering can
- Paper and crayons
- Calendar or growth chart
- Optional: magnifying glass

Before Reading

Connection Question

If you could plant a wish like a seed, what would you wish for? What do you think it would need to grow?

Background Building

In fairy tales, wishes come true instantly — poof! But in this story, the hero discovers a wishing tree that works differently. You plant your wish like a seed. Then you TEND it — water it, talk to it, be patient. The hardest part? Waiting. Because for a long time, nothing seems to happen. But underground, invisible roots are growing. And one day — a sprout. The wish wasn't granted. It was GROWN.

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the hero plants the wish-seed and checks back the next day to find nothing —** Nothing happened! But wait — is that really true? What might be happening underground where we can't see?
- **When the hero gets frustrated and almost gives up on tending the seed —** It's so hard to be patient when you can't see progress! What keeps you going when something takes a long time?
- **When the first tiny sprout appears —** THERE IT IS! After all that waiting, a sprout! How does the hero feel? How does patience feel when it finally pays off?

Discussion Questions

1. The hero had to water and tend the wish every day, even when nothing seemed to be happening. Why is invisible growth the hardest kind?

↳ Can you think of something that grows invisibly? (reading skills, friendships, muscles)

2. The hero almost gave up right before the sprout appeared. Why do people often quit just before the good part?

↳ What helps you keep going when you can't see results yet?

3. The story says wishes aren't "granted" — they're "grown." What's the difference?

↳ Which kind of wish do you think means more — one that appears by magic or one you grew yourself?

4. What was the hero really growing — just a plant, or something inside themselves too?

↳ What grows inside YOU when you practice patience?

Facilitation Tips

This is a beautiful lesson to pair with an actual planting activity that extends over weeks. The physical experience of waiting for a seed to sprout is more powerful than any discussion. Check on the seeds daily as a class ritual.

Emotional Payoff

The instant-gratification wish gives way to something richer: the pride of having GROWN something through patience and daily care. The waiting wasn't an obstacle to the wish — it WAS the wish. The hero grows patience alongside the plant, and both bloom at the same time.

After Reading Activities

Plant a Wish Seed

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Small pots, soil, fast-growing seeds (bean, sunflower), markers

Each child plants a real seed in a labeled pot. Write an "I wish I could ____" card and attach it. Tend daily as a class ritual. When the seed sprouts, check in on the wish — has the child been "growing" it too? The plant is a living patience lesson.

Invisible Growth Gallery

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Paper folded in half, crayons

Fold paper in half. On top: "What I see" (the surface). On bottom: "What's growing underneath" (the invisible roots, effort, practice). Draw things that grow invisibly: reading skills, friendships, confidence, muscle memory. Share: growth is happening even when you can't see it.

Patience Timeline

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Long strip of paper, markers, stickers

Draw a timeline of something that took a long time: learning to ride a bike, making a friend, reading a whole book. Mark the hard parts (X marks), the "almost quit" moments, and the breakthrough star. See: the timeline SHOWS the growth the moment couldn't.

Writing Prompts

- If you planted a wish, what would you grow? Draw the seed, the waiting, and the bloom.
- Write a letter to your future self about something you're growing right now that nobody can see yet.
- Draw what patience looks like. Is it quiet? Slow? Strong? What color is it?

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "The Wishing Tree," about discovering that real wishes aren't granted — they're grown, one patient day at a time. Your child planted a real seed with a wish attached and will be tending it daily. Please ask them about their wish and their seed — both are growing, even when you can't see it yet.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Ask about the class wish-seed: "How is your plant doing? How is your wish doing?"
- Start a family patience project — grow herbs on the windowsill and tend them together
- When your child is frustrated by slow progress, say: "The roots are growing underground. We just can't see them yet."

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle
- The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss
- Waiting by Kevin Henkes
- A Seed Is Sleepy by Dianna Hutts Aston