

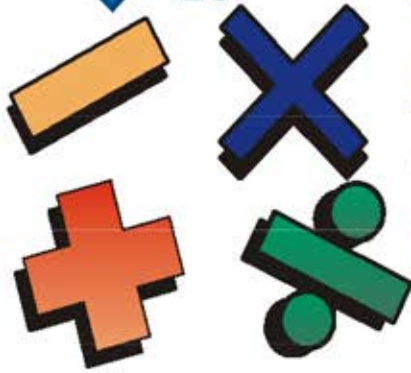


A Chair for My Mother

(GPN #20/PBS #205)

Author: Vera B. Williams

Publisher: Greenwillow



Program Description: Members of a family work together to rebuild their lives after a tragic fire. They share the goal of saving money for a special chair.

Math Concepts:

- estimation
- money values
- counting
- counting by 5's and 10's
- addition, subtraction
- fractions: one-half
- classification
- patterns

• **Comparing money values.** Collect newspaper ads for furniture and catalogs from furniture stores or other businesses that sell chairs — for students to use in “shopping” for a chair. They will need to decide on the type of chair they wish to buy and comparison-shop the ads, looking for the best values. They might organize their information on a large chart on which they have glued cutouts of different kinds of chairs and placed them in categories (rocking chairs, recliners, etc.), and labeled the prices.

• **Working with one-half.** When the little girl in the story helps out at the Blue Tile Diner, she puts half of her pay in the money jar. Using a jar and small manipulatives, such as beans, unifix cubes, tiles, etc., have students problem-solve a strategy for putting half of their objects in the jar. After they have figured out some possible strategies with manipulatives, have them use pennies and then coins of larger value. Have enough coins available so that if they are paid a dime and two pennies, for example, they have more than one possible way of determining half the amount.

• **Estimating, counting, and regrouping.** In a whole group activity, use a gallon glass jar and manipulatives of different sizes and shapes (e.g., unifix cubes, dice, checkers, crayons, marshmallows, etc.) for estimation. After students have estimated how many of their chosen objects will fill the jar, determine the actual number according to concepts on which you are focusing, such as counting by 1's, 2's, 5's, 10's. Allow students to suggest different ways of counting. This activity may be extended further to include regrouping and calculating to determine if their estimate was greater than, less than, or the same as the actual amount. Later, students may continue this activity in small groups with an assortment of baby food jars filled with objects such as beans, pasta, marbles, beads, etc.

• **Estimating and counting money.** Start a penny collecting jar for the classroom. A mayonnaise or peanut butter jar might be a good way to begin. Anyone who wishes may add to the jar. With students, focus on pennies they earn or find. Designate a day of the week for estimating and accounting. Post a chart of names on which each child can record her/his estimate each week. A team of accountants (2-3 children) takes the responsibility for making a weekly report of the penny jar finances. Have students brainstorm how they would like to spend the money (e.g., books for the classroom or school library, classroom materials, donation to a charity, etc.) when the jar is full. The pennies may periodically be used to determine the penny equivalents of other coins.

• **Finding and creating patterns.** A Chair for My Mother author/illustrator Vera B. Williams created patterns in the borders of the pages of the book. Discuss the borders with students, asking them to describe the patterns and to speculate as to why the illustrator chose those particular designs for the pages. Invite them to add patterned borders to the charts generated for other activities recommended above and to the estimation recording sheet.

Do-At-Home Activity

- **Thinking about saving money.** Encourage families to discuss the concept of saving money from the perspective of the family. Topics they might think about include:
- What sorts of things do families save money for?
 - Which of these things usually require saving for a long period of time (e.g., college education, house, car, etc.)? What kinds of items require less time in order to purchase (e.g., bicycle, clothing, furniture, etc.)? What kinds of things require a fairly short amount of money-saving time (e.g., small toy, a CD, a video, etc.)? Why do these differences in time exist?
 - What are some different ways in which people save money? (e.g., piggy bank, savings account, bonds, tucked away in a sock, etc.)
 - What are some things that families do in order to save money (e.g., coupons, buy items on sale, reuse items, etc.)