

Tofu Ling and the Carp Banner Story Discussion Questions & Answers

Discussing the Story:

The discussion ideas are meant to encourage the child/student to use higher order thinking skills to compare, contrast, explain, describe, identify, summarize, discuss, relate how, analyze, draw conclusions, evaluate, and interpret. They are not designed to have a child respond with only one answer or response. It is important to stimulate as much creativity with responses as possible. The depth and breadth to which a child will respond will depend on their individual abilities and experiences. It is the author's intent to teach this skill not only to the child, but also the teacher or parent. Long gone is the idea that there is only one response possible. As long as the child can justify their response with thoughtful or logical reasoning, the answer should be accepted. We need to teach our children how to think and not just what to think. Foundations need to be established and nurtured. Please note: Possible discussion responses are provided in parentheses after the discussion idea. If needed, use them as springboards to guide the discussion; however, do not use them as the only possible response.

Discussion Leads:

Describe Tofu's opinion of Tango No Sekku, Boys' Festival, and TaeKwonDo Belt Testing and Tournament. (He was excited about the festival and TaeKwonDo Belt Testing and Tournament. Tofu felt that it was his opportunity to show that he was worthy of flying his carp banner high and earn his green belt. He vowed to practice his TaeKwonDo daily and work very hard.)

Discuss where Tofu thought his virtues were at the beginning of the story and where he discovered his virtues were at the end of the story. (In the beginning, Tofu mistakenly believed that his virtues were his muscles. He thought that if his muscles were stronger through practicing TaeKwonDo that his virtues would be stronger. However, at the end of the story he realized that his virtues were his ability to choose the right thing to do to help someone else with their needs over his own personal wants. He told his mama that his virtues and Grandfather share the same place – in his heart.)

Explain what the difference between wants and needs. (Wants are something that you would like to have or do, but are not essential. Needs are something that you must do or have to sustain life or health and they are essential.) Discuss further examples of wants and needs in the child's life.

Identify in the story when Tofu made the decision to put his Grandfather's needs above his own wants. (Tofu understood that his Grandfather needed him after he hurt his ankle and could not get up to get his food and other needs.)

Name Grandfather's nickname when he was younger. (Swift Tae, meaning Swift Hand)

Discuss why Tofu was surprised to learn that Grandfather was an eighth degree black belt. (Tofu had thought of his Grandfather as old and weak and didn't understand what it was to be a black belt. He thought that the belt defines the person and not that the person defines the belt.)

Explain how Tofu felt about working with his Grandfather. (Tofu enjoyed working with his Grandfather and learned what it was to be a black belt. He worked hard with his Grandfather trying to learn from him. Tofu also respected his Grandfather.)

Relate how you would feel about being tested for a belt level and a tournament. (This would be an excellent opportunity to learn how your student/child thinks about the pressures of exams and moments of proving themselves.)

Grandfather kept one special move for Tofu to use during the tournament. Identify the move and why you think he did this. (Grandfather taught Tofu to slide his leg around on the floor and pick up his cane when he would drop it. Grandfather knew that it would be a good move to use after Tofu's opponents had seen what they thought were all of his moves. When an opponent watches you spar they are able to learn how you react to their actions. Grandfather wanted Tofu to have an element of surprise with the new move.)

When the belts were being awarded and Tofu thought that the master decided not to award Tofu his green belt, explain why Tofu respected the master decision not to award him the lower green belt. (Tofu stood up even straighter when he realized that he did not earn his green belt, because he had learned that his belt ranking was not as important as learning the skill. He thought that the master did not feel that he was ready for his green belt. However, he was surprised when the master felt that he had earned a higher green belt due to his personal sacrifice and hard work with his grandfather and advanced skill level.)

Analyze how Tofu had grown in his appreciation and understanding of his Grandfather. (In the beginning of the story, he clearly loved and cared for his grandfather because he sacrificed his TaeKwonDo practice and possible earning of his green belt to help him. He thought of his Grandfather as frail and did not see him as who he truly is. When Tofu started to learn from his Grandfather, he began to learn a lot about his Grandfather and himself. Two different generations learned from one another and what they had to offer each other. It is a wonderful explanation and example of what Children's Day is all about.)

Identify the meaning of the symbolisms used throughout the story. (Use the Tofu Ling and the Carp Banner Story Illustrations Questions and Answers to identify them.)