Teacher Resource Kit

My Paryushana: Festival Of Forgiveness

Written by Priya Kumari and Urvashi Dubey
Illustrated by Urvashi Dubey

My Paryushana introduces children to the Jain festival of forgiveness, exploring how reflection, prayer, and kindness help hearts grow lighter each year.
Every year, we pause to look within. We think about how we've spoken, acted, or felt, and gently ask, "Did I hurt someone, even by mistake?"

Picture Book
LCCN: 2026936256
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Recommended Grades: K–3
Reading Experience: Read-aloud, shared reading, and guided reading
Lexile® Measure: 940L*

The quantitative Lexile measure reflects the book's culturally specific vocabulary, including South Asian names and Jain terms. Context, illustrations, and supporting definitions make these concepts accessible to younger readers.

Key Themes: Paryushana celebration, Mahavira's story, Jain traditions, Kindness, forgiveness, cultural fulfilment.



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Priya Kumari is a multi award-winning children's author whose books introduce young readers to Asian history, faith, and traditions. Her acclaimed title *Leaf Talks Peace: Buddha's Message of Harmony* is the first picture book to feature a foreword by His *Holiness the Dalai Lama*. Raised in the Himalayan foothills, Priya draws from her early connection to nature and spirituality to craft stories that inspire empathy and cultural awareness. She lives in New Jersey with her husband and their two sons.

Co-Author and Illustrator:
Urvashi Dubey is an award-winning illustrator known for her imaginative and expressive picture books. With more than twenty titles to her credit, she has received multiple honors in India for her illustration and design work. Inspired by her family's Jain traditions, she felt a deep connection to *My Paryushana* and joined as co-author, contributing both words and art to portray a festival close to her heart. She lives in Mumbai, India, with her husband. Find more of her work at www.urvashidubey.com.

Publisher:
Eternal Tree Books is an award-winning independent publishing house, based in the United States, that produces mainly children's books. Their most popular book, Leaf Talks Peace: Buddha's Message of Harmony, is the first picture book to be endorsed by The Dalai Lama.

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01. A Journey of Transformation

Learning Objectives:

- Students will create a timeline to sequence the major events in Mahavira's life
- Students will identify how a character's choices and experiences shape who they become.
- Students will connect the concept of inner transformation to their own lives.

Curriculum Links:

- **NY ELA 3R2** (Reading, Literary/Informational Text): *Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.* (Grade 4 alternate: 4R2 — determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize.)
- **NY ELA 3R3 (RL):** *In literary texts, describe character traits, motivations, or feelings, drawing on specific details from the text.*
- **NY ELA 3W3:** *Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events, using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.*
- **NYS K–8 Social Studies Framework, Grade 3: Communities around the World — Key Idea 3.4a:** *People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, and historical narratives to transmit cultural histories from one generation to the next.*

Materials

- A copy of My Paryushana picture book for read-aloud
- "Mahavira's Journey" sequencing strip/timeline template (For example, this one).
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Chart paper

Instructions:

1. Read *My Paryushana* aloud, pausing after the sections on the palace, the years of meditation, and the moment Mahavira becomes known as "the Great Hero."
2. As a class, brainstorm on chart paper: "What changed about Mahavira between the beginning and end of the story?" Teachers may choose to use supplementary materials to share additional details about Mahavira's journey, such as this animated story.
3. Distribute the sequencing strips/timelines. In pairs, students draw and label 4-6 key events in order (leaving the palace → years of quiet reflection → gaining infinite knowledge → becoming Mahavira).
4. Under each picture, students write one sentence describing what Mahavira learned or how he grew.
5. Each pair can share their sequencing strips or timelines with the class.

Extensions:

Writing extension: Students write a short narrative journal entry "as Mahavira" on the day he left the palace, in first-person perspective, describing his feelings.

Art extension: Create a class mural timeline of Mahavira's journey to display in the hallway.

Discussion extension: Compare Mahavira's path to another figure students know (real or fictional) who changed through a long period of quiet effort, and discuss why the word "hero" doesn't always mean fighting or winning.

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02. The Five Great Vows in Everyday Life

Learning Objectives:

- Students will identify and explain the five great vows of Jainism (ahimsa, satya, asteya, aparigraha, brahmacharya) in student-friendly language.
- Students will connect each vow to an everyday classroom or home behavior.
- Students will practice respectful discussion of another culture's values without judgment.

Curriculum Links:

- **NY ELA 3R4:** *Determine the meanings of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.*
- **NY ELA 3SL1:** *Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.*
- **NYS K–8 Social Studies Framework, Grade 3: Communities around the World — Key Idea 3.8a:** *Across global communities, governments and citizens alike have a responsibility to protect human rights and to treat others fairly.*
- **NYS SEL Benchmarks (K–3 benchmark band), Goal 3:** *Young people demonstrate intentional decision-making skills and behaviors that consider social, emotional, and physical safety and well-being in personal, school, and community contexts.*

Materials:

- A copy of *My Paryushana* picture book for read aloud
- Five Vows cards (one vow + student-friendly definition per card, printed large)
- Sorting mat with headers: "Kind to Others," "Honest," "Doesn't Take What Isn't Mine," "Doesn't Take More Than I Need," "Respectful of Myself"
- Sticky notes

Scenario slips (short everyday scenarios, e.g., "You find a pencil on the floor that isn't yours")

Instructions:

1. Introduce the five vows one at a time, translating each into a plain-language idea (e.g., *A*himsa= Be kind to all living beings not the current written line as book doesnt have that") as shown in *My Paryushana.*
2. In small groups, students match each vow card to its student-friendly description on the sorting mat.
3. Distribute scenario slips. Groups read a scenario and decide which vow it connects to, then write on a sticky note *what a person guided by that vow would do*.
4. Groups post their sticky notes under the correct vow on a shared class chart.
5. Whole-class discussion: Why might a community choose to live by shared vows like these? Are there similar values in other communities we know about?

Extensions:

Cross-curricular extension: Compare the five vows to classroom rules or a school code of conduct. What parts are similar? What parts are different?
Writing extension: Students choose one vow and write a short "I will..." pledge connecting it to their own life.
Research extension: Briefly research one other world belief system's guiding principles and compare them to the five vows.

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03. The Power of Forgiveness

Learning Objectives:

- Students will explain the meaning and purpose of Micchami Dukkadam.
- Students will practice giving and accepting sincere apologies.
- Students will reflect on a time they hurt someone (intentionally or not) and consider repair.

Curriculum Links:

- **NY ELA 3W3:** *Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events, using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences (applied here to personal reflective writing).*
- **NY ELA 3SL1:** *Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions... building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.*
- **NYS SEL Benchmarks (K–3 benchmark band), Goal 2:** *Young people use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish, navigate, and maintain mutually supportive relationships with individuals and groups that nurture a strong sense of belonging.*
- **NYS SEL Benchmarks (K–3 benchmark band), Goal 3:** *Young people demonstrate intentional decision-making skills and behaviors that consider social, emotional, and physical safety and well-being in personal, school, and community contexts.*

Materials:

- Chart with the phrase "*Micchami Dukkadam*" and its meaning
- Blank "Forgiveness Note" template (simple card with sentence starters)
- Class "Kindness Jar" or box

Instructions:

1. Introduce the phrase *Micchami Dukkadam* and its meaning, showing the illustration on page 1 of My Paryushana: "if I have hurt you in any way, please forgive me." Discuss why a whole festival might set aside a day just for this.
2. Facilitate a class discussion. Some prompting questions might include: Why is it hard to say sorry sometimes? Why might it be freeing to both give and receive forgiveness?
3. Individually, students complete a Forgiveness Note using sentence starters such as: "One time I may have hurt someone without meaning to was..." and "Next time, I will..."
4. Notes stay private (not shared aloud) unless a student volunteers. Note that this is a reflection activity, not a public confession.
5. Close with a class discussion on how saying "please forgive me" and choosing to forgive both take courage. Make text-to-text connections by thinking of other stories in which the main character had to either apologize or forgive someone else.

Extension:

- Art extension: Design a class "Forgiveness Tree" where students add a leaf with a reflection, if they wish. This could be extended beyond the classroom to a school-wide initiative.
- Literacy extension: Read a short additional story or poem about forgiveness and compare its message to *Micchami Dukkadam*.
- Home connection: Send home a family conversation starter card inviting students to talk with a family member about a time forgiveness helped a relationship.



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04. Mindful Eating and Food Choices

Learning Objective:

- Students will describe the practice of fasting during Paryushana and the reasoning behind simple, home-cooked meals.
- Students will sort foods by category (root vegetables, leafy vegetables, other) and explain why some Jain practitioners avoid certain foods during this time.
- Students will connect the practice to the broader idea of intentional, mindful choices.

Curriculum Links:

- **NY ELA 3R1:** *Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.*
- **NYS P-12 Science Learning Standards, 4-LS1-1:** *Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction*
- **NYS Learning Standards for Health Education, Standard 1 — Personal Health and Fitness:** *Students will have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity, and maintain personal health.*
- **NYS K–8 Social Studies Framework, Grade 3: Communities around the World — Key Idea 3.9a:** *World communities use human and natural resources in different ways.*

Materials Needed:

- Picture cards of vegetables (roots: carrot, potato, onion, garlic, beet; leafy: spinach, lettuce, cabbage; • other: rice, lentils, squash, tomato)
- Sorting mat with three columns: "Root Vegetables," "Leafy Vegetables," "Other Foods"
- KWL chart (What we Know / Wonder / Learned)

Instructions:

1. Ask students what they already know about fasting or eating traditions in any culture (start a KWL chart).
2. Read/re-read the section of the book describing simple, home-cooked meals during Paryushana and the avoidance of root and leafy vegetables.
3. In small groups, students sort the picture cards into the three columns.
4. Discuss as a class: Why might someone avoid root vegetables specifically (connect to the idea of ahimsa -- minimizing harm to living things, since pulling up a root can disturb more organisms in the soil)? Why might eating simply, at home, be a form of mindfulness?
5. Complete the "Learned" column of the KWL chart together.

Extensions:

Science extension: Draw and label a diagram of a plant, identifying root, stem, and leaf, and discuss the function of each part.
Math extension: Create a simple bar graph of how many foods the class sorted into each category.
Reflection extension: Students write one sentence about a time they made a food choice on purpose for a reason (health, kindness, tradition, etc.).

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05. Storytellers of the Temple

Learning Objective:

- Students will describe the tradition of *Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Vanchan*, including oral storytelling by monks and nuns and the creation of silver figures.
- Students will practice oral storytelling and retelling skills.
- Students will create a simple visual representation connected to a cultural tradition, with cultural sensitivity and respect.

Curriculum Links:

- **NY ELA 3SL4:** *Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.*
- **NY ELA 3R2:** *Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.*
- **NYS Learning Standards for the Arts — Visual Arts, "Creating" anchor standard (Grade 3 benchmarks):** *students generate and conceptualize artistic ideas based on knowledge of a tradition.*
- **NYS K–8 Social Studies Framework, Grade 3: Communities around the World — Key Idea 3.4a:** *People in world communities use legends, folktales, oral histories, biographies, and historical narratives to transmit cultural histories from one generation to the next.*

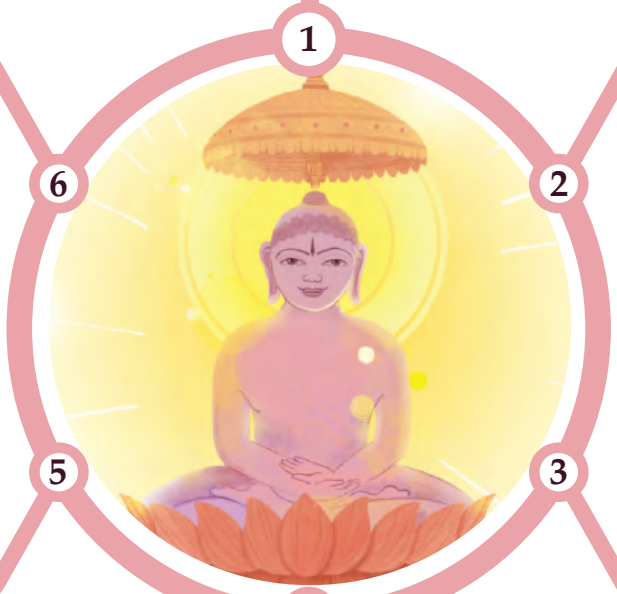
Materials:

- Retelling of Mahavira's birth story (from the picture book or a simplified class version)
- Storytelling "talking piece" (any small object passed between speakers)
- Aluminum foil, clay, or silver-colored craft paper for simple figure-making
- Small trays or bases for figures

Instructions:

1. Explain that on this special day, monks and nuns tell stories of Mahavira's birth in the temple, and community members create silver figures to mark the occasion.
2. Reread or retell the relevant section of My Paryushana, modeling clear, expressive storytelling.
3. Students are invited to orally retell a traditional oral story they may know from their own culture.
4. Students can create a model (using foil, clay, or craft paper) representing a moment from the oral story (either from the read aloud or their own). *NOTE: Students should be reminded that they are not creating a statue which has religious and cultural significance, but a model or artefact from the story.*
5. Display the models alongside a one-sentence student caption describing the story moment it represents.

Mahavira's Life Timeline



1. Queen Trishala had special dreams.
2. Baby Vardhamana was born.
3. Vardhamana grew up kind and brave.
4. He left his palace home.
5. He meditated for many years.
6. He became Mahavira.

The Five Great Vows of Jainism

Be Kind To All Living Beings

Ahimsa

Always Tell The Truth

Satya

Never Take What Isn't Yours

Asteya

Share What You Can

Aparigraha

Practice Self-Control

Brahmacharya



SAY SORRY • FORGIVE • BEGIN AGAIN

A Forgiveness Note

To...

I Am Sorry For...

A Forgiveness Note

To...

I am sorry for...

A Forgiveness Note

To...

I Am Sorry For...

A Forgiveness Note

To...

I Am Sorry For...

My Forgiveness Reflection

Grade K-1 | Draw Or Write

This page is private. You do not have to share it unless you want to.

Something I Wish I Had Done Differently:

Draw a picture or write a few words.

Next Time I Can...

One Way I Can Make Things Better...

Micchami Dukkadam

If I hurt you in any way, please forgive me.

My Forgiveness Reflection

Grade 2-3

This page is private. You do not have to share it unless you want to.

One Time I May Have Hurt Someone Without Meaning To Was...

I think they may have felt...

Next time, I will...

One way I can make things better is...

Micchami Dukkadam

If I hurt you in any way, please forgive me.

Food Sorting Mat

Cut out the picture cards and place each food in the correct group

Root Vegetables

Leafy Vegetables

Other Foods

Food Sorting Mat

Cut out the picture cards and place each food in the correct group



Lettuce



Cabbage



Carrot



Potato



Lentils



Onion



Rice



Tomato



Garlic



Squash



Beetroot



Spinach

KWL Chart

Before reading, complete K and W. After the lesson, return to L

K - What We Know? | What Do We Already Know?

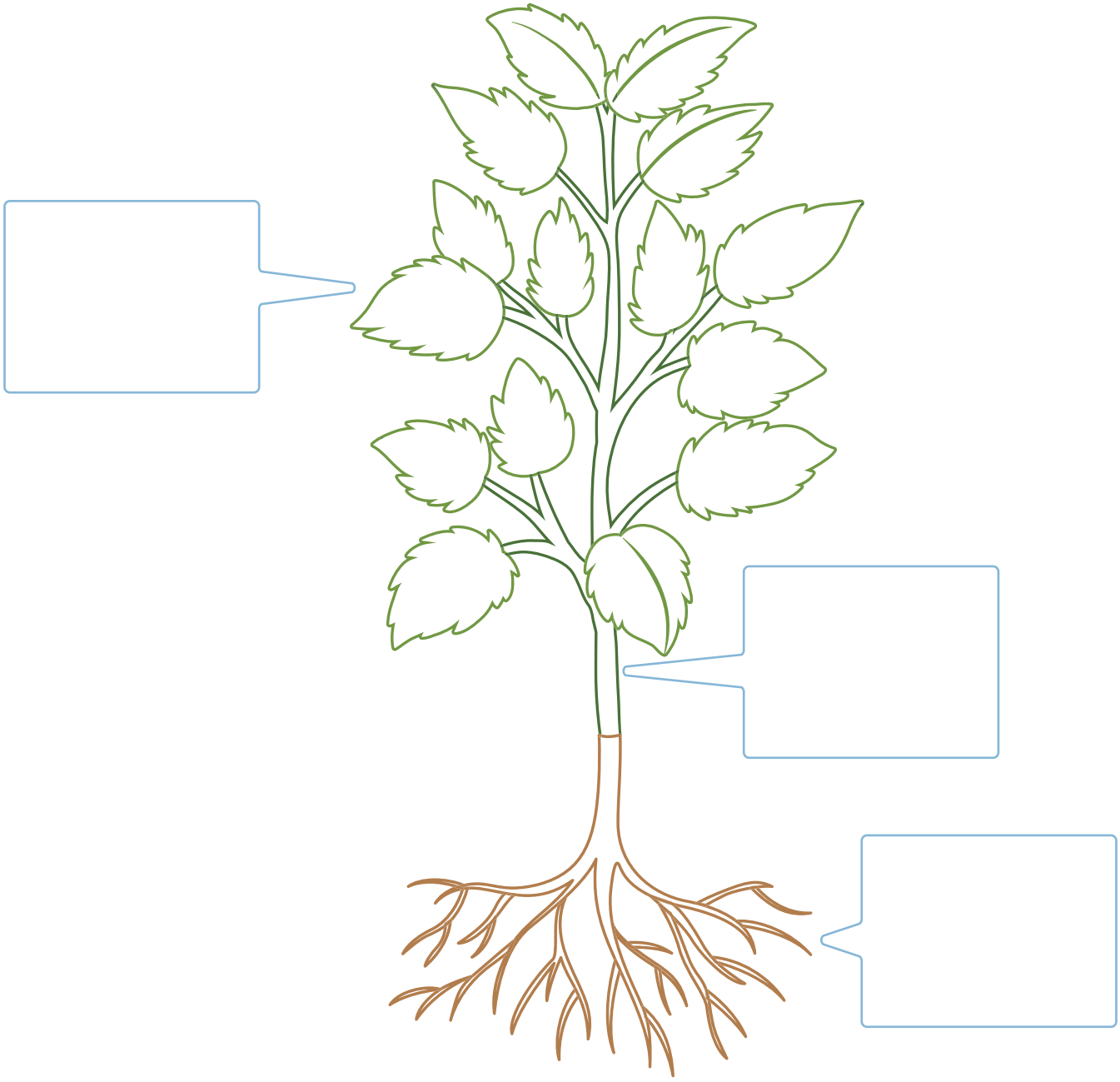
W - What We Wonder | What Questions Do We Have?

L - What We Learned | What Did We Learn?

Parts Of A Plant

Grade K-1 | Science Extension

Name: _____ Date: _____



Directions: Cut out words. Glue each word next to the correct plant part. Then color the plant.

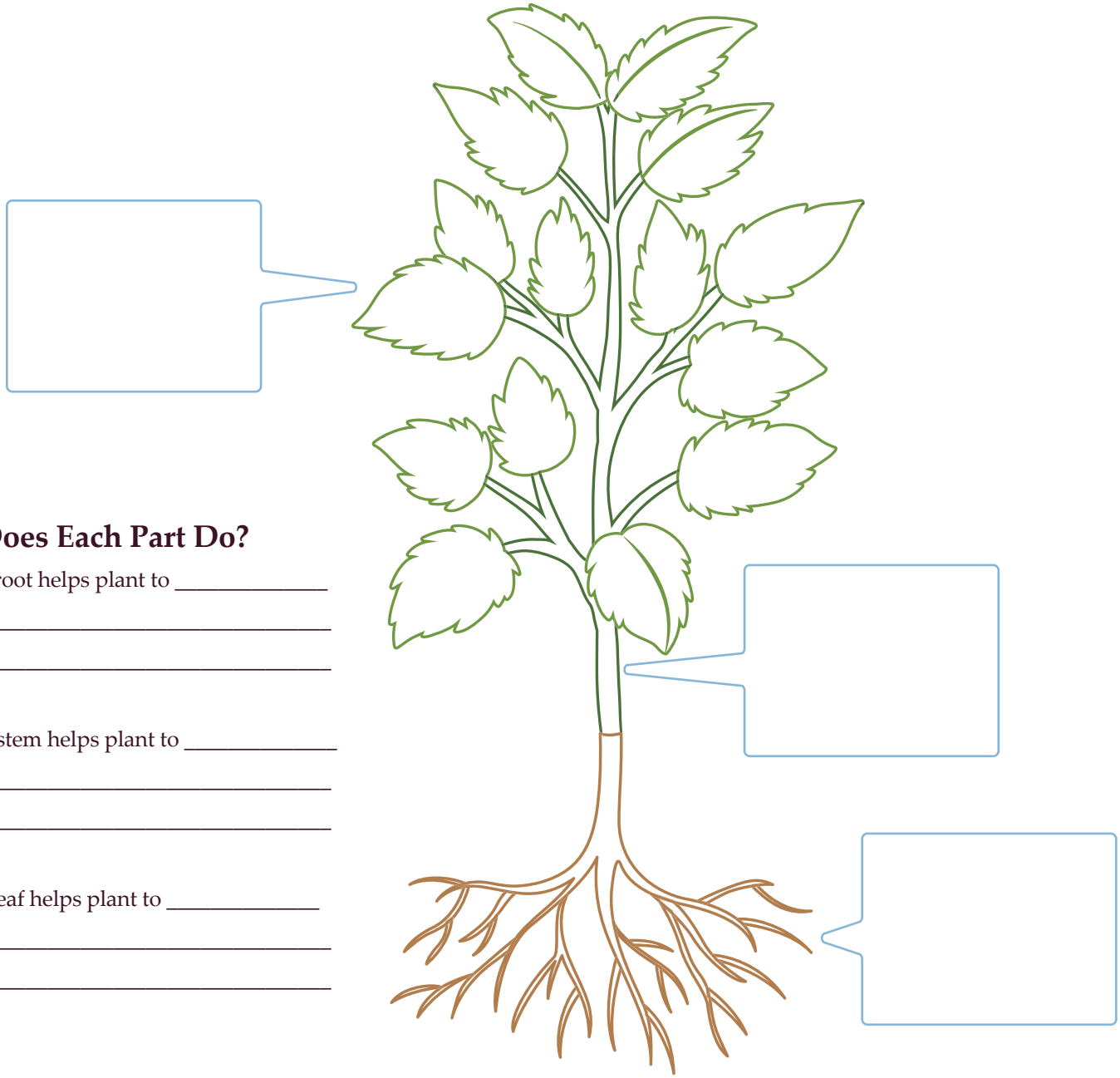
Stem	Root	Leaf

Parts Of A Plant

Grade 2-3 | Science Extension

Name: _____ Date: _____

Label the root. stem, and leaf. Then explain what each part does.



What Does Each Part Do?

Root: The root helps plant to _____

_____

_____

Stem: The stem helps plant to _____

_____

_____

Leaf: The leaf helps plant to _____

_____

_____

Connect To Our Food Sorting Activity

Name one food we sorted that comes from a root: _____

Name one food we sorted that comes from a leaf: _____

How does knowing the plant part help us understand the food we eat? _____

_____

Parts Of A Plant | Teacher Answer Key

Plant Labels

Root: The part that grows below the soil.

Stem: The part that supports the plant and conects roots.

Leaf: The flat green part that helps plant make food.

Suggested Child-friendly Functions

- Root: takes in water from the soil and helps hold the plant in place.
- Stem: holds the plant up and carries water to the leaves.
- Leaf: uses sunlight to help the plant make food.

Food Connection Examples

- Root examples from the lesson sorting set: carrot and beet.
- Leaf examples from the lesson sorting set: spinach, lettuce, and cabbage.
- Other foods in the sorting set: rice, lentils, squash, and tomato.



Teacher note: In everyday food-grouping activities, potato, onion, and garlic are sometimes placed with "root vegetables," but botanically they are modified underground stems or bulbs rather than true roots. If desired, keep the student activity simple and mention this distinction only as an enrichment fact.