



Grade IX

Lesson 1. The Lost Child

- Mulk Raj Anand

Supplementary Reader

Soul of the Chapter

This story highlights a child's love for his parents. It is the festival of spring. Everyone is going to a fair. The child is very happy and excited because he is also going to the fair with his parents. On the way to the fair, the child is fascinated by the natural beauty. He enjoys every moment. In the fair, the child is attracted towards his favourite sweets. He wants to have one but he does not express his desire. He knows that his parents will not allow him to take any. Then, he is attracted by a toy but again he does not ask for that because he knows that his parents perhaps cannot afford to buy the toy.

The child moves on with his parents enjoying the fair. He wants to take one of the garlands from a shop and a balloon from the balloon-seller but he does not ask his parents to buy them. He says nothing. He sees a snake-charmer. He likes the music and wants to stay there for some time. His parents do not approve of such music. So he moves on. He sees a merry-go-round. People are enjoying the ride. He also wants to enjoy the ride. For the first time, the child expresses his desire. He says, "I want to go on the roundabout, please father, mother". But there is no reply. He searches for his parents here and there. He is lost. He starts crying. He runs towards a shrine. There is a big crowd. He goes a little ahead between people's legs. He is pushed back. A kind-hearted man hears him crying. He stops and lifts the child in his arms. He tries to soothe him. But the child is crying continuously for his parents. The man takes him to the roundabout and asks if he wants a ride. The man takes him to the sweetmeat-seller, the balloon-seller and the snake-charmer. He offers him everything but the child refuses everything. These things have lost their charm. Now the child wants only his parents.



NCERT Questions

Think about it

1. What are the things the child sees on his way to the fair? Why is he lagging behind?

Toys, sweets, garlands and balloons are the things the child sees on his way to the fair. He is attracted to his favourite things displayed in the shops. He stops at every shop to have a closer look at them. So, he is always lagging behind.

2. In the fair, he wants many things. What are they? Why does he move on without waiting for an answer?

The child wants to have a toy, sweets, a garland of Gulmohar and a colourful balloon. He knows that his parents would not buy these things for him. So, he does not even ask for them and moves on without waiting for an answer.

3. When does he realise that he has lost his way? How has his anxiety and insecurity been described?

The child wants to have a ride on a roundabout. He asks his parents for permission. When there is no response, he realises that he has lost his way. He cannot see his parents. He starts crying bitterly. He runs here and there in search of his parents.

4. Why does the lost child lose interest in the things that he had wanted earlier?

The child is separated from his parents. He has lost his way in the fair. Nothing attracts him now. He wants his parents before anything else. So he has lost interest in the things that he had wanted earlier.

5. What do you think happens in the end? Does the child find his parents?

When the child was running here and there in search of his parents, a kind-hearted person rescued him. He must have tried to locate his parents. The man must have found them. The parents of the lost child also must have tried to locate the child. I think the child finds his parents.

Next Generation School

Short Answer Questions**1. What was his father's reaction to his demands?**

The child was very happy at the fair. He wanted to have a toy. His father perhaps could not afford it. He looked at him rudely and with anger. The child said nothing and kept on moving.

2. What kind of a lady was his mother?

His mother was a very kind lady. Her attitude was very tender. Whenever the child wanted to buy something, she tried to divert his attention to something else. She did not scold him.

3. Describe the path of the fair.

There was a walking distance from the village to the fair. The path went through the lanes and then there was narrow, winding footpath through the mustard fields.

4. Why was the child forbidden to hear the music?

The child was fascinated by flute music of the snake-charmer. He wanted to stop there and enjoy the music. His parents did not allow him to hear that. They considered the flute music cheap and coarse. So he was forbidden to hear that.

5. How did the child react in front of the juggler?

The juggler was playing the flute to a snake. The child was attracted by the music and went towards him. He knew that his parents would not like his standing there. So he moved on.

6. Where did the child's parents stop and why?

While going to the fair, the child's parents stopped under the shade of a grove to rest for a while. Moreover, the scene there was quite captivating.

7. What did the child do in the grove?

When the child entered the grove, he started collecting the raining petals in his hands. He heard the cooing of doves and ran towards his parents telling about the presence of the dove.

8. Why would his parents have refused to buy a garland of Gulmohar?

His parents would have refused to buy a garland of Gulmohar because they thought it to be cheap. So the child did not ask for it without waiting for their reply.

9. Why did the parents refuse for the flute's music?

The parents refused the flute's music to the child because they considered it coarse music. The child suppressed his feelings and kept on moving.

10. What did the child meet a kind-hearted person?

The child met the kind-hearted person near the shrine. The man saw the child in the crowd. He might have been trampled underfoot. His shrieks invited the attention of the kind man who lifted him up.

11. According to you, why was the child happy when he was on the way to fair? Was it the attraction of the fair or the natural beauty that he enjoyed on the way?

The child was very happy when he was going to the fair with his parents. In my opinion, it was the natural beauty that he enjoyed on the way. He was fascinated by the natural beauty all around him. Dragonflies, insets, worms, flowers filled him with joy.

12. How can you say that the child was an obedient boy?

The child was an obedient boy. He wanted to buy many things from the shops in the fair. Whenever he demanded, his parents refused and he obeyed quietly. He did not complain for anything. It proves that he was an obedient boy.

13. When did the child realise that he was separated from his parents? What was his response?

The child was always lagging behind. He was lost in the wonders of the fair. When he was near the swing and expressed his desire for swing, he didn't get a response. Then he realised that he was separated from his parents. He started crying.

14. "The child was running towards the shrine". Why? What would have happened if he was not lifted?

When he was separated from his parents he ran towards the shrine in their search. It was very crowded. He struggled to push through the legs of the people. If a man had not rescued him, he would have been trampled upon.

15. Do you think in the end the child was reunited with his parents? Who, according to you, had helped him?

Yes, I think the child was reunited with his parents in the end. The kind person who rescued him in the crowd must have helped him in finding his parents. It was a small fair and the sincere efforts of that kind man must have worked.

Long Answer Questions

1. **How did the child behave at the shop of the sweetmeat-seller? What does it show about the values of the child? Was he a considerate child?**

There was a large crowd around the counter of the sweetmeat-seller. Various colourful sweets decorated with silver and gold leaves were displayed. He was hawking - "Gulab Jamun, Rasgulla, Burfi, Jalebi". The child was fascinated. His mouth watered for his favourite Burfi. He stared open-eyed. He wanted to have one but he knew that his parents would not allow him to get one. He knew that they would call him greedy. So he moved on without waiting for an answer. It shows that the child was a considerate boy. He understood the limitations of his parents. He liked the sweets but he did not insist on buying them. He knew that his parents could not afford it. He was a good boy. He was not a greedy and disobedient boy.

2. **What were the reactions of the child on seeing the flower-seller and the balloon-seller? Do you think it was an obvious reaction of a child?**

The child was attracted by the fragrance of flowers. He went towards the basket of flowers. He wanted to have a garland. But knowing that his parents won't allow he moved on. He saw a balloon-seller holding a pole with colourful balloons. The child was simply carried away by the rainbow glory of balloons. He desired to have all of them. He knew that his parents would say that he was too old to play with them. He said nothing and moved on. Yes, it was an obvious reaction of a child. All the children are attracted to colourful balloons and toys and they want to have them. This child was very obedient and considerate as he didn't force his parents for anything.

3. **If you had been the lost child, what would you have done to find your parents in the fair?**

If I had been the lost child, my condition would have been the same. I would have run here and there in the fair, looking for my parents. I would have also cried bitterly. But I would have acted in a more sensible way. I would have avoided the crowded place. I would have gone to the office of the fair and would tell them about my address and the name of my parents and would request someone to make an announcement. If there was no help from him, I would have waited for my parents at one place. If some kind-hearted man would help me locate my parents, I would definitely accompany him. I know they would not have gone back home without me and would have gone to the places in the fair we visited. I would not have lost patience and waited for them.



4. You are a counsellor. Write a paragraph advising parents how to ensure that the children are not lost in any crowded place like a fair, etc.

Tips for parents

It generally happens that children are separated from their parents in public functions of fairs. In some cases children are traced and reunited with their parents. But there are cases when the children are in wrong hands and are never traceable. In order to ensure that children do not get lost, the parents have to be vigilant and extra careful. The child should never be ignored. It should not be left behind in any shop. Sometimes, a child is so fascinated by the toys that it does not move ahead and the parents fascinated by other items leave him behind. A child should always carry on an identity card in its pocket. It should be trained how to maintain calm and approach the public address system. It is always better to fix a place of meeting in case of separation.

5. A little child's reactions to the immediate situation bears a universal ring when examined superficially. Delving in depth, one can see that each child reacts to a situation according to his or her individual characteristics. Write a character sketch of the little child in the lesson 'The Lost Child', bringing out the child's individual traits as illustrated in the contents of the story.

The little child in the story 'The Lost Child' had accompanied his parents to a village fair. Dressed in a yellow turban, he was excited and engrossed in all the activities of the fair. The child had a sheltered upbringing where his parents were in the habit of dictating his every action. Thus, he obeyed his father's command to follow them despite wanting to linger at the toy shop. He was observant and fascinated by the sight of insects and worms in the footpath. The child had a strong fun-loving streak and while his parents rested in the grove, he ran around the banyan tree, gathering flower petals and listening to doves cooing. Like several children, he had a sweet tooth and enjoyed burfis. He was a restless individual drawn to immediate stimuli and temporarily let go of the safety and security of his parents, but was inconsolable when lost, and consistently pleaded to be taken to them.

6. Describe the condition of the child when he was separated from his parents in the fair. Do you think it is a natural reaction?

When the child realised that he had been separated from his parents, then he started crying. Tears rolled down his eyes. He was filled with fear and restlessness. He panicked and ran here and there. His yellow turban had got united. His clothes became muddy. He ran





towards the shrine in search of his parents. There was a thick crowd. Before he could be trampled upon their feet, a kind-hearted person picked him up in his arms. He took him to the roundabout and offered him many things. He asked him how he got there and where his parents were. But, the child wept more bitterly and cried for his parents. Yes, it is a natural reaction for any child of his age.

7. Compare the attitude of the child before and after his separation from his parents.

The company of parents is more important than the things of pleasure. Do you agree?

In the beginning, the child was happy and excited. He wanted to have toys, sweetmeat, flowers and many more things. Though he knew that his parents would not allow him to get the things, yet he longed for them. Mere presence of these things gave him satisfaction. After he was separated from his parents, his mood was completely changed. He started crying.

A kind-hearted person offered him all the things available in the fair. But the child declined everything. He only wanted his parents. All things had become useless for him. It shows that the company of parents is more important than the things of pleasure. The child found everything useless without his parents.



Next Generation School

