
The Crown Inside

Classroom Guide

For discovering the royalty inside you

CASEL Competency: Self-Awareness

Grade Level: Pre-K–2

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Category: Growing Up

Learning Objectives

- Discover that true royalty comes from CHARACTER, not appearance or possessions
 - Learn through humor that performing "royalness" doesn't work — genuine kindness does
 - Understand that self-worth is built on what you DO, not what you wear or own
 - Practice identifying and celebrating character strengths in themselves and others
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Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Royal • Crown • Character • Kindness • Genuine • Self-Worth • Castle • Glow • Heart • Strength

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Paper crowns or cardstock strips
- Markers, stickers, glitter
- Paper and crayons
- Optional: a toy crown

Before Reading

Connection Question

What do you think makes someone a REAL prince or princess? Is it the crown, the castle, or something else?

Background Building

A mysterious crown appears in a meadow — glittering, golden, waiting. It's supposed to glow for a TRUE royal. Our hero puts it on and... nothing. They try sitting perfectly still. Waving like a robot. Even kissing a frog (the frog is NOT impressed). Nothing works! But when they stop TRYING to be royal and just help a friend who's fallen, the crown BLAZES with light. Turns out, royalty was never about the crown — it was about the heart underneath it.

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the hero tries to make the crown glow by sitting perfectly still and waving like a robot** — The hero is trying SO hard to be royal! Why isn't it working? What's missing?
- **When the hero kisses the frog and it just stares back, unimpressed** — That frog is NOT having it! Why did the hero think kissing a frog would help? What fairy tales are they thinking of?
- **When the crown blazes with light after the hero helps a friend** — The crown finally glows! But the hero wasn't even TRYING to be royal — they were just being kind! What does that tell us?

Discussion Questions

1. The hero tried everything to make the crown glow — sitting still, waving, kissing a frog. Why did trying to LOOK royal fail?

↳ What's the difference between ACTING like something and BEING something?

2. The crown only glowed when the hero helped someone without thinking about the crown at all. Why does kindness work when performing doesn't?

↳ Have you ever done something kind without expecting anything in return? How did it feel?

3. The castle that appears reflects who the hero really IS inside — not what they look like. If YOUR character built a castle, what would be in it?

↳ What rooms would represent your strengths and the things you love?

4. The story reclaims the idea of "royalty" from appearance to character. What other words could we redefine? (Cool? Popular? Strong?)

↳ How would our class be different if we judged people by their character instead of their appearance?

Facilitation Tips

Many children are fascinated by princesses and princes. This story doesn't dismiss that fascination — it redirects it toward character. When children say "but princesses have pretty dresses," agree: "They can! AND the crown glows for kindness, not dresses." The comedy (frog kiss, robot wave) is important — lean into the humor to make the lesson stick.

Emotional Payoff

The child gets the crown AND the castle — but earned through genuine kindness, not appearance or performance. Every future "I want to be a princess/prince!" becomes "I already AM one — watch me prove it by being kind." The crown becomes a portable metaphor the family can reference forever: "Your crown is glowing right now."

After Reading Activities

Design Your Character Crown

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Cardstock strips, markers, stickers, glitter, tape

Each child creates a crown, but instead of jewels, they decorate it with their CHARACTER strengths written on paper gems: KINDNESS, BRAVERY, HUMOR, PATIENCE, CREATIVITY, etc. Wear the crowns during a "Royal Parade" where each child announces their character strength: "I am Royal because I am _____!"

Build Your Inner Castle

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Large paper, crayons, markers

Draw a castle that represents who you ARE, not what you look like. Each room is a different strength or thing you love: "The Kindness Kitchen," "The Brave Tower," "The Silly Dungeon," "The Animal Room." Label each room and draw what's inside. Share: "Welcome to my castle — here's what you'll find inside."

The Frog Kiss Comedy Skit

Duration: 10 min | Materials: A stuffed frog or paper frog cutout

Reenact the funniest moment from the story — the hero trying increasingly ridiculous things to make the crown glow. Children take turns attempting silly "royal" moves (robot wave, curtsy-fall, frog kiss) while the class judges: "Did the crown glow? NOPE!" Then someone does something genuinely kind and — "THE CROWN IS GLOWING!" Big celebration.

Writing Prompts

- Draw yourself wearing the crown. It's glowing because you just did something kind. What did you do?
- Design one room of your inner castle. What character strength does it represent? What's inside?
- Write a letter from the frog: "Dear hero, I am NOT a magic frog. Here's why kissing me won't make you royal..."

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "The Crown Inside," about a child who discovers that a magic crown only glows when they show genuine kindness — not when they try to LOOK royal. Your child designed their own "character crown" decorated with their inner strengths and built a castle that reflects who they really are inside.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- When you catch your child being genuinely kind, say: "Your crown is glowing right now!"
- Ask your child to give you a tour of their inner castle — what rooms did they create?
- Discuss as a family: "What makes someone truly royal?" Make a family list of character strengths

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch
- Princess Truly in I Am Truly by Kelly Greenawalt
- The Princess Knight by Cornelia Funke
- Do Princesses Really Kiss Frogs? by Carmela LaVigna Coyle