

THE STRAWBERRY

Intent of the story:

- ✓ *Enjoy your present moment*
- ✓ *No regrets about the past or anxieties about the future.*
- ✓ *Awareness of the here and now makes life enjoyable.*

The Story

A Zen Master was attacked by a fierce tiger. Running away from the tiger, he reached to the hedge of a precipice. To save himself, he hung from a root of a tree bulging out from a crevice of the cliff.

He realized with horror that the root was giving way. Above him, there was the wild tiger waiting to pounce on him. Below, the yawning gap of the precipice ready to swallow him. Death was imminent. He was terrified.

All of a sudden, in front of him he saw a luscious wild strawberry bush with ripe, colorful and tasty strawberries. Forgetting all about the tiger, the precipice and his impending death, the master plucked one of them, put it in his mouth, and with delight said: "Strawberry how sweet you are"!

A Zen Story

PERSONAL WORK:

1. In a few lines explain the meaning of the story, and apply it to our lives.
2. What's the secret of happiness and peace of mind? Formulate it?
3. Can you tell how we can live life to the full?
4. As a whole are people happy throughout life? Why?
5. Explain the following sentences:
 - Don't count your years, make your seconds count.
 - Life is a continuous flow. Do not try to swim upstream or down stream. Just keep floating.
 - Throughout life, we meet God only in the here and now.
 - The secret of happiness is to enjoy the present moment. That's all we have in hand.
 - Do not let your past or your future interfere with your present.
 - If you cannot do what you enjoy, enjoy what you do.
 - Do not worry about tomorrow. It will have enough worries of its own. Mt. 6/14

IDEAS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- Life is given to us mortals bit by bit. The bit that really counts is the present moment, the "here and now".
- The past is gone. It will never come back. The future is not ours yet. It may never come.
- If we cannot enjoy the "present moment" we shall never find joy in life.
- If we are dead to the "here and now", to all effects, although alive, we are already dead.
- We spoil a beautiful present pining away about a past that is gone, and worrying about a future that may never come.

- God makes Himself present to us only in the "here and now".
- The present moment is the point of intersection between God's eternal life and our temporal one!
- The present moment is the sacrament of God's presence.
- If we cannot find God in our "present" we shall miss him in our entire life.
- Let us leave our past in the hands of an all loving and forgiving God, our future in the hands of an all provident Father, and enjoy God's love in our present moment.

AN EXAMINATION

1. Do you keep regretting about things past and chances already gone?
2. Are you ridden with guilt and scruples over your past misdeeds?
3. Are you tense and anxious about the future?
4. Do you keep imagining that the worst will happen?
5. Do you enjoy the little joys and pleasures of your day to day life?