

**TEACHER NOTE**

Read the following story "**Connor is Sick**" aloud to your students. You can pause during the story to have students answer the discussion questions or choose to have the discussion at the end.

Connor got sick the same day his grandpa went into the hospital.

Connor felt as if someone had stuck socks up his nose. His head hurt, his eyes were watery, his throat was sore, and he didn't feel like doing anything except sleeping, only he couldn't sleep because of his nose and his head and his eyes and his throat.

Connor was miserable.

"What's wrong with me?" he asked his mom

"You have a bad cold," said his mom. She was tucking a blanket around his shoulders to make him more comfortable. Connor was sitting on the living room sofa and thinking about whether he wanted to watch cartoons on TV or just stare out into space.

"How did I get the bad cold?" he asked.

Connor's mom looked at him and shook her head. "I don't know," she said. "You may have gotten it from one of your classmates. The cold germs get in the air, and people breathe them in. The germs make you sick."

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- > "What kind of sickness did Connor have?"
- > "How do you think that Connor got sick?"

"I'm going to get you some soup," said his mother. "You need something warm in your body, and the steam from the soup will help you breathe."

About 10 minutes later, Connor's mother had brought him some hot chicken soup, which she put on a little table in front of him. Connor didn't think he could eat just yet.

"What happened to Grandpa again?" he asked.

Connor's mother tucked a napkin on the front of Connor's shirt. "Grandpa's in the hospital," she said.

"Why?" asked Connor.

"Grandpa's sick," said Connor's mother. "He has cancer."

"What's cancer?" asked Connor.

"It's a disease," said Connor's mother, "that mostly older people get. There are different kinds of cancers that affect different parts of the body. The doctors are going to give Grandpa medicine to try to make him feel better."

"How did Grandpa get cancer?" Connor wanted to know.

"Cancer is one of those things you don't catch," she said. "It's just the way some bodies react to different things around them. If you smoke a lot, you might get lung cancer when you're older. And if you go out in the sun a lot without sunscreen, you might get skin cancer when you're older. But most of the time, it's just something in the body that changes, and people don't exactly know why it happens."

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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- > "What kind of sickness did Connor's grandfather have?"
- > "How do you think that Connor's grandfather got sick?"

Connor saw his grandpa only a few times a year, and he was pretty old, but he always seemed happy and wanted to do things with Connor. He remembered the last time his grandpa was at Connor's house, his grandpa showed him how to play Pick-Up Sticks, and he showed his grandpa how to play Slapjack. "Can I still play with Grandpa next time I see him, or will I get cancer?"

Connor's mother answered. "You can't catch cancer. And I know your Grandpa would really like to play with you."

"I don't want any more soup," Connor said, holding his hand up in front of the spoon his mother had in front of him. "Can we send some to Grandpa? Maybe it'll help him feel better." Connor's mother smiled as she lay the spoon back in the bowl. "I think that's a great idea, Connor.

I'm going to call Grandpa now and tell him your idea. I'll bet that once he hears that, he's going to have a smile bigger than this bowl."

And that, even more than the soup, made Connor feel a lot better.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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- > Can you catch cancer?
- > How did Connor's mother make him feel better?
- > What did Connor want to do help his grandfather feel better?