



Yankel the Class Clown

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities



Yankel the Class Clown

Yankel is the funniest boy in the third grade, and he knows it.

He can make a face that looks like a fish. He can balance a pencil on his nose. He can talk in the voice of a squeaky mouse, and it makes the whole class laugh until their sides hurt.

"Yankel, you crack me up," says his friend Moishy.

"I'm a natural," says Yankel, bowing.

Morah Brocha likes his jokes, too, most of the time. But on Tuesday morning, something changes.

The class is working quietly on a math sheet. It is very still. Yankel looks around. Everyone is bent over their papers. It is so serious.

He has an idea. He grabs a rubber band, stretches it, and aims it at the pencil box on Moishy's desk. Ping! The pencil box jumps and lands on the floor with a crash.

The class bursts out laughing.

"Yankel!" says Morah Brocha.

"Sorry," says Yankel, grinning. "It slipped."

She gives him a look, but she doesn't say more. The class goes back to work.

At lunch, he makes a fish face at the girl at the next table. She giggles. At recess, he does his mouse voice, and four boys fall on the grass laughing.

It feels good to be funny. It feels like everyone likes him.

On Wednesday, the class has a spelling test. The room is silent. Yankel looks at the page. He doesn't know how to spell "necessary." His stomach gives a flip. He doesn't like that feeling.

So he makes a joke. "Hey, Morah, how do you spell 'I give up'?"

A few kids snicker. Morah Brocha smiles. "Very funny, Yankel. Please focus."

But he keeps joking. He makes a loud whisper. He crosses his eyes. Nobody can concentrate, and the test takes twice as long.

After the bell, Morah Brocha asks him to stay.

"Yankel," she says gently. "I love your sense of humor. You make people laugh, and that's a gift. But I noticed something today."

"What?"

"Sometimes you joke when you're feeling nervous. Is that right?"

Yankel blinks. He hasn't thought about it. "Maybe."

"And sometimes your jokes make it hard for others to learn."

His face goes warm. He remembers Moishy's pencil box, and the girl at the next table who can't finish her sentence.

"I didn't mean to bother anyone."

"I know. But humor has a time. There are times for jokes, like at recess or Shabbos meals. And there are times when kindness means being quiet."

Yankel scuffs his shoe on the floor. "How do I know the difference?"

"Ask yourself: Will this help people feel good? Or will it make it hard for someone?"

He thinks about that. "And what if I'm nervous?"

"Then take a breath and tell me. I'll help."

The next day, when the spelling test comes back, Yankel raises his hand.

"Morah, I don't know how to spell necessary. Can you help?"

"Of course," says Morah Brocha, kneeling beside him. She shows him a trick: one collar, two sleeves.

"One c, two s's," says Yankel.

"Exactly."

At recess, he does the mouse voice. The kids love it. But in class, he saves his jokes for later.

On Friday, Morah Brocha says, "Yankel, I have an idea. Would you like to be in charge of our Friday joke of the week, ten minutes before dismissal?"

His face lights up. "Yes!"

The class cheers. The joke of the week becomes the favorite part of every Friday.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. What can Yankel do with his face?

2. What does he do with the rubber band?

3. What does Morah Brocha help him spell?

4. What job does she give him on Fridays?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Yankel jokes when he feels nervous. Fact / Guess
2. Morah Brocha never likes Yankel's jokes. Fact / Guess
3. Yankel asks for help with spelling. Fact / Guess
4. Jokes are saved for recess and Fridays. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. When is a good time for jokes?

2. Why does Yankel joke during the test?

3. How can you tell if your joke helps or bothers?



Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: JOKE, FUNNY, LAUGH, RECESS, MOUSE, CLASS

C	B	L	N	C	I	S	W	S	C	G
L	R	H	T	N	W	R	O	F	B	L
A	G	M	K	W	S	E	E	J	P	D
S	N	E	L	E	E	C	J	B	P	F
S	H	B	L	D	N	E	V	F	M	U
J	J	R	R	A	S	S	I	D	T	N
P	O	B	H	L	U	S	T	Y	A	N
S	V	K	M	P	C	G	C	Y	U	Y
U	P	L	E	N	F	H	H	W	P	I
F	L	L	M	O	U	S	E	T	S	C
V	N	J	F	N	O	B	S	S	I	N



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. YFNUN = _____

2. OSMEU = _____

3. LICPEN = _____

4. PLLINGES = _____

5. GLUHA = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"I'm nervous. Can you help?"

"That's a joke for recess."

"Do you want to hear a joke later?"



Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Joke Time Chart

#	When	Joke or quiet?	How it went
Morning			
Recess			
Friday			



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw Yankel making his fish face with a pencil balanced on his nose.

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a thin teal border, intended for drawing.



Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Make a fish face
2. Knocked Moishy's pencil box off the desk
3. Necessary
4. The joke of the week

Fact or guess: 1 Fact; 2 Guess; 3 Fact; 4 Fact

Scrambled words: FUNNY, MOUSE, PENCIL, SPELLING, LAUGH

Think and write: answers will vary; talk them over together.