

Great Classroom Idea



Grade level: K-4

Subject (if applicable): Social Studies, etc.

Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> lesson plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> project-based teaching/activity idea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> technology integration idea | <input type="checkbox"/> graphic organizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> integration of faith and learning idea | <input type="checkbox"/> webquest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> classroom management technique | <input type="checkbox"/> virtual field trip |
| <input type="checkbox"/> devotional | <input type="checkbox"/> bulletin board idea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> science demo or experiment | <input type="checkbox"/> critical thinking strategy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assessment tool | <input type="checkbox"/> original classroom game |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> relationship-building idea | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ |

Description: (attach supplementary materials if needed)

Great Classroom Idea: *Traveling Casey*

Subject: This can be adapted to almost any subject, but I have used it for Social Studies, Science and Language Arts.

Applications: *Traveling Casey* is a relationship-building idea; a project-based teaching/activity idea; and a motivational idea that integrates learning and fun. It can also be used to coordinate several subject areas in the classroom.

Description: *Traveling Casey* is a special suitcase that travels home to classroom students each weekend throughout the school year, on a rotating basis. It can be enjoyed by students, siblings and parents during the time it is at home. One of the objectives of this activity is to increase parental and family involvement in student learning. In the past, I've found that the parents enjoy *Traveling Casey* as much as the students do!

The suitcase contains items that coordinate with an instructional theme being carried out in the classroom. This theme could include almost any single subject area or a combination of subject areas. A theme usually lasts one or two months before the contents of the suitcase are changed. The length of time between content-changes is related to how many students or families there are in your classroom and the length of time you are spending on a particular unit of study. If there are two children from the same family in the classroom, they take home *Traveling Casey* on the same weekend. Each student has a turn to take *Casey* home during a theme-time. In other words, each student may have up to 5-10 turns with *Casey* during the school year.

Continued . . .

Submitted by: Brenda Thompson

School: SDA Christian School

Traveling Casey, continued

For example, I once used **Traveling Casey** to supplement a Social Studies theme in which we studied world communities. (See sample letter which follows.) **Casey** went to places like Egypt, China, Australia, Africa and Russia. One December, **Casey** went to Germany and brought back things like a nutcracker, library books on Germany, a mini play kitchen with play clay, cookie cutters, aprons and chef hats. The children were allowed to use these things during their time with the suitcase. They were also allowed to keep a goodie bag and some single items included for themselves.

The suitcase always includes a letter of instructions and a list of items included in the suitcase. In this way, parents can be sure everything is returned to the school at the end of their student's time with the suitcase. Another list informs the students and parents what items can be kept, if so desired. (See **Traveling Casey** Instructions and Lists which follow.)

I have found that this activity is lots of fun for all involved! Its potential is limitless. A teacher could include all kinds of things in the suitcase: puzzles, games, books, small art or craft projects, packaged food items, photocopied colouring pages, etc. It's a way to use all those neat things teachers have collected over the years. Dollar stores are great places to find items for the students to keep. Other themes could include Math, Art, Music or Physical Education topics. For instance, **Traveling Casey** could visit famous artists or composers from the past. One P.E. unit could be on swimming, another on gymnastics, winter sports, summer games etc. **Traveling Casey** requires a little effort and imagination on the teacher's part, but it is worth all the learning benefits and positive relations built between home and school.



We will have a special suitcase in our classroom this year. Its name is *Traveling Casey*. Casey has traveled all over the world this past summer and would like to show you some of its adventures. Every few months, Casey will bring things to school from a new place it has visited. It's been to places like Egypt, China, Africa, Russia and Italy.

Casey will share its special collection with a student each week. In other words, one of you can take Casey home to look at and play with each weekend. There might be a few things inside Casey that you can keep. Most things will need to come back to school on Monday with you, so that someone else can take Casey home the next weekend.

While Casey is sitting in its safe spot during the week, we will be finding out interesting things about the places he has been. We may have visitors come to tell us about Casey's adventures. We may try cooking and eating some foods from the places he has been. We'll read books about those places and watch DVD's too! There will be games and toys and all kinds of things to enjoy from around the world.

This year is going to be lots of fun! I hope you are ready to meet Casey. Here's what our Casey looks like. Can't wait to see you!



From Mrs. T and Casey

Traveling Casey Instructions

Our classroom suitcase contains items for you to enjoy for the weekend.

These things are for you to look at and play with.

Please do not share them with someone else in our class (unless you live in the same house).

Classmates will not enjoy it very much if they come to your house and play with the things before their turn comes.

Please return Casey (the suitcase) to Mrs. T's room on Monday morning.

Inside you will find a list of items that must be returned along with the suitcase. Please take care of the things, so that they don't get dirty, broken or lost. If that happens, I will expect you to replace them.

There is also a list of things that are yours to keep at home.

Have Fun!

Sample List to include in *Traveling Casey* for parent and student information.

This list was based on a trip to Germany during December - a Social Studies and Language Arts Activity to Supplement our regular program.

Note: The items on the left were to be returned to school with the suitcase, and the items on the right were for the students to keep at home.

Return to School:	For You to Keep:
1 Nutcracker Toy	
Angel Designs to color (Included a plastic folder & title page with photocopied designs to choose from.)	Design sheets that you color. (NOT THE FOLDER)
2 Cookbooks	
Other Books or Stories about: Germany	Goodie Bag (has your name on it) (Included a gingerbread cookie, dollar store wooden nutcracker to paint, & candy cane.)
Gingerbread Baker Doll	
Cookie Cutters & Dishes	
Play Dough (put back in container's by color)	
Little Kitchen	
2 Aprons & 2 Chef Hats	

**Sample items to include in Travelling Casey for a Science (Space)
or Social Studies (American) Theme:**

To Return to School:	To Keep at Home:
Klutz Book of Paper Airplanes and paper	Paper airplanes you made
U.S. Plastic Space Vehicles (2) & Grey Space Men (14) American Flag	
Library Books on Outer Space + Stars + Earth	
I SPY Blast OFF PUZZLE 63 Pieces	Airplane Fan with Batteries (A Dollar Store Item)
Uni-Set Press & Peel SPACE ADVENTURE SET	