30. "Confucius"

by Core Knowledge Staff

Long ago in China, a baby was born. Known as Confucius, he was born at a time when all of China was experiencing great troubles. China, an enormous country, was divided into small areas ruled by many different leaders. No two leaders agreed with one another. They formed large armies and fought long wars against one another. Robbers rode through the countryside hurting other people. Greedy leaders wanted to conquer all of China for their own selfish reasons.

Confucius was born into a poor family more than two thousand years ago. His father died when he was very young. His mother believed that education was important and made sure that he learned from the wise teachers in his village. Confucius also taught himself many subjects. He learned that China had not always been so divided. It had once been a peaceful, united country ruled by wise men who wanted to help their people. Confucius began to dream of a time when people could live in a peaceful land led by wise sages once again. He wanted to spread the word that it was possible to live without wars and confusion. He wanted to give people hope for a better tomorrow.

Confucius decided to spend his life educating others and teaching them how to live in a more peaceful way. As he taught his students how to build a peaceful country, Confucius would often begin his lessons by asking them to start with their own families. Confucius reasoned that if people could not get along in small groups, how could they expect their leaders to control the behavior of whole cities and towns? Confucius believed that if people always treated one another with kindness, the world would be a better place. Confucius also believed that if leaders were able to stop all wars, feed the hungry, and make sure that people were safe in their cities and towns, everyone could live in a happier world.

In addition, Confucius believed that education was very important. He thought that it was necessary to study and learn all the time. In ancient China, only people with money were allowed to go to school. Confucius thought that this was wrong. He believed that all people, rich and poor, should have equal opportunities to learn. Learning never stops, according to Confucius.

Word Count: 385

Comprehension Questions

"Confucius"

Assess each student's comprehension of the selection by asking him or her to respond orally to the following questions one on one with you:

1. ***Literal*** What did Confucius begin to dream of?

   » a time when people could live in a peaceful land led by wise sages once again

2. ***Literal*** What did Confucius believe about education?

   » that all people should have an equal opportunity to learn

3. ***Inferential*** What was China like when Confucius was born?

   » troubled and divided, with fighting everywhere