

Mrs. K and the Food Festival

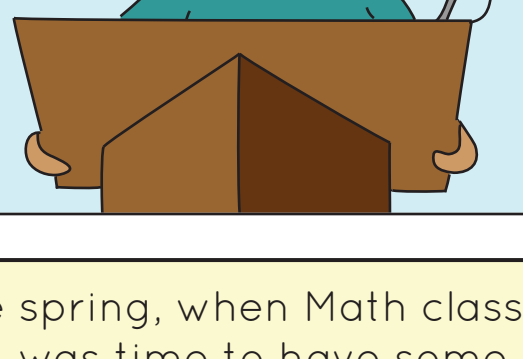
Written and illustrated by Sari Kopitnikoff (a.k.a. Mrs. K)

Once upon a time--three years ago, to be clear
There was a young teacher who loved her career



She'd wake up each morning, excited for the day
Her name -- Mrs. Kopitnikoff (but she went by Mrs. K)

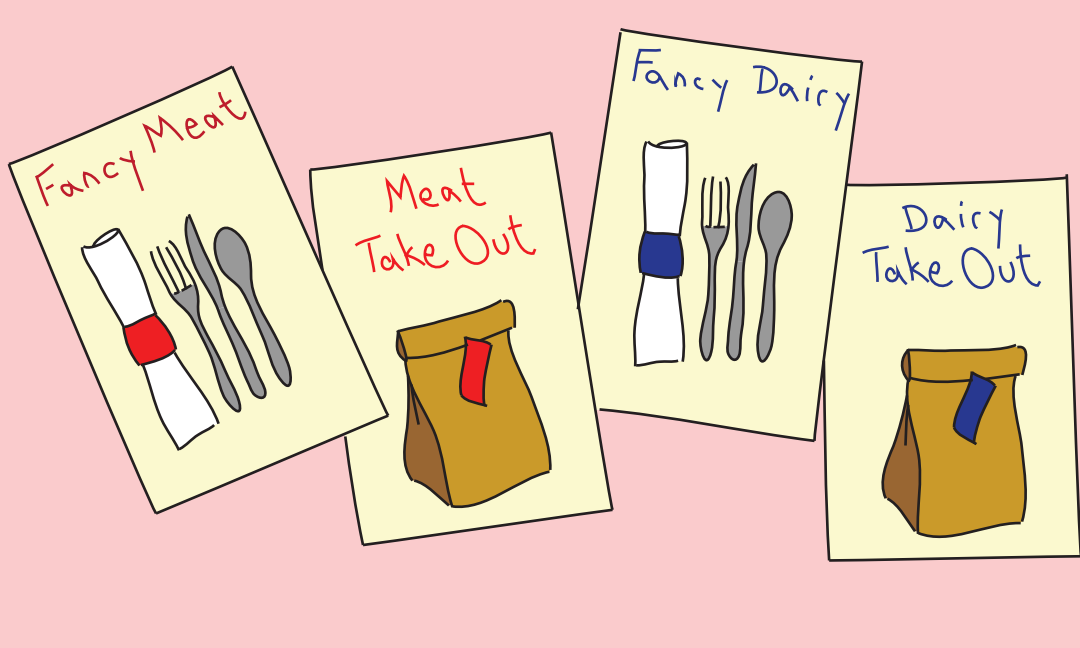
Though lessons and activities can teach a great deal
Mrs. K wanted her class's learning to be real
So she challenged her fifth grade boys to become involved
With real-world problems that needed to be solved



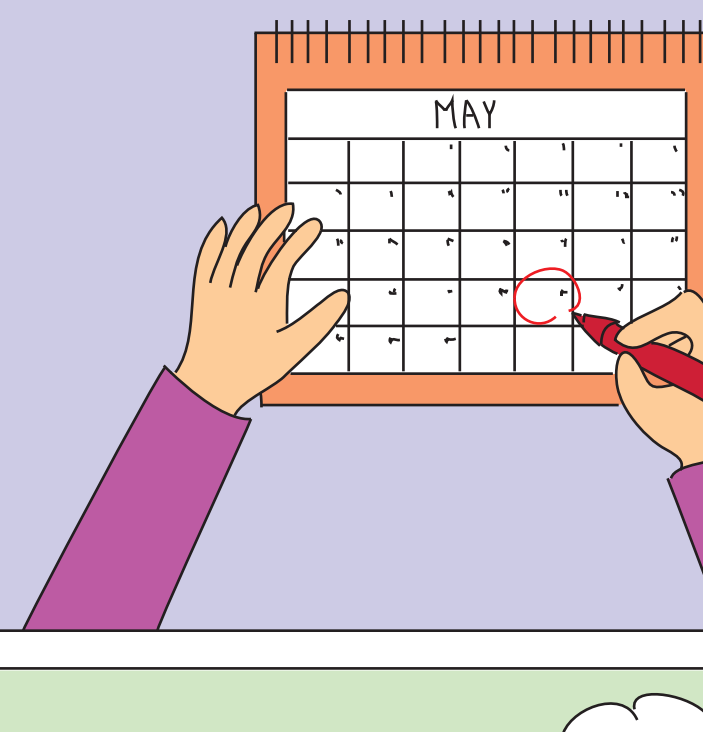
Like, one day in the spring, when Math class had begun
She told the class it was time to have some decimal fun
Now that they learned decimal arithmetic
They were ready for a challenge that would help the new skills stick



Mrs. K divided the class into four equal teams
Each group was assigned one of four restaurant themes



The groups had a few weeks to plan their pop up place
On opening day they'd transform their classroom space
They'd rearrange the furniture and add some decor
Creating an ambiance for diners walking through the door



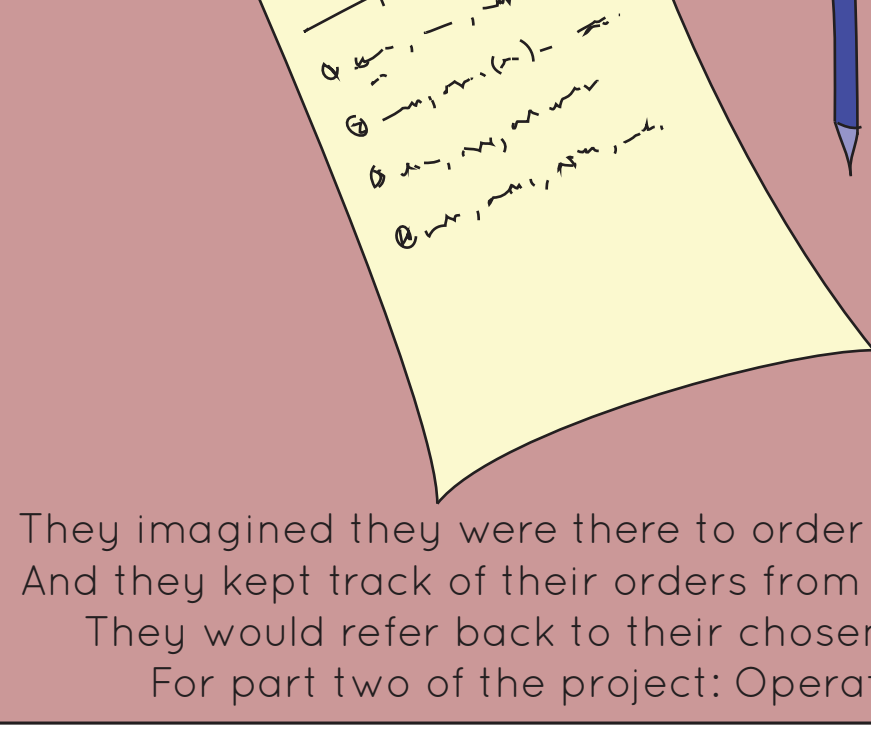
Each group had 5 students and each student had a part
The economist made the prices, the designer did the art
The writer wrote the menus, the chef came up with dishes
The waiter would ask the diners for their order wishes



But they all were to work together, using collaboration
To go from start to finish and make their group's creation
On restaurant day, each team would have a turn
To present their pop up place--a real fun way to learn



When each restaurant opened, everyone decided
What to order from the menu that the team provided



They imagined they were there to order what they want
And they kept track of their orders from each restaurant
They would refer back to their chosen orders later
For part two of the project: Operation Cater

After all the teams went, the class gathered to discuss
What could have used improvement and "What worked well for us?"
From her years of teaching, Mrs. K finds
That such discussions strengthen and open minds

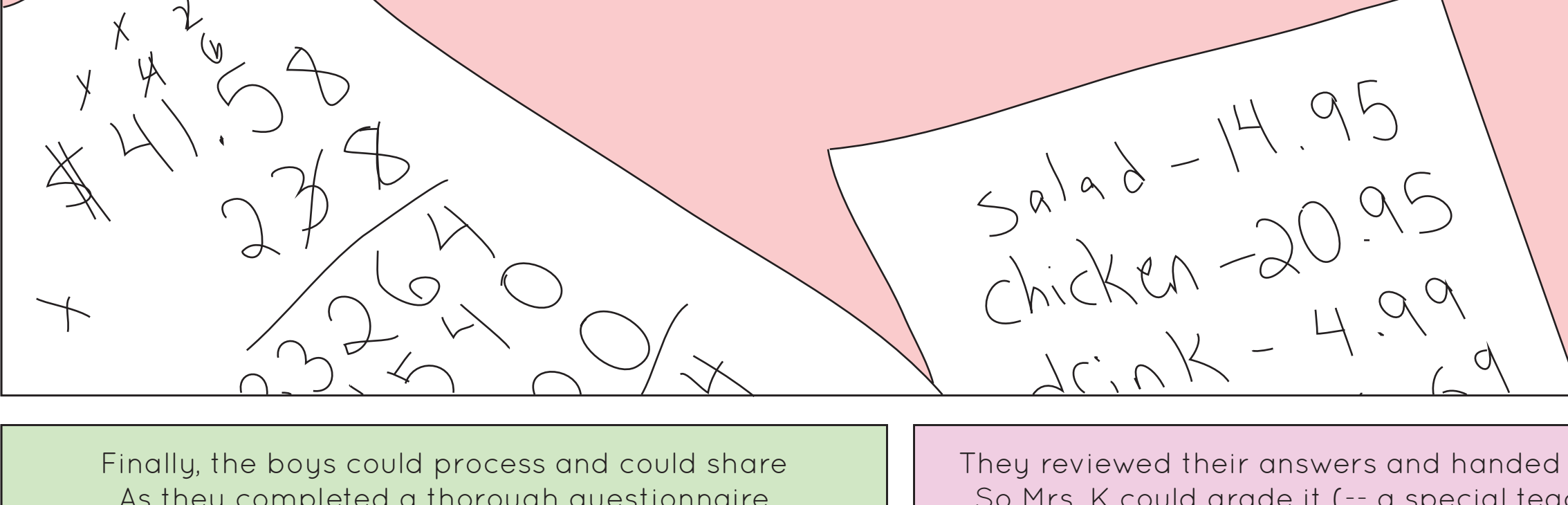


After all of this came the second mission
For the boys to use the data and some math cognition
Every boy was given a random guest amount
And told to cater an event for the given count

First, he figured out what kind of event
Would call for lots of food--and for money to be spent
It could be for a bar mitzvah or Shabbat retreat
A birthday or a wedding, or a casual meet and greet



He looked at the prices of his orders from each eatery
And multiplied them by his guest count to see what the mass cost would be
After he calculated the total for each menu
He thought through everything and decided on the venue



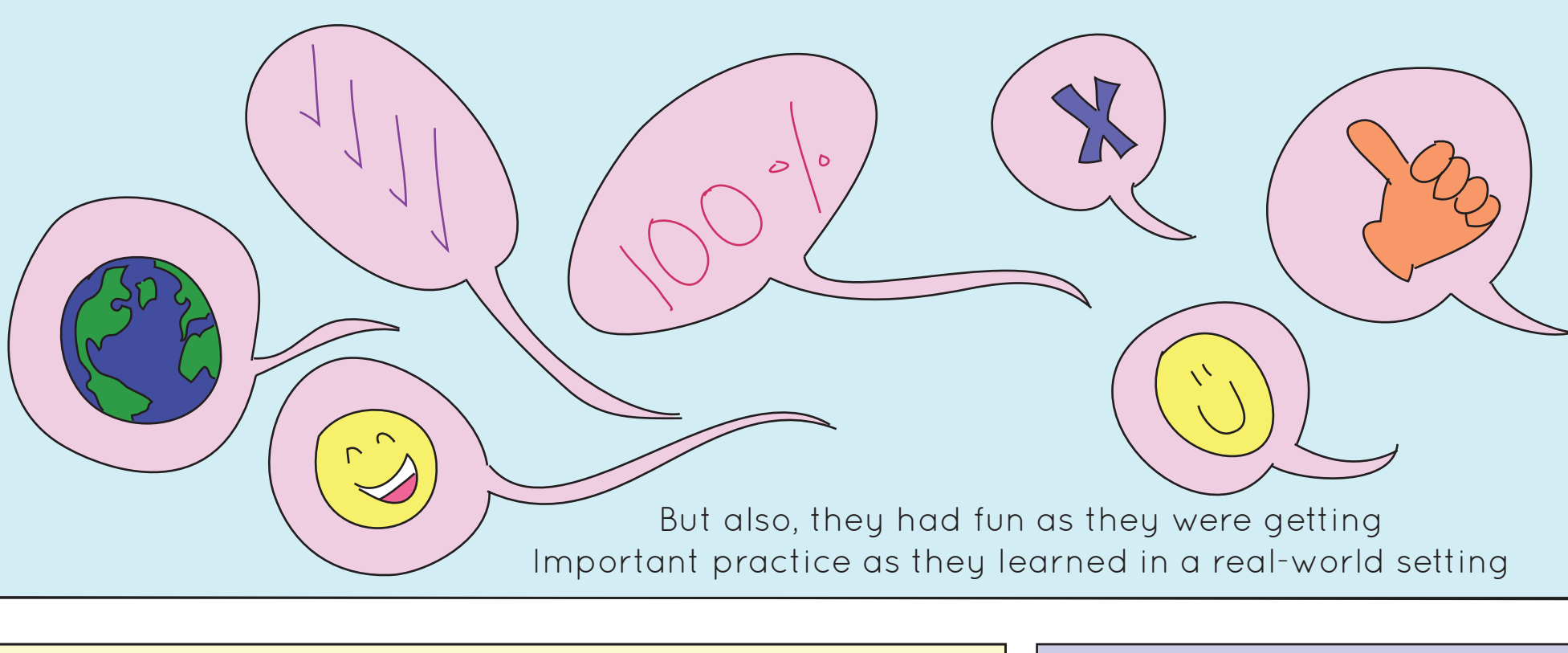
Finally, the boys could process and could share
As they completed a thorough questionnaire



They reviewed their answers and handed in their work
So Mrs. K could grade it (-- a special teaching perk!)



From looking through their answers, Mrs. K could tell
That the boys learned multiplying decimals very well

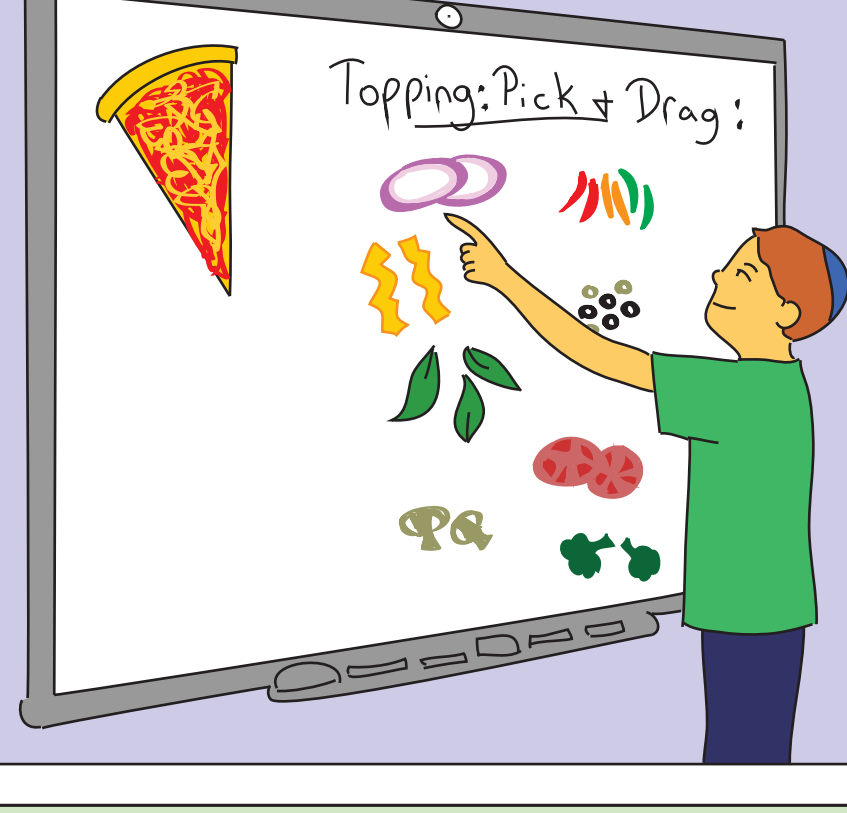


But also, they had fun as they were getting
Important practice as they learned in a real-world setting

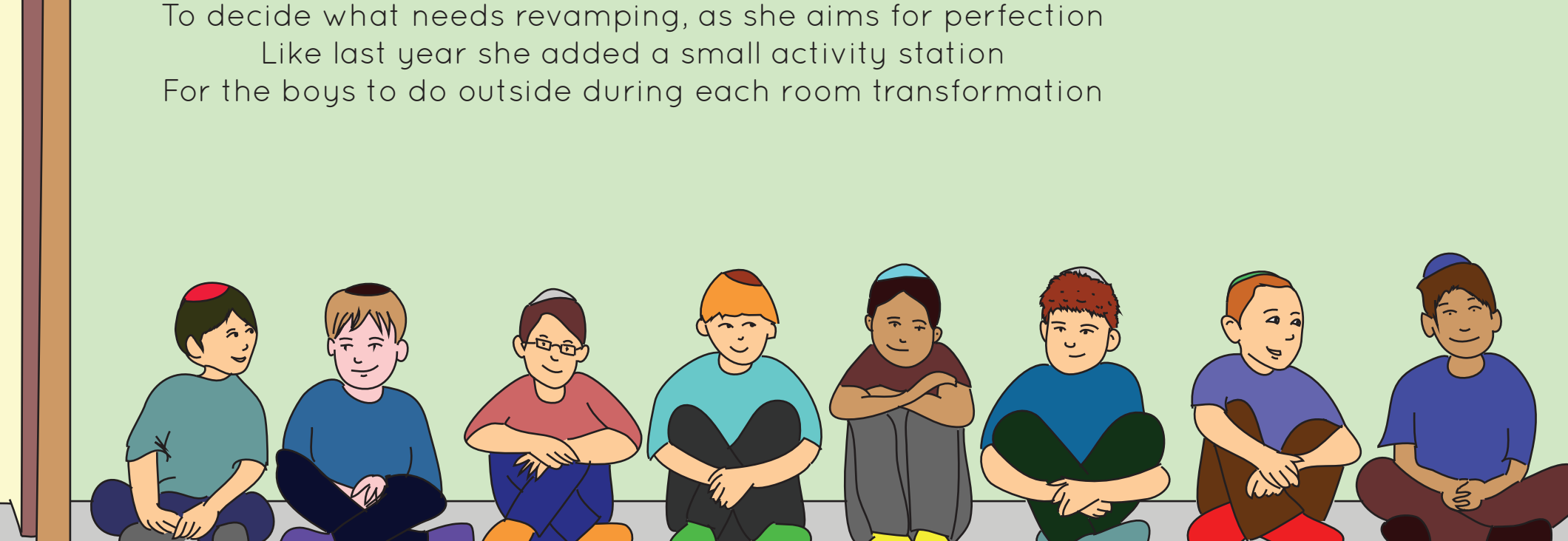
Ultimately, it's amazing what the boys create
Like the life-like sports bar, that plays highlights as you wait



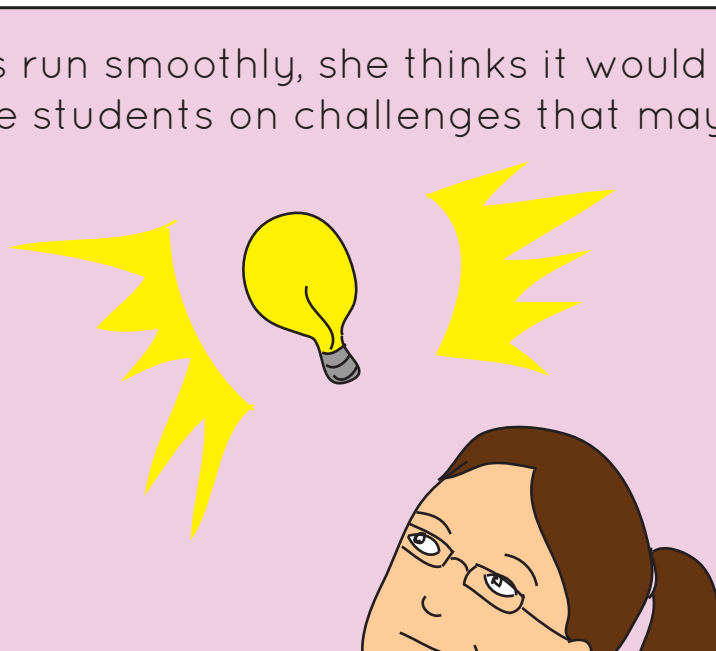
One group made a Smartboard pizza design center
And another played French music when diners would enter



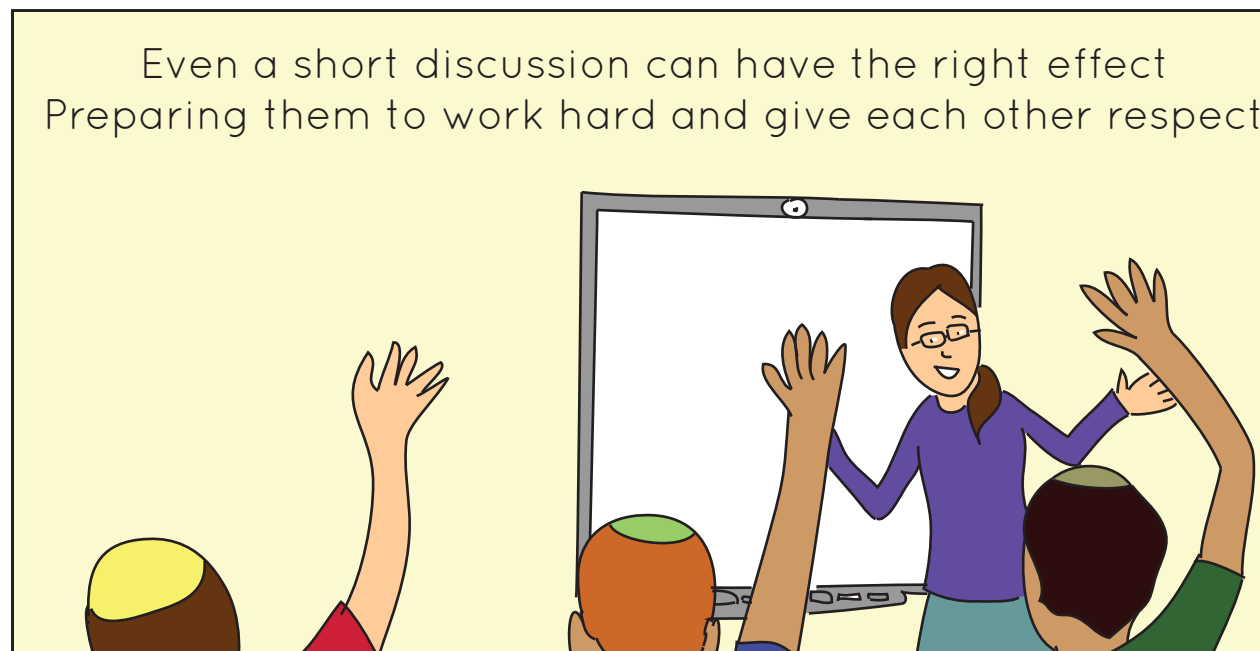
After each time, Mrs. K goes through some reflection
To decide what needs revamping, as she aims for perfection
Like last year she added a small activity station
For the boys to do outside during each room transformation



To help the groups run smoothly, she thinks it would be wise
To prepare future students for challenges that may arise



Even a short discussion can have the right effect
Preparing them to work hard and give each other respect



And that's the story of Mrs. K and the Food Festival
But it's not over, and that's what's best of all
Mrs. K plans to do this again in the spring ahead
And hopes that by sharing it, her idea will just spread

