**Smells and Jingles**. A story about justice from *The Sunshine Tree*, page 50

In old Japan, there lived an old woman who loved to eat broiled eels. And how lucky for her, because she lived next door to the eel-seller's shop. During the night, the eel-seller caught his eels, and in the daytime he served them, smoking hot, to his customers. He cut the eels into pieces three or four inches long and cooked them on a griddle over red hot charcoal until they were ready to eat.

Although she dearly loved eels, the old woman could not afford to buy them as often as she liked, and when she was short of money she would take her bowl of rice and sit close to her neighbor's door. Eating her boiled rice, and sniffing the aroma of the broiled eels, she enjoyed with her nose what she could not pay for to put in her mouth.

When the eel-seller found this out, he became quite angry and thought he would charge his neighbor for the smell of eels. So, he made out his bill and presented it gruffly to the old woman. But she only smiled. She brought out her iron money-box, which at that time was nearly empty. But it does not take many coins in a money-box to make a good jingle. The old woman shook the money-box in the eel-seller's face.

"Did you hear that, neighbor?" she asked

"Indeed I did!" he said

"Then we are even," said the woman, with a bow.

"What?" cried the eel-seller. "Aren't you going to pay me?"

"I have paid you," said the woman. "You have charged me for the smell of eels, and I have paid you with the sound of money."

Questions to encourage discussion:

1. Explain why you think it was fair, or unfair, for the eel-seller to charge the woman for smelling the food. Explain why you think it was just or unjust for the old woman to pay for the 'smells' with 'jingles'.

2. If you were the eel-seller, what would you have done?

3. When someone demands something of one unfairly, what can one do?

Activity:

Let one person take the role of the eel-seller, and another person play the other character, who cannot afford to pay for the eels. Let the rest of the group listen to each one explain his or her side of the story, then among themselves, try to come to a judgment fair for both.