ENRICHMENT GUIDE

GOSSAMER
By Lois Lowry

SCHOOL DATES:
SEPTEMBER 19 – OCTOBER 3, 2008

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Please be sure to share this guide with all teachers who are taking their students to see this production. Photocopy or download additional copies from WWW.FIRSTSTAGE.ORG

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Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin
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Dear Teachers and Parents,

We are delighted to be opening our 22nd season with you as we venture into the world of dreams, and those imaginary creatures who supply us with dreams, in our world premiere production of Lois Lowry’s GOSSAMER, in collaboration with Oregon Children’s Theater. GOSSAMER is a realistic fantasy that tells the story of a young boy and a young dream-giver, who are both going through challenging changes in their lives, and those who help them along the way and change along the way through the process. GOSSAMER explores what dreams are made of and the power behind our dreams...which can sometimes lead to dreams that are too powerful—nightmares. Furthermore, this story touches on sensitive issues in a magnificently gossamer way—one which explains these topics in a non-threatening yet truthful manner. GOSSAMER is a story of change, hope, friendship and mentorship, and love. The themes in this story are sure to resonate with you and your young people, and provide you with opportunities for meaningful and enlightening dialogues.

Enclosed in this enrichment guide is a range of materials and activities intended to help you discover connections within the play through the curricula. In addition to this, we have also provided a listing of local child abuse, foster care and adoption resources throughout the community for you to gain further information. It is our hope that you will use the experience of attending the theater and seeing GOSSAMER with your students as a teaching tool. As educators and parents, you know best the needs and abilities of your students. Use this guide to best serve your children—pick and choose, or adapt, any of these suggestions for discussions or activities. We encourage you to take advantage of the enclosed student worksheets—please feel free to photocopy the sheets for your students, or the entire guide for the benefit of other teachers.

Enjoy the show!

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First Stage Policies

- The use of recording equipment and cameras is strictly forbidden in the theater.
- Food, drink, candy and gum are not permitted in the theater.
- Any portable radios brought to the theater by students will be kept by the House Manager during the performance and returned to the group leader at the conclusion of the play.
- There is no smoking in the theater, by order of the Fire Marshal.
- Should a student become ill, suffer an injury or have another problem, please escort him or her to the theater lobby and ask an usher to notify the House Manager immediately.
- In the unlikely event of a general emergency, the theater lights will go on and someone will come on stage to inform the audience of the problem. Remain in your seats, visually locate the nearest exit and wait for First Stage ushers to guide your group from the theater.

Seating for people with disabilities: If you have special seating needs for any student(s) and did not indicate your need when you ordered your tickets, please call our School Group Coordinator at (414) 267-2962. Our knowledge of your needs will enable us to serve you better upon your group’s arrival at the theater.
had to be taken away from her, even if just momentarily. The young mother is willing to do whatever it takes to get her son back, and give him the best life possible. She is starting to go through counseling, stopping smoking, moving into a safe and clean apartment that is big enough for her and John, and attempting to find a new job. The young mother has limited contact with her son at the time, and so most of her discussions go through John's social worker at CPS.

When John first arrives at the Woman's house, he responds harshly and closed-off—showing the hurt and anguish he is in through his angry words and actions towards the Woman and Toby. John has been hurt so deeply—emotionally and physically—that he has difficulty understanding love or opening himself up to the friendship of others. His arm is in a cast and he is unable to confer in an open or calm manner to anyone. The Woman responds gently and calmly, listening to John without making judgments or showing any frustration or fear of John.

Before the dream-givers are sent out into the human world the next evening, Most Ancient gathers all the dream-givers together to share information he has on an attack from the Sinisteed that is growing in size and power. The other dream-givers confer that they too have felt the Sinisteed growing in power and that a Horde attack is surely in the making. They must all be on the lookout for this Horde attack, and bestow their humans with as many positive and affirmative dreams as possible, so they are not vulnerable to the Horde. Littlest doesn't really know what a nightmare is, or what power the Horde truly has, however, she has met John and feels how susceptible he is. She fears the Horde is gaining in strength to attack the boy—a perfect candidate.

That night, Littlest and Thin Elderly do not encounter the Horde, but they do come into contact with one Sinisteed—he is there to prey on the boy. Littlest wants to fight this Sinisteed, but Thin Elderly must explain to her that the Sinisteed is much more powerful than they are—their only power against the Sinisteed is to bestow positive dreams on their humans, to strengthen them against the nightmares. After the Sinisteed leaves, it is their job to try to undo the damage by gathering soothing and happy fragments for the boy. However, before Littlest can find any fragments, John wakes up in a panic from his nightmare. The Woman comes into John’s bedroom and tells him a story to comfort him until he falls asleep together. After the story, Thin Elderly and Littlest find the best fragments possible, and bestow them all on John.

As the summer goes on, the young mother is allowed to have phone contact with John. The mother tells John that she has quit smoking and has a second interview for a wonderful job right at John's school. John is having difficulty processing the fact that his father is gone—he wants to love his father and he never speaks ill-will of him; however, he is also scared of his father—both because of what he did to John and what John saw him do to his mother. John’s mother explains to him that his father is far away now and cannot hurt them anymore—ever again. Although comforting to know they are safe from the father, John is still conflicted about his feelings toward him, and deeply hurt with feeling of abandonment and rejection. John’s understanding of unconditional love and commitment...
setting the stage: synopsis

are deeply skewed by his past experiences, and he attempts to come to a more thorough understanding of this with conversations he has with the Woman. The Woman gently and patiently teaches John what unconditional love and commitment to that love is, and John can see this through the Woman’s love for him and Toby.

Back at the Heap, Thin Elderly confirms with Littlest that the Horde is planning an attack on John because they can sense how weak and in need he is. Littlest knows she can help John be strong, but she must do something that is breaking the dream-giver rules—she must gather fragments for John from another living creature, the dog. John has found love in the dog and is learning to be trusting and committed to others through his relationship with this pet. Although Thin Elderly is quite hesitant about this idea at first, he knows this is the only way to gain enough strengthening fragments for John, and he also knows what a light and gossamer touch Littlest has—if anyone can touch another living creature without stirring it, it is Littlest. Therefore, after much debate, he allows Littlest to gather fragments from the dog.

The air is cooling and it is almost time for school to start again, and the Horde continues to grow in strength and power. Most Ancient and Fastidious learn of Littlest touching Toby and approach Thin Elderly with much concern. Thin Elderly explains his reasoning towards this very special set of circumstances and after more discussion, Most Ancient decides to not make a fuss over this broken rule. That night, as Littlest and Thin Elderly are bestowing strong dreams on the Woman and John, they can feel the world around them begin to shake, as shadows emerge from the walls and a hissing sound engulfs the house—the Horde is getting closer. Thin Elderly warns Littlest to run for cover but can’t seem to find her anywhere. After continually searching for Littlest, Thin Elderly retreats to the top of the attic to wait for the Horde to pass. The Horde reaches John and attacks with vengeance, but the fragments bestowed on him by Littlest are so strong that the nightmare is much less damaging than intended. Once the Horde retreats, Littlest hears Thin Elderly on the top of the staircase, crying. She approaches him and asks him why he is crying—he is delighted to see her safe and alive! When Thin Elderly could not find Littlest anywhere, he assumed she had been killed by the power of the Horde. However, Littlest stayed by John’s side, bestowing fragments, until the last second before the Horde approached when she slipped under his bed to hide. The attack was so powerful, Thin Elderly and Littlest stayed at the house all night and did not return to the Heap until dawn.

Littlest has become quite attached to John, and she is now starting to give him “back-to-school” dreams, as he prepares to go into the third grade! He will start the school year staying with the Woman, but will get to see his mother every day because she has gotten a job at the school as a receptionist. Littlest can’t wait to see how he will do in school this year, however, Thin Elderly informs her that now she is older she will be transferred to a new house. Littlest does not want to go to a new house and meet new people—she wants things to remain as they have always been. Thin Elderly explains to Littlest that change is difficult, but also necessary—she is needed at another house now. However, Littlest tells Thin Elderly that she can’t leave the boy because she loves him. Thin Elderly must further explain to Littlest that she is imaginary—they live within the stories and within the dreams and will, therefore, live within the boy forever.

pre-show questions

1. Littlest and Thin Elderly are Dream Givers—those creatures that bestow dreams on humans every night. Do you ever remember some of your dreams, and if so, what are those dreams about?

2. John becomes very close with Toby, the Woman’s pet dog, and Toby waits every afternoon for John to return to him from school. Do you have any pets? What is special about your relationship with your pet?

3. Thin Elderly explains to Littlest that everything and every object holds a story. John always keeps with him a seashell his mother and he collected at the beach together. This seashell holds many good memories and stories in it. Think of a personal object of yours that is special to you. Why is this object special to you, and what is the story attached to this object?

4. All of the characters in GOSSAMER must go through different changes, which can be very scary at times. What is a change you have gone through—either big or small? How did you feel about having to go through this change, and what did you do to help you cope with this change?
Lois Lowry

Whether she’s writing comedy, adventure, or poignant, powerful drama – from Attaboy, Sam! and Anastasia Krupnik to Number the Stars and The Giver – Lois Lowry’s appeal is as broad as her subject matter and as deep as her desire to affect an eager generation of readers. An author who is “fast becoming the Beverly Cleary for the upper middle grades” (The Horn Book Magazine), Lois Lowry has written over 30 books for children and young adults and is a two-time Newbery Medal winner.

Lois Lowry was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, and attended junior high school in Tokyo, Japan. Her father was a dentist for the U.S. Army and his job entailed a lot of traveling. Lowry still likes to travel.

At the age of 17, Lowry attended Brown University and majored in writing. She left school at 19, got married, and had four children before her 25th birthday. After some time, she returned to college and received her undergraduate degree from the University of Maine.

Lois Lowry didn’t start writing professionally until she was in her mid-30s. Now she spends time writing every single day. Before she begins writing a book, she usually knows the beginning and end of her story. When she’s not writing, Lowry enjoys gardening during the spring and summer and knitting during the winter. One of her other hobbies is photography, and her own photos grace the covers of Number the Stars, The Giver and Gathering Blue.

Lois Lowry has four children and two grandchildren. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

SUGGESTED READING

- The Giver by Lois Lowry
- The Silent Boy by Lois Lowry
- Messenger by Lois Lowry
- House of the Red Fish by Graham Salisbury
- Under the Same Sky by Cynthia Defelice
- The Great Gilly Hopkins by Katherine Paterson
- Stuck in Neutral by Terry Trueman
- Indigo Dreams: Relaxation and Stress Management Bedtime Stories for Children; Improve Sleep, Manage Stress and Anxiety by Lori Lite
Some years ago, when she was in her early eighties, my mother suffered a stroke. She was hospitalized for a while, and then the doctors said they could do no more for her physically, and so, reluctantly, my brother and I moved her to a nursing home. She was very confused, often mistaking us for her own parents, and emotionally very labile, laughing uproariously or crying as if she were heartbroken, always about things that were happening in some invisible place that only she had access to.

One time, when my brother was visiting, she cried and cried, and said over and over again, “Dorothy’s baby has died. Dorothy’s baby has died.”

My brother remembered, from our childhood (as did I, when he told me about this), that my mother’s best friend in those years—this would have been 50 years before—whose name was Dorothy, had no children. Then, to everyone’s delight, Dorothy and her husband were expecting a baby. Such excitement. Talking about names. Buying baby clothes. My mother knitting little sweaters.

But the baby, a little boy, lived only a few days.

It was that sad event, tucked away in her damaged brain that my mother wept for 50 years later.

As my mother wept that day in the nursing home, my brother…a doctor, curious about the mechanics of the brain…asked her, “Mother, are you seeing Dorothy? Are you with Dorothy? Or are you just remembering her?”

He told me that Mother looked at him as if he were a babbling idiot. And she replied, “In the Dreamworld, it doesn’t matter.”

My mother, amazingly, healed from the brain damage and went on to live with her mind intact for several more years. But she never remembered the five months in the nursing home, or the thoughts she had then, or that magical place she must have lived in, the place she called the Dreamworld.

It haunted me, though. I talked to my friend Trina Schart Hyman, the illustrator whom many of you knew, about it. We talked of collaborating on a book about the Dreamworld—the magic we could make of it. Then Trina entered her own Dreamworld, caught in a relentless illness, and it was clear that there would not be time for us to pursue the book.

It was while Trina was dying that I spent time alone….except for my dog….at my old farmhouse in Maine and began to write the book that would be called Gossamer.

I am a writer who never starts out with a plan, or a theme, or—god forbid—a moral in mind - or even an outline, or index cards with a plot carefully worked out. I start with a character who appears in my imagination. I can see the character—often he or she arrives there in my imagination already named—and I frequently begin a book by simply placing that character on a page, feeling in my mind where he or she is.

I’m going to give you an example of that from a different book of mine, one called Gathering Blue.

A girl appeared in my imagination. She had a name: Kira. I heard her voice. I wrote down the word I heard her say. Then I kept writing.

“Mother?”

There was no reply. She hadn’t expected one. Her mother had been dead now for four days, and Kira could tell that the last of the spirit was drifting away.
“Mother.” She said it again, quietly, to whatever was leaving. She thought that she could feel its leave-taking, the way one could feel a small whisper of breeze at night.

Now she was all alone. Kira felt the aloneness, the uncertainty, and a great sadness.

I didn’t have a clue who this girl was or why she was sitting beside her mother’s body. I could picture the place, could smell the stench of rotting corpses, could sense the isolation and vulnerability of the girl, but beyond that: nothing. It felt a little prehistoric to me, and I began to worry whether I would have to read up on Neanderthal man and worry about wooly mammoths.

But gradually—as it always does—the strong sense of being-there filled me. I sensed things coming; I could feel the existence of other characters, and they appeared, with names, and I began to understand their relationship to one another, and then I perceived the problems they were facing together. The girl stood. In my imagination, I felt her stand, and wrote the words—she stood—but until she stood and reached for a stick to lean on, I didn’t know that walking was difficult for her. As soon as I knew that, I began to understand how fragile her future was. I knew she would need friends, and help. A little boy appeared, and as they talked to one another, they explained to me—their creator, though I never feel like that, because by then they are so real and separate from me—what they were facing and how precarious their lives were. And so the book began to shape itself.

Time passed; and that book, called Gathering Blue, was published; and others books were published; and then it was 2004, and time to write a new book, and a new book had not yet appeared to me. I don’t ordinarily lead a life of isolation; usually my house in Cambridge is busy with friends and family and comings and goings. But sometimes it doesn’t lend itself to the solitude required when I’m writing. And so during that time—as it happened, the same time when my friend Trina was so ill—I went to Maine. I holed up alone in my farmhouse, except for my dog, whom I had taken along, and except for the mice and bats and crows that populate a windswept hill in November. I fiddled around at the computer. I read. Mostly I waited. And then one day I wrote:

Sometimes the creaking walls of the old house disturbed her sleep, or a shutter that came loose in the wind startled her briefly awake. A few nights before, a bat had found its way into the room, making squeaking sounds as it swooped through the dark. Sometimes a mouse scampered across the floor, usually in the fall when outdoor creatures sought warmth. Occasionally she thought that she should get a cat. Women her age often kept cats as company.

But she had the dog. They were growing old together and were good friends to each other. The dog made her take walks and gave her someone to talk to. He was all she needed.

The dog and the house. And her dreams.

That’s what I wrote.

And then, to my own amazement, I continued: The tiny footsteps that crossed her bedroom each night never woke her.

And thereby I entered the Dreamworld that had been there waiting for me.

Of course, because I write for a young audience, it wouldn’t do to have the “main character” be a woman in her seventies. Would have been a little self-absorbed, self-indulgent, narcissistic. So I created two young characters, one male, one female. They affect each other, change each other, but their worlds are separate.

And each of them—in addition to The Woman (who never did acquire a name)—grapples with fears. The one called Littlest fears growing up. The boy...his name is John...fears both attachment, which has failed him so badly, and abandonment. The Woman fears her own future and her own loneliness.

Their fears are all assuaged in that magical world, the Dreamworld, in which memory and yearning and symbols come together with no reliance on time or logic, in the place where things combine to bring solace to damaged souls. Her own terrible loss—her unbearable anguish—appears to the woman when in a nightmare she can hear the shot and the cry as her fiancé is killed. But then—such magic dreams can have—he reappears to her, in the Dreamworld, smiling and soothing. The little boy re-experiences his own horrors—an abusive father, an ineffectual mom, but the Dreamworld re-invents, re-orders his past for him so that he wakes smiling.

And all of it is orchestrated by Littlest One, the one who fears her own power until she comes to terms with it and accepts her own growth.

In the book, which eventually would titled Gossamer, the dreams are created out of what are called “fragments” collected by the tiny creature named Littlest. Silently, at night while they sleep, she glides and flutters undetected around the house where The Woman and the boy live, touching the objects that have been important to them: a folded sweater, an old photograph, for The Woman: things filled with memories. One scene describes:

The woman’s dishes, which had come to her from her own mother, were filled with important and meaningful fragments. Touching them, Littlest could perceive all sorts of things: a child (the woman, probably, though it was hard to tell for certain) sulking, seated alone at a table after everyone else had

A SPEECH BY AUTHOR AND PLAYWRIGHT, LOIS LOWRY, ABOUT GOSSAMER
gone. Refusing to eat something. Carrots, Littlest thought. It was a sweet memory, despite the sulking, because the child’s mother, she perceived, had eventually taken the hated carrots away with a smile. With her gentlest touch, Littlest collected the child’s petulant sulk, the mother’s forgiving smile, a bib with an embroidered rabbit, and even the hand-painted flowers on a small plate. It would make a lovely dream, Littlest thought; she could combine it with the kitten she had collected from an old photograph, and perhaps some remembered music that she had found in the piano.

A seashell is one of the little boy’s few treasures. Here are the fragments contained in the shell:

A breeze shot through with sunshine, the tangy whiff of salt, a child’s laughter pealing across the breeze, and cool foam on bare feet sinking into their own outline in gritty sand at the ocean’s edge….the warm lint-lined pocket of the boy’s shorts…

“We are such stuff as dreams are made on....” Shakespeare wrote, in The Tempest. Part of our “stuff,” because we are human and vulnerable, is our fears. But our dreams are made, too, of our own memories and hopes: the things we yearn for, the things we value.

Most fiction culminates in a battle of some sort, and in Gossamer the forces of good and evil….dream and nightmare….fight very dramatically for the soul and future of a deeply troubled little boy. It is Littlest One, the small dreamgiver, who gives him the weaponry he needs, and who for the first time learns to insert words into dreams as well.

“Give sorrow words,” Shakespeare also said, in Macbeth. “The grief that does not speak whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.” Words are my life, so it isn’t surprising that words are part of my own Dreamworld and that I made them a part of the healing process in Gossamer. “Courage,” the little dream-giver breathes into the boy, and arms him with the word. “Laughter,” she whispers into his dreams.

Fantasy. Of course the book is catalogued under the genre called “Fantasy.”

But gradually the nightmares were overtaken in frequency by his familiar, smiling reappearance in restorative dreams. We dream what we need, I think. I needed my son to spread his arms, as he does now in occasional dreams, to grin, to say insistently and reassuringly: “Look!” as he shows me that he is standing, wearing a leather jacket he loved, in a vast meadow, green and strewn with wildflowers.

I think it was probably no accident or whimsy that when I sat down in 2004 to write a book about the power of memory and imagination to heal, I found myself, The Woman, in it.

When a child reads a book, he or she enters the world of the fictional character….becomes that character….suffers and grieves with the character….makes decisions with the character….fights at the character’s side….and triumphs, too, with the character at the book’s end. A book becomes kind of a Dreamworld, too, a place where things connect and unfold and terrors dissipate.

So: is Gossamer about the aging woman fearing her own solitude and sorrow? Is it about the damaged little boy fearing his own deep needs? Or is about the tiny sprite called Littlest, learning her own power and fearing her own future? Or is it about each of us, and about the young reader?

As my mother once pointed out, in The Dreamworld, it doesn’t matter.

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A SPEECH BY AUTHOR AND PLAYWRIGHT, LOIS LOWRY, ABOUT GOSSAMER

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Help your students start thinking about a major theme of GOSSAMER, dreams, and write poetry at the same time. Writing free-verse dream poems can be a creative jumping off point for a discussion of where dreams come from. Poems about dreams can be so much fun. They can be rich in creative imagery, written in a stream of consciousness style, or “wouldn’t it be great if...” wish lists.

Free verse is just what it says it is - poetry that is written without proper rules about form, rhyme, rhythm, meter, etc. The greatest American writer of free verse is probably Walt Whitman. His great collection of free verse was titled Leaves of Grass and it was published in 1855. In free verse the writer makes his/her own rules. The writer decides how the poem should look, feel, and sound. Henry David Thoreau, a great philosopher, explained it this way, “. . . perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.” It may take you a while to “hear your own drummer,” but free verse can be a great way to “get things off your chest” and express what you really feel.

Activity:

1. Begin by asking students to share a few aspects of dream they may have recently had, if they are comfortable with this.

2. Share with students that they are going to be brainstorming dreams today and writing free verse poetry about dreams.
   a. At this point, share the definition of free verse poetry with students and share a few free verse poems with the class.
      Pass out the attached handout for students, so they may visually understand the form of free verse poetry.

3. After going through the dream related free-verse poems by Bruce Lansky, have students fill out the brainstorming portion of the handout.
   a. Students may brainstorm individually or with a partner.
   b. Students may then use these ideas to develop their free verse dream poem.

4. After allowing students time to brainstorm, have students share some of their ideas and images with the class.

5. Next, inform students that they are now going to create their own free verse dream poem, using one of the following titles:
   a. Places I go in my Dreams
   b. I Wish...in my Dreams
   c. Impossibles Become Possible in my Dreams

6. Once students have completed their poems, have them draw a picture to further illustrate and describe their dreams.

7. Hold a poetry slam in the classroom and allow students to share their dream poems!
My Bed is Like a Sailing Ship

My bed is like a sailing ship—when I’m tucked in, I take a trip.
I leave behind my busy day
and sail to places far away.

I sail past beaches, gleaming white,
with palm trees swaying in the night.
I watch the waves break on the shore,
and then I see my bedroom floor!

I blink my eyes, I scratch my head—my ship is home, I’m back in bed.
My ships go sailing every night
and sails home in the morning light.

I May Be Dreaming, But Wouldn’t It Be Great If...

…I were a genius who could get straight As in school without having to do any homework.
…My parents let me eat dessert first and then anything else wanted.
…My little sister moved to an island off the coast of Madagascar and I never heard from her again,
except on my birthdays, when she’d send me a card with money in it.
…Instead of making me go to Sunday school, my parents would take me and my girlfriend to the amusement park,
where I could practice the Golden Rule on the roller coaster by holding her hand whenever she got scared.

Sleepy Thoughts on a Cold Winter Night

I’m cold.
I pull my blanket over my head.
That’s better.
I find a comfortable position
and start breathing slowly.
I wonder what it would be like
to be a bear and sleep all winter.

I guess you’d have to have a pretty big last supper,
or you’d have to wake up in January to find something to eat.
I wonder what it would be like
to be a fish and sleep at the bottom of a lake.
I guess you’d have to have gills,
or you’d have to come up to the surface every ten seconds or so
to get a breath of air.
My favorite places to go are...


Here’s a list of adjectives to describe these favorite places:


One of my best memories is from the time when...


This memory is so special to me because...


If I could create my very own “wish list,” here’s what it would include:


The last dream I had was...


If I had to describe myself with 10 words, those words would be...


The dreams I have for myself include...


If I could fly it would feel like this:


If I could fly, this is where I would go...


If I could talk to animals, the animals I would talk to would be...


If I could talk to animals, this is what they’d tell me...


If I could switch bodies with anyone in the world for just one day, it would be

because.....


FaNtastical FREE-VERSE POETRY
Language Arts Student Worksheet
Interpreting Dreams

There are different states of consciousness, such as being awake, asleep, concentrating, alert, excited, bored, and so on. Our conscious mind only takes a very small part of our brain activity. Some experts claim that it is only 10%. Other areas control memory, imagination and things like heartbeat, breathing, etc. And then there is the activity called dreaming. This part is still a mystery in many respects.

On average, we spend about a third of our lives sleeping. During a portion of that time, we are dreaming. When we are asleep, our brain is not really “sleeping.” It’s in constant activity. Dreams are both a method of relaxation and a vehicle in which the mind communicates ideas.

Dreams are easily influenced by factors in our life. They are emotions, thoughts and ideas. That’s why many people believe in interpreting dreams. Although there are different methods of dream interpretation, most of them offer the same basic points of analysis.

Activity:

1. Together as a class, think about symbols that have appeared in your dreams. Talk about what they may mean.
2. Then, hand out copies of attached worksheet and read the “dream-dictionary” portion of the worksheet in class.
   a. Are there symbols they had already mentioned? Were their predictions correct? (Remind students that their own perceptions take precedence over any definitions in dream dictionaries. Tell students that if they prefer not to share personal dreams, they can always make them up.)
3. Divide the class in groups and have them place their attention on the second portion of the worksheet. Assign each group one or more of the “situations” presented on the worksheet to complete.
   a. Students have to predict what the person in the situation may dream about tonight, according to their personal situation and the dictionary. Ask them to finish the sentence.
4. After allowing groups ample time to complete the dream situations, have each group discuss the situations they were given and their interpretation of what this person may dream of tonight.

Extension

5. After going through this assignment, hold a class discussion regarding dream interpretations.
6. What do students think about the interpretation of dreams? Do they believe that interpreting dreams is useful, or is it a waste of time? Do they feel better or worse after having a nightmare? Discuss in class. Have students share experiences, if comfortable.
Dream Dictionary

Balloon
Indicates hope with regard to business and/or love. If you feel scared, it can mean that you’re frustrated with a particular situation.

Bats
To many people, bats are ugly little creatures. They are often a sign that someone has something against you.

Birds
Birds are usually considered a very good omen, especially if they are colorful.

Boat
A boat is a means of transportation. It’s a symbol for your life and/or business and the direction it’s taking. Pay attention to the water, whether it’s a calm ocean, a storm, etc. (see water)

Bridge
If you cross a bridge in your dream, you’re not scared of change.

Butterfly
A butterfly means that you or somebody else is afraid of commitment. It symbolizes “flying” from person to person.

Cactus
A cactus tells you that you need to protect your privacy. You are feeling crowded.

Calendar
Seeing a calendar means that you are organized and well prepared.

Celebrities
If you are the celebrity, it means that you want to achieve more in social situations. If not, you are letting people influence you too much. Also, remember that celebrities are people, and they can also be reflections of yourself.

Circus
If an animal runs away from a circus, it means that you need extra control of your passions or your temper. If you’re at a circus, you are worried about giving the wrong impression about yourself.

Drowning
If you’re drowning and you’re scared, it’s a bad omen for health or business.

Exam
If you dream that you’re taking an exam, you’re worried about whether you’re meeting society’s expectations.

Falling
It’s a common symbol for uncertainty about the future. If you dream that you’re falling but you’re not frightened, it means you will overcome all obstacles. If you’re injured in the fall, it means you have lost a friend.

Flying
Flying is a common metaphor of personal power. If you fly over “obstacles,” such as trees and houses, it means you can overcome them. If you’re happy in your dream, it’s an indicator of self-confidence.

Hair
If your hair is gray and/or it’s falling off, you’re concerned with getting older. Long hair is a symbol of creativity. If you get a haircut and you’re not happy with it, it means you’re not being allowed to be as creative as you’d like.

Hitting
If you hit someone in a dream, it means you feel powerful over him/her. If you cannot hit him/her, you feel inferior.

Naked
Dreaming that you’re naked in public (and you’re not happy) means that you’re afraid that others can “see through” you. You’re afraid of not being accepted. If you dream you are naked and you feel comfortable, it can mean that you’re happy with your relationship to other people.

Rain
Rain is usually a symbol of a release of tension and good luck. A severe storm can be a sign of future wealth. (see water)

Rats
If you see rats, it means that somebody is jealous of you. If you hear rats running outside or inside walls, you should move on and not waste your time.

School
Recurring dreams of being back in school typically reflect performance anxiety.

Teeth
If you lose a tooth in your dream, you’re concerned about your physical and social appearance. If your teeth are rotten, you are hurting somebody. False teeth mean that you’ll get unexpected help.

Tornado
Frequent dreams of tornadoes may reflect family instability or violent and unpredictable moods.

Water
Water is the universal symbol for emotions. Pay attention to the way the water “behaves.” Turbulent waters mean that you are overwhelmed emotionally. Clean, clear water suggests emotional clarity.
Dream Situations...

1. David is feeling crowded. He may dream about a desert full of _____________________________________________________

2. There are many upcoming changes in Ryan's life. His family is moving and he's about to start middle school but he's not scared of these things. He's very happy and confident. He may dream that he's crossing a _____________________________

4. Sarah is very self-confident. She may dream that she's ___________________________________________________________

5. Tom just opened a new business and he's hoping that it goes well. He's full of hope. He may dream about a ______________

6. Arthur is worried about getting old. He may dream about __________________________________________________________

7. Christina has a very bad temper. Sometimes she loses control. She may dream about a lion escaping from a _____________

8. Rebecca won the lottery today. She had been worried about her debts, but she doesn't have to worry any more. She may dream that she has ________________________________________________________________________________________
**Activity:**

1. The evening before this exercise is done in class, ask students to bring in an ordinary but personal object to class the next day.

2. Read the above excerpt from the play GOSSAMER to the class, or read the chapter in the book where Littlest is learning how to pick up fragments from personal objects she touches.

3. With students’ personal objects, have them write a short story of that object.
   a. Students should think of the following questions while writing their story: What are the memories that object holds? What may be the strongest memory or feeling attached to that object? What is the relationship the object has with the student? How could the memories and feelings attached to that object influence the student’s dreams?

4. Once the first personal object story is completed, the facilitator should display a number of ordinary personal objects not connected to any student for the class to use.

5. Place students with a partner and have each pair choose one of the ordinary personal objects from those the facilitator brought to class.

6. The pair should next examine the object and, using the attached worksheet, begin brainstorming ideas as to what sort of person may own this object and what the personal connection to this object may be.
   a. Using the attached worksheet, students will then develop a story around this new object.

7. Once completed, share these creative writing stories with the class.
Name of the object: ________________________________

The person who owns this object can be described as...
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

The relationship the object has with its owner can be described as...
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

The memories attached to this object include...
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

The strongest memory or feeling attached to this object is...
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Now, knowing all of this background information about this object and the person who owns the object, create a dream the owner may have that stems from the memories and feelings attached to this object.
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
WHAT DO YOU SEE?  
Art Classroom Activity

A Note from The Director, Jeff Frank:

We’ve talked a bit about Lois’ description of the Heap – like a pile of clothes. For me that implies a sense of the beings melding together – also a sense of the soft layers that are their cloaks/coverings. In addition to Thin Elderly, Fastidious, Most Ancient, and Littlest – there will be one additional adult – Trooper, and two teens. The three will bring to life the other elements of the story as well. Puppeteering the dog, becoming masked characters in the dream sequences. Dog puppeteer in blacks I think.

The environment of the heap – is a cave like dwelling – perhaps we can open up traps and come from below. Building on the idea of the luminous (since we can’t make them transparent) nature of the dream givers, that their cave world has a sense of the phosphorescent inhabitants – a sense of the space glowing – just a bit of magic in their world.

Materials
Large drawing paper
Different art tools: markers, colored pencils, chalk, charcoal, paint, watercolors, etc.

The images in GOSSAMER, such as what the dream-givers and the Heap looks like may be very difficult for some students to visualize. Use this creative exercise to help students make visual connections with these abstract characters and ideas.

Activity:
1. Ask students to list the dream-giver characters in GOSSAMER, and write this list on the board.

2. Next, ask students to list as many adjectives to describe what these characters may look like, and their personalities.
   a. What emotions or moods may each character embody? What colors best describe each character? If you met each of these characters, how do you think they would react and respond to you? How is each character similar to you, and how are they different?
   b. Complete this brainstorming exercise with the environment of Heap, as well.

3. Now, inform students that they are going to be drawing a representation of two of the dream-giver characters (or one character and the Heap), using whatever drawing medium they choose.
   a. If it is possible to have a wide array of drawing utensils, ask students to describe what mood each different art supply may create and how that supply will assist them in creating the visual image of each character.
   b. Remind students that there is no right or wrong interpretation of these characters—they should use the information given from the book to help guide their illustration. However, it is based on their vision.
WHAT’S IN A NAME
Social Studies Classroom Activity

Adapted from: http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=878

Activity
1. As a class, ask students to recall the names of the different Dream Giver characters referenced in GOSSAMER, and write this list on the board.
   a. The list should include: Gossamer, Thin Elderly, Most Ancient, Rotund, Fastidious, Trooper, and Dowager.
   b. Have students look up the definitions for those names that are identified as new vocabulary words.
2. Ask students what these Dream Giver’s names tell us about these characters.
   a. Based on their names, what do these characters look like? What may these names tell us about their personalities?
3. Have each student choose one of the Dream Givers listed on the board to create an illustration of, clearly depicting the physicality and personality of the Dream Giver, based on its name.
4. Explain that during this lesson students will focus on personal names.
5. In class, allow students time to research and record the meanings of their names on the internet and in Baby Name books, if possible. In addition, ask students to record their responses to the following questions:
   a. How do you feel about your name?
   b. How do others respond to your name?
   c. If you could pick out your own names, what would you select, and why?
      i. Before students begin their research, explain that they will share their findings with others in the class. Emphasize that students should be careful to gather information that they are willing to (and won’t be embarrassed to) to share with others.
6. Assign students to interview members of their family to find out additional details about their name (or nickname—whatever name students are called where they currently live), and record these responses.
   a. Students may ask family members questions about why you were named as you were, what other names were considered, and who ended up picking out your name.
7. Once students have had the opportunity to complete their name research and family interviews, arrange students into small groups and ask them to share the details that they found out about their own name.
8. Ask each group to choose one “name story and information” to share with the whole class.
9. Gather the class together and ask each group to share the story that they have chosen.
10. Ask students as a class to discuss what they’ve discovered from the name stories. The following questions an guide the discussion:
    a. What do names tell us about people?
    b. How are names part of a person’s history?
    c. How were the names that weren’t chosen part of the stories?
    d. Who do name-giving practices vary from one culture to another?
11. Return to the story of GOSSAMER. Ask students why they think Lois Lowry chose to give the Dream Givers the specific names she did. What do these names tell us about these characters and the Dream Giver creatures?

In the first draft of GOSSAMER, Littlest actually had a “real” name. Along the way, it disappeared: it no longer felt right, it felt too human. I began to perceive that the creatures (for lack of a better term) --- the dream-givers --- would be more ethereal, would lack some of the more prosaic human elements: names, houses, pets, and hobbies. Clothing, too, I suppose! They are really unencumbered except for spirit. I suppose they could be described as pure spirit. – Lois Lowry
Below is information regarding Foster Care and Adoption in the state of Wisconsin, provided by a First Stage Children's Theater partner, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare: together, for children.

We encourage you to read through this information and share it with the young people in your lives, to help answer questions and encourage discussions about foster care and child welfare. For more information on becoming a foster or adoptive parent, call Children's Service Society at (414) 264-KIDS.

Frequently asked questions about foster care and adoption:

What is foster care?
Foster care is the temporary placement of a child in a new home away from his or her family due to abuse or neglect. Placement in a foster home protects the child while working with the biological family to help them learn how to be effective parents. In most cases, the goal is for the child to return home to his or her biological family. Children are placed in foster care for various reasons. Some examples include a child who has been abandoned, a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect or a child whose parent is incarcerated or hospitalized.

What is expected of a foster parent?
A foster parent must be committed to providing a safe and nurturing family environment for a child until he or she can return home to live with his or her biological family. Foster parents are expected to attend to and meet a child's individual needs. Foster parents are expected to be meaningfully involved in all aspects of the child's life: school, therapy, social network and others. Foster parents are expected to schedule visits with the social workers involved in the case and work with the biological families whenever appropriate.

What is expected of an adoptive parent?
Adoptive parents must be committed to providing a forever family for a child who cannot return to his or her biological family. They also are expected to attend to and meet their child's physical, emotional and mental health needs.

What is the average length of stay a foster child will be in our home?
A child may stay in a foster home until his or her parents are able to care for him or her again or until a suitable placement can be made with a relative. If this is not possible, a child may stay in the foster home until he or she can be adopted. The average length of stay in foster care is 12 months, however the length of stay in foster care varies depending on the child and the family's case plan.

Do the children have contact with their birth parents while in foster care?
Foster parents are asked to support the child's connection to the birth family as the goal of foster care is usually to return children to their biological families. It is intended to be a short-term arrangement until kids can safely return to their family. Some children have been removed from their homes because they have suffered abuse or neglect, or because their parents cannot take care of them. The safety of children is most important. Whenever possible, efforts are made so the child and his or her biological family can stay together. The ideal fostering situation is one in which all interested parties work in partnership toward the best interests of the child. This is not always possible or appropriate.

What is the background of the children in foster care?
The children, ages 0 to 18, are from Milwaukee County and have been removed from their families and are placed in out-of-home care, usually because of abuse and/or neglect. The majority of children and youth have some degree of physical, behavioral and emotional needs stemming from the difficulty some of them have experienced in their lives. All children who have experienced the trauma of child abuse and neglect and have been separated from their biological family have some special needs. Many children in foster care are part of a sibling group. Foster and adoptive families can have a dramatic, positive impact on these children. Foster and adoptive parents can make a difference by providing a structured, nurturing environment. It is important to remember that these children will grow up to be adults in our society. How we respond to their needs now will largely determine what kind of citizens they will be in the future.

What are the training requirements for foster and adoptive parents?
Training is a very important component of foster parenting and adopting, because children in foster care have a variety of unique needs. Foster and adoptive parents are required to attend 36 hours of pre-placement PACE training prior to caring for a child. The training provides prospective foster and adoptive parents the skills and knowledge essential to providing a stable and nurturing environment for children. Once licensed, ongoing training is required and must be completed yearly in order to keep your license in good standing.
Child Abuse Statistics in the USA

- An estimated 906,000 children are victims of abuse and neglect every year. The rate of victimization is 12.3 children per 1,000 children.
- Children ages 0-3 are the most likely to experience abuse. About one in 50 U.S. infants are victims of nonfatal child abuse or neglect in a year, according to the first national study of the problem in that age group done by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention along with The Federal Administration for Children and Families.
- 1,500 children die every year from child abuse and neglect. That is just over four fatalities every day.
- 79% of the children killed are younger than four.
- The rate of child abuse is estimated to be three times greater than is reported.
- The rate of victimization is 12.3 children per 1,000 children.

These statistics are from the Administration for Children & Families of the US Department of Health & Human Services “Child Maltreatment Report 2003”

The first step in helping abused children is learning to recognize the symptoms of child abuse. Although child abuse is divided into four types -- physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment -- the types are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child for example is often emotionally maltreated as well, and a sexually abused child may be also neglected. Any child at any age may experience any of the types of child abuse. Children over age five are more likely to be physically abused and to suffer moderate injury than are children under age five.

What do I do if I think someone is abusing a child?
If a child discloses that he or she has been abused by someone, it is important that you listen to them most of all.

DO
- Provide a safe environment (be comforting, welcoming, and a good listener)
- Tell the child it was not his/her fault
- Listen carefully
- Document the child’s exact quotes
- Be supportive, not judgmental
- Know your limits
- Tell the truth and make no promises
- Ask ONLY four questions
  - What happened?
  - Who did this to you?
  - Where were you when this happened?
  - When did this happen?
- Asking any additional questions may contaminate a case.
- Report it!
- Call your local law enforcement agency
- Call your local Child Protective Services Agency
- Call the 24-Hour Childhelp® National Child Abuse Hotline and we will connect you to the appropriate agency.

DO NOT
- Investigate
- Ask leading questions (a question that suggests the answer or contains the information the questioner is looking for – That man touched you, didn’t he?)
- Make promises
- Notify the parents or the caretaker
Below are links to a number of online resources to help you learn more about the resources out there combating child abuse and protecting our youth... and ways you can help!


If you suspect that students in your class may be suffering or have suffered from child abuse, this site offers ideas on how to use books as bibliotherapy. This book can be used as a discussion point to educate students about child abuse and how they can deal with it.


Finish off a unit or discussion about child abuse with this site, made for young adults, offering stories and resources about how students can help other students who are suffering from child abuse.


Teach students about how child abuse is a current issue with these articles from the New York Times. This site lists all of the articles on child abuse printed by the newspaper in the past few years, and highlights many of the current events surrounding this nationwide issue.

Closing Thoughts on Child Abuse

This is another, rather serious lesson plan designed for students to continue teaching about child abuse awareness, and what to do if students recognize the signs of child abuse.

Other Resources:

• Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin: http://www.preventchildabusewi.org/index.htm
• Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin Education Center: http://www.BlueKids.org/index.asp
• “What Should You Do When You Suspect Child Abuse?” Scholastic: http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4435
• “Child Abuse Resources for Schools and Teachers” Memorial Library: http://library.cortland.edu/rguides/child_abuse.asp
• Child Welfare League of America: http://www.cwla.org/articles/cv0111teachers.htm

Information on Placement in the Foster Care System for Teachers and Parents
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Taken directly from: http://www.youthcomm.org/FCYU-Features/MayJune2008/FCYU-2008-05-08.htm
Change and Stress

Change, whether planned or unexpected, is hard for young children to understand and accept. When change happens because of a natural disaster or other crisis, loss adds even greater stress. Children may have a hard time talking about their feelings, but you often can see telltale signs of distress. According to “Tips for Talking to Children After a Disaster” from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), children may:

- Revert to younger behaviors—sucking their thumb, crying more easily, or clinging to parents and caretakers.
- Anger more quickly and more often.
- Become quiet or withdrawn.
- Eat too much or too little.
- Sleep too much or too little.

What can you do to help?

Encourage children to ask questions.
Make time for your children to talk about their worries with you, such as how they feel about loss and change. Develop a plan. Plan together for other possible emergencies; help your children feel that there’s something you can do to be safer.

Pay attention.
Watch what children play or draw and what they see on TV. Turn off the news if it’s too distressing or if visuals are difficult reminders of loss or change. Find out what frightens them. Help children understand that no feelings are wrong - it’s okay to be afraid, and it’s okay to be sad one minute and laugh out loud another.

Focus on the positive.
Help children see the good things that people do to support each other in times of disaster.

Stay in touch.
Help children stay in contact with the people, places, and things that are important to them.

Change is stressful, and even harder for young children to handle if their routines are disrupted. Start each day by talking about and planning what your child will do that day. As soon as possible after a move or a crisis, it’s good to get back into a daily routine. Even if it’s a different routine in a different place, knowing what’s planned helps young children feel more secure.
Change, whether planned or unexpected, is hard for young children to understand and accept. When change happens because of a disaster or other crisis, loss adds even greater anxiety in children. Play “Topsy Turvy” to show children that all changes are not big or scary.

Activity
1. Before students enter the classroom in the morning, set up some silly changes in the room: write the schedule as 3, 2, 1 instead of 1, 2, 3; wear two different shoes; put on only one glove.
2. Wait until students begin to notice the silly changes you’ve set up. When students ask what’s going on, say you’re just making a few changes.
3. Then, when you’re ready to start the activity, choose a favorite picture book and read the sentences backward or read from back to front. When everyone is laughing, begin the lesson.
4. Ask students: What happened differently today? Did you think some of the changes were fun? Confusing? Can some changes be scary? Uncomfortable?
5. Set up four columns on the chalkboard or chart paper.
   a. Big Changes
   b. Little Changes
   c. Scary Changes
   d. Helpful Changes
6. Have students talk about changes that have happened to them, now or in the past. Then, as a class, classify the changes by putting them into the proper columns.
   a. For example, “moving” might be a big, scary, or helpful change; “getting a puppy for the family” might be a big and helpful change; “outgrowing your old shoes” may be a little change.
      i. Be sensitive and allow students to identify and talk about their classifications. For some, “outgrowing shoes” could be a big change if they were a favorite pair or if their family is worried about money.
7. After students have completed the chart, ask them what they have learned about change. (Answers will vary, but may include “All changes are not big,” “All changes are not scary,” and “Some changes are really good.”)
8. For the rest of the day, play “Topsy Turvy.”
   a. Quietly, pick a student to make a silly change. He or she might put on a hat upside down, switch seats with a friend, walk backward, etc. When someone spots the change, he or she shouts, “Topsy Turvy!”
I AM A STAR
Art Classroom Activity

John is, simply, frightened, because he has been damaged by people he loved. So, he mistrusts love, and perhaps with good reason. It will take him a long time to recover. The woman gives him that time. She doesn’t pressure him, doesn’t judge him; she only loves him. It helps him begin to heal. – Lois Lowry

Objectives:
Students will write about what makes him or her unique, and recognize and respect the unique qualities of others.

Activity:
1. Begin this session by showing students a cut-out of a large five-point star (directions may be found at: http://www.highhopes.com/5pointstar.html) and telling the students that they are all “stars.”

2. Demonstrate how to fold the five-point star.
   a. Practice making the star before the lesson so you are comfortable with the process when you demonstrate.

3. Have each student fold and cut out a star.
   a. They should then decorate their stars with colorful or interesting patterns that illustrate special qualities that make them unique and special.
   b. Display the stars on the bulletin board or hang from the ceiling. Label the display “Our ‘Star Qualities’.”

4. Once these stars are completed, meet as a whole group to discuss star qualities.

5. List on chart paper words that describe people.
   a. Encourage them to keep the descriptions positive: quiet, loud, artistic, athletic, good reader, dark hair, etc. Avoid judgmental words such as noisy, bossy and ugly.
   b. Help them to discover that the world is a better place because we are each unique with different strengths, appearances and skills.
   c. Talk about the importance of respecting others who are different.

6. Continue the class discussion by talking about the importance of trust within the classroom community.
   a. Discuss how trust is earned and kept. Discuss how trust allows people to take risks. Discuss the benefits of taking risks.

7. As a reflection on the class discussion, have students write in their journals about their own perceptions of themselves. Encourage them to write as many words that describe the appearance, skills, habits, gifts and personality as they can.
   a. Let them know that they do not need to share these thoughts with anyone else.
   b. If students trust each other, they may wish to share and celebrate their strengths with each other.
Objective
To compare human needs and animal needs: food, water, shelter, protection, medical care, companionship, clothing, exercise, and love.

Materials
- Pictures from magazines representing all of the above human needs.
- A second set of pictures showing how animals can have these same needs.

Activity
1. Ask students to tell you what the first set of pictures show about what a family provides for its members. Encourage children to talk about food, water, shelter, protection, medical care, companionship (friendship), exercise, and love.

2. Ask students questions about each of the following:
   a. Food: What kinds of food do you eat? Should you eat cat food? Or chocolate all day? What is your favorite food?
   b. Shelter: What kind of house do you live in? How does the house protect you? (It keeps you warm in winter and cool in summer.)
   c. Medical Care: Why do you go to a doctor’s office? How does a doctor help you when you are sick?
   d. Clothing: Why do we wear clothing?

3. Animals have needs just like people. Show children the animal needs pictures.
   a. Food: Families need to provide food for both their human and animal members. Animals need food made especially for them. Discuss these issues with students:
      i. People food, like chocolate, can make animals sick.
      ii. Use clean plates to put out appropriate food: dog food for dogs, and cat food for cats.
      iii. Meat bones can break into small, sharp pieces and get stuck in your pet’s throat. Give your pet rubber bones or dog biscuits instead.

   b. Water: Animals need plenty of fresh water throughout the day to prevent dehydration. Discuss these issues with students:
      i. Think about how much water your pet needs.
      ii. Will a large dog like a St. Bernard have enough water from a small cereal bowl to last all day? How much water do you think a large dog would need?
      iii. What happens to water outside in the winter? In the summer? Can you drink very frozen or very hot water?
      iv. Try an experiment with your class: put a glass of water on the counter for a few days and taste it. Does it taste good? Make sure your animals have fresh, cool water everyday.
c. Shelter: Explain that shelter means home or where you live. Make sure your animal’s house is the right size and the right temperature. Discuss these ideas with students:
   i. What if humans went outside in the summer with four or five coats on? How would we feel? Would a dog with lots of fur feel good outside in the summer with no shade?
   ii. How would a short-haired dog feel outside in the winter with no shelter?

d. Clothing: People wear clothing. What do animals wear? (Fur and feathers are possible examples.) Discuss these ideas with students:
   i. What happens when our clothes get dirty?
   ii. People need to take care of their animals by grooming them. The best thing you can do is brush your pet’s fur. Sometimes pets may need a bath to get rid of fleas or ticks.

e. Protection: How does your family help protect you? Discuss these ideas with students:
   i. One way you can protect your dog is to always use a leash when you are taking him or her for a walk. If you are going for a walk and your dog is on a leash, you can steer your dog away from trouble. Also, dogs on leashes can’t run into the street when cars are coming, or get into fights with other dogs.
   ii. Put an identification tag on your pet.
   iii. Get your pet a license. A license protects your dog or cat if an accident happens. What kinds of accidents could happen? (A door left open, a fence blown down in a storm.) If your pet winds up on the street or at the animal shelter, the person who finds it can get it back home to you.

f. Companionship: Discuss these ideas and questions with students:
   i. Who has a special friend? How do you feel about your friend? What do you do with your friend? Animals have feelings too, and they need the people they love to spend time with them.
   ii. Dogs especially need to have companionship. Their cousins in the wild (wolves and coyotes) live in family groups called packs. Your dog considers you part of his pack, and if you don’t spend time with him he’ll feel confused and lonely, and wonder why his pack is treating him this way.
   iii. Make sure you play with your pet and take time to train him.

g. Exercise: Discuss these ideas with students:
   i. What would happen if you came to school and did nothing but sit at your desk all day and read a book? How would you feel at the end of the day? Bored? Tired? In a bad mood?
   ii. Dogs and cats that are left alone too much or don’t get enough exercise can become bored and lonely. They might tear up the house or chew up your favorite toy in frustration. Dogs need to run. Cats can get a lot of exercise by playing with their toys or jumping on the furniture. Make sure your pet gets enough exercise.
Appreciating Age and Cultural Diversity

One of the most important goals of education is to instill a sense of appreciation for the diversity of the human experience. This includes the different ways people from varying cultural backgrounds view the world. Appreciation of human diversity also includes understanding the perspectives of people born at different times in different historical periods.

In a rapidly changing world, each succeeding generation shares experiences as different from other generations as there are differences among cultures. By introducing members of the older generation into the classroom, teachers add another perspective to cultural diversity.

Without adding units or topics, teachers can expose their students to the subject of aging by having older and younger people working together in learning activities. When the young interact with older persons, there is increased understanding of aging, and the contributions and perspectives of older men and women are more appreciated.

In many cultures, family and community members traditionally looked to older persons for guidance. Older persons enjoyed respect for their years of living, working and experiencing life’s changes. But in a complex world that is changing rapidly, older people are less valued for their years of accumulated knowledge. As technology advances, a transfer of knowledge often is initiated by younger persons. Without opportunities for meaningful exchanges of ideas, young people may view older people as old-fashioned, behind the times or a hindrance to progress. Older people may view younger people as self-important or shallow.

In most families there is regular intergenerational contact, whether family members live in the same household or in separate towns. However, even if they see each other often, communication may be limited in scope. For example, although grandparents and grandchildren may be in daily contact, they may not significantly understand each other, or exchange thoughts and feelings about past and present events.

In some cases, family arrangements make frequent contact difficult or impossible. Older and younger generations become separated when families relocate for jobs or through divorce. Older family members may move to another region after retirement. Immigrant families with limited means may leave younger or older family members in their country of origin. As a result, many young people are deprived of regular contact with older persons and do not benefit from the experiences their elders might share with them about the world in which they live.

Like families, schools may have established relationships with the surrounding community, but teachers may know little about the community and the resources it offers. Among those resources are older men and women who are active in various community groups, such as local senior centers and volunteer organizations. Older residents have valuable information and perspectives to share when schools provide intergenerational educational opportunities.
By promoting intergenerational education, schools respond to the needs of the larger community and strengthen classroom instruction. Elders as Resources programs described in this guide are designed to bring schools and communities together and allow younger and older persons to learn from each other.

**Life Writing**
Another vehicle for intergenerational learning is the written word - the exchange of personal thoughts committed to paper and shared across generations. Life writing is an opportunity for younger and older people to share life views and experiences through writing exercises. Suggested activities include the following.

- The teacher focuses on a life event or theme, such as family relations, childhood or personal values. Variations on this project involve several forms of literary expression, such as poetry, short dramatic works and keeping a journal.
- Include older adults in classroom writing exercises. Assign both older adults and young students to compose a short paper describing something about their own lives.
- Elders and students present their completed assignments in class. In an open discussion format, students compare perspectives of elders and themselves. Understanding the ways in which their views are similar or different, especially relating to life themes or events, is sure to generate enthusiasm.

**Food and Culture**
Among the most common, yet important, of all family traditions is preparing food. Food preparation is an art. Each culture and region has unique kinds of foods and ways of preparation. People from different cultures and regions differ in the role that food plays in their lives. By having elders instruct students in the art of food preparation from their culture or region, the class becomes a forum for both aging awareness and multicultural education. Suggested activities include the following:

- Elders attend class and share samples of ethnic food from family recipes passed down through the generations. Students are invited to share their own family food traditions.
- An ethnic festival is organized and food is displayed and consumed by festival participants. Elders describe the foods and food preparation in specific ethnic celebrations.
- Social and cultural circumstances often lead groups to develop diets that are distinct from others. With the assistance of elders, students may record recipes and stories for a shared publication.

**POST-SHOW QUESTIONS**

1. The process of “touching” is fascinating on many counts --- picking up fragments of memories, smells, feelings, etc. that have become embedded in objects over time. What objects in your house would be ideal for “touching”?

2. The Sinisteed inflicts nightmares on humans by using the tactic of “delving.” Why is “delving,” or touching too deeply, dangerous to both the Dream Giver and the human dreamer?

3. At the beginning of this story, John is very unhappy and disturbed. What has caused John to be so angry? How does John change throughout the story, and what impact does his relationship with the Woman have on these changes, if any?

4. All of the main characters go through changes throughout the story. What are the major changes John, his mother, the Woman and Littlest each go through during the play? Which character, and the changes they go through, do relate to most, and why?
1. We’re going to enter now. We have important work to do. It is essential that we be absolutely quiet after we enter. You seem to have difficulty with understanding that particular rule. “Absolutely quiet” means no questions, no giggling, no comments!

2. She’s very lively and curious. I don’t think we’ve ever had one quite so curious. It’s appealing. You explained to her, of course, what we are? That we are dream-givers?

3. He’s an angry little boy named John, Toby, and we must be very patient with him. He’ll be here Friday.

4. Yes, I collected fragments. I stored them inside myself. I can feel them there, still. They make me feel good. There’s a fragment of a party. The man in the uniform is there, laughing. There’s a bit of dancing. And there’s a--. There’s a kiss. Well, a fragment of a kiss.

5. Delving means touching too deeply. Pressing your hand instead of using that light flickering though you just showed me. It sometimes happens unintentionally, when dream-givers become too interested in what they’re touching. When they start to like it too much.

6. So anyways, like I said, I’m getting my act together. I’m going to counseling. But I need John back. It’s totally weird having him gone. He’s my best friend, you know?

7. Someday you’ll get really, really mad at him. Then you can get someone to shoot him. I know people who have guns. Or I’ll do it for you, after I get my gun.

8. Yes, it’s Sinisteeds. They’re convening. I think they have a victim identified. I’m feeling early warning signs. Small tremors in the earth. They’re on the prowl.

9. Use that, then. It’s a good memory for him. Use it now to strengthen the boy.

10. Dogs are good company. So are you, come to think of it: you’re good company, too.

11. He’s worth a lot to me, John. He’s my best friend. He’s my family. There you go, Toby. Into the yard.

12. I’m afraid so. We must hope that it doesn’t bring The Horde. The boy is very vulnerable. They can sense that, when a human is weak, or in need.

13. A story is—well, everything is a story.

14. And when she said to the boy: “I’ll tell you a story”—and then she began “once upon a time there was a boy”—that was his story, wasn’t it?

15. Well, then, I am quite, quite certain I could touch the dog in a fragile and delicate way. In a gossamer way.

16. But the Horde is gathering. There is going to be a mass attack, I’m quite certain. And Littlest has such few fragments to give the boy for strength. It was she who realized he was beginning to feel affection for the dog.

17. Well, it’s of no importance, really. And I’d prefer that you not mention to the others that I even expressed an interest. But it’s something I’ve always wondered about. What does, ah, fur feel like, exactly? Is it soft?

18. Hold my hand, Thin Elderly, and hope with all your heart. Think the words! Say the words!

19. I have an idea, then. We’ll let your mom take care of it each day. She can keep it right on her desk. Remember where she keeps your photograph?

20. We’re imaginary. We live within.

21. I feel terribly sad. About the boy, and about the filling-in.

22. Quite so. Change means leaving things behind. There is a sadness to that. Run now. There’s The Heap just ahead. Dive in. Think.

23. Oh! It’s so tiny! And transparent! And look at its wide eyes! What is its name?
1. We’re going to enter now. We have important work to do. It is essential that we be absolutely quiet after we enter. You seem to have difficulty with understanding that particular rule. “Absolutely quiet” means no questions, no giggling, no comments! **Fastidious**

2. She’s very lively and curious. I don’t think we’ve ever had one quite so curious. It’s appealing. You explained to her, of course, what we are? That we are dream-givers? **Most Ancient**

3. He’s an angry little boy named John, Toby, and we must be very patient with him. He’ll be here Friday. **Woman**

4. Yes, I collected fragments. I stored them inside myself. I can feel them there, still. They make me feel good. There’s a fragment of a party. The man in the uniform is there, laughing. There’s a bit of dancing. And there’s a--. There’s a kiss. Well, a fragment of a kiss. **Littlest**

5. Delving means touching too deeply. Pressing your hand instead of using that light flickering though you just showed me. It sometimes happens unintentionally, when dream-givers become too interested in what they’re touching. When they start to like it too much. **Thin Elderly**

6. So anyways, like I said, I’m getting my act together. I’m going to counseling. But I need John back. It’s totally weird having him gone. He’s my best friend, you know? **Young Woman**

7. Someday you’ll get really, really mad at him. Then you can get someone to shoot him. I know people who have guns. Or I’ll do it for you, after I get my gun. **John**

8. Yes, it’s Sinisteeds. They’re convening. I think they have a victim identified. I’m feeling early warning signs. Small tremors in the earth. They’re on the prowl. **Most Ancient**

9. Use that, then. It’s a good memory for him. Use it now to strengthen the boy. **Thin Elderly**

10. Dogs are good company. So are you, come to think of it: you’re good company, too. **Woman**

11. He’s worth a lot to me, John. He’s my best friend. He’s my family. There you go, Toby. Into the yard. **Woman**

12. I’m afraid so. We must hope that it doesn’t bring The Horde. The boy is very vulnerable. They can sense that, when a human is weak, or in need. **Thin Elderly**

13. A story is—well, everything is a story. **Thin Elderly**

14. And when she said to the boy: “I’ll tell you a story”—and then she began “once upon a time there was a boy”—that was his story, wasn’t it? **Littlest**

15. Well, then. I am quite, quite certain I could touch the dog in a fragile and delicate way. In a gossamer way. **Littlest**

16. But the Horde is gathering. There is going to be a mass attack, I’m quite certain. And Littlest has such few fragments to give the boy for strength. It was she who realized he was beginning to feel affection for the dog. **Thin Elderly**

17. Well, it’s of no importance, really. And I’d prefer that you not mention to the others that I even expressed an interest. But it’s something I’ve always wondered about. What does, ah, fur feel like, exactly? Is it soft? **Fastidious**

18. Hold my hand, Thin Elderly, and hope with all your heart. Think the words! Say the words! **Littlest**

19. I have an idea, then. We’ll let your mom take care of it each day. She can keep it right on her desk. Remember where she keeps your photograph? **Woman**

20. We’re imaginary. We live within. **Thin Elderly**

21. I feel terribly sad. About the boy, and about the filling-in. **Littlest**

22. Quite so. Change means leaving things behind. There is a sadness to that. Run now. There’s The Heap just ahead. Dive in. Think. **Elderly**

23. Oh! It’s so tiny! And transparent! And look at its wide eyes! What is its name? **Littlest**