

The Journey by Francesca Sanna: A Sequence of activities for Upper Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3

It might be useful to have a visualiser or some kind of camera projection device to be able to share the images from the text with the pupils on a large scale, to allow for close reading of the images.

The book supports teachers to teach higher level reading and writing skills through a challenging and emotive text. The rich and evocative illustrations are the perfect stimulus for developing reader response by inviting reflections of complex and mature themes. The text offers a wealth of opportunities to explore in depth responses to the challenging issues and sensitive content in a framework that explore these themes whilst inspiring creative and authentic responses.

It is advisable to give careful consideration as to whether or not all members of your class have the emotional maturity to engage with this text in light of the sensitive nature of its focus. Teachers must also be mindful and sensitive to the prior experiences of their pupils and use this to inform the extent to which they deem it appropriate to explore the themes addressed. The book can be explored with children in Year 5 and above subject to the above caveats.

The activities detailed below stretch over five sessions and focus primarily on using the illustrations to stimulate reflection, discussion and creative responses. The sessions introduce readers to the family unit and the rupture that is created by the father's disappearance. If you wish to explore the plot further and in more depth, a five week teaching sequence with extended writing opportunities is available on CLPE's Power of Reading website. www.clpe.org.uk

Session 1:

Present the children with a pair of glasses, ideally with a circular red frame like the glasses worn by the father in the story. Invite the children to speculate upon who the glasses might belong to and consider:

- Where they may have come from
- What the owner might have seen through the glasses
- How they might have been misplaced
- How this might affect the owner

Note the children's reflections and suggestions. Divide the children into discussion groups. Provide each group with the first page of the double page spread with the opening paragraph omitted. In their groups invite the children to consider:

- What they notice?
- What aspects of the illustration they like and are drawn to and why?
- What aspects of the illustration they dislike and why?
- What puzzles them and what questions the illustration prompts?
- What connections they make, what does the illustration remind them of? They might reference previous experiences, other books, film, animation or art as part of their reflections.
- How the illustrator uses colour and shapes and what impact this has on the reader.

Once they have discussed the first half of the illustration, provide each group with the second part of the illustration. Encourage the groups to extend their discussion to consider how the additional detail develops their initial impressions as well as considering the use of colour and shape.

- What effect does the dimension and ratio of the composition have?

- Where might the scene be set?
- Why might the illustrator have chosen to set the opening scene here? How might it be relevant to the story?
- What is each character doing? What does the body language and facial expression suggest and what might this tell us about each character?
- How is shadow used in the illustrations and what does it suggest?
- Invite them to note their discussions around the illustrations and then use these notes to inform a whole class discussion.

Read the opening part of the book. Discuss what the choice of words and phrases suggest about their lives before the change? Explore what aspects of the language indicate a sense of routine, stability and normality. Drawing on their responses to the illustration invite the children to speculate what the change may have been, what might have triggered it and what the consequences might be.

- How do the details in the illustration support these inferences?
- Invite the children to reflect on previous summer holidays and recall a fond memory of summer. Ask them to consider what three or four colours most effectively capture the mood and energy of this memory.
- Using their chosen palette, encourage them to draw their fondest memory or an image that best captures what summer means to them on A4 card.
- On the other side of the card invite them to draft a caption to accompany their memory to create a postcard memory.

Session 2:

Provide each child with a piece of A3 black sugar paper and a copy of their drawing from session one. Ask them to cut the A4 piece of artwork into as many pieces as they choose and arrange and stick the pieces onto the black sugar paper in any way they choose. (Alternatively cut the artwork up in advance and return this to each child in an envelope). Discuss how it feels to have the image of their memory fragmented and altered in this way. Using black crayon or paint, invite them to cover as much or as little of their collage as they choose. Discuss and note how this makes them feel.

Share the next page of the book that features the image of destruction without the text and invite the children to respond. Note their responses. Discuss how the colour black is used and what effect this has. What might it symbolise or represent? Read the text accompanying this illustration.

Session 3:

Read onto the next page and encourage response to and discussion of the text and illustration. Bring back the glasses from the first session and consider with the children the sentimental value of objects and what it can feel like to only have an object to remind you of a person? Discuss why the illustrator may have chosen the glasses specifically.

- What significance or symbolism can be drawn from this choice?
- What will have been viewed through the glasses over time? What will have been the last thing viewed through the glasses?

Drawing on the discussions and reflections, invite the children to form groups and in their groups create a freeze frame that captures what they deem would be a poignant memory for the father. Provide each group with a strip of paper and encourage them to draft a line that best captures the essence of the memory created. Collate the strips and as a class agree an order that can form the

basis of a collaborative poem. Encourage the children to use the freeze-frames and collaborative efforts to inspire their own compositions. Allow the children to use the frame below to help support their own poem or alternatively use the inspiration to write their own free verse.

Session 4:

Read the next page and share the illustration of the family in their embrace. Photocopy the illustration and draw two circles over the image to create a venn diagram to help frame and focus the discussion. Encourage the children to consider the similarities and differences between the two images of the family. What do the two family portraits suggest about the two different moments in the lives of this family? Explore this further with the children and ask the children to consider how the mother might be feeling at this point in the narrative; what are her concerns likely to be and how the sequence of events so far are likely to have affected her?

Encourage the children to consider the use of colour and shapes in the illustration and what affect this has. In what ways does the illustrator use the colour black, what affect does this have and what might it suggest? Explore the strong sense of foreboding that is created through the use of colour, shape and detail in the illustrations.

Session 5:

Read the next page. Discuss the text alongside responses to the illustration.

- Discuss the details of the illustration as well as the contrast in colour and shape.
- What might the choices made by the illustrator signify?
- How does this setting differ from the seaside setting in the opening of the story?
- What might be the symbolic significance of this contrast?
- Discuss the possible symbolic significance of the turbulence of the sea and erosion of the sands juxtaposed with the sturdy stability of the mountains.

Read on to the next page. Identify the animals and nature depicted. You may choose to provide the children with the opportunity to research where this place might be. Invite the children to consider how this vastly different landscape and climate is likely to affect what will already be a very large upheaval for the family. Take on the role of the mother and invite the children to represent the voice of the friend. In role facilitate a conversation to explore what options are available to the mother and her family and the challenges involved in staying or going. Invite the children to draw on the contributions made in the drama activity to write a letter in role as the friend offering advice on what they think the mother should do.

This sequence of activities was designed by CLPE for the Greenaway shortlist. To access more free resources from CLPE, visit: www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources

In depth teaching sequences for over 175 other high quality texts can be found at: www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading

Further resources to support children's understanding of picturebooks for all ages and research on the importance of using picturebooks across the primary years can be found at: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures>