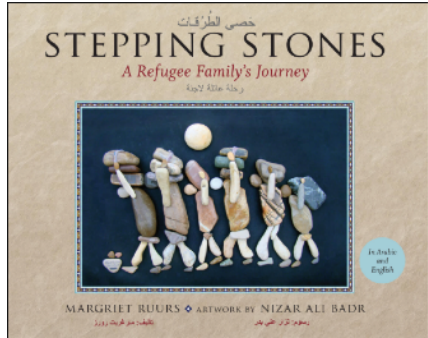


Teacher's Guide: Bring Your Cape



Premise: A Syrian family journeys from their war-torn home to a land of new opportunity and peace.

Large themes: immigration, war, refugee, humanitarian crisis, family, overcoming obstacles, tolerance

Other themes: culture, cuisine, environmentalism, tolerance, pollution, art, reuse, psychology of memory, farming, music, fashion

Kindergarten - Grade 3: Focus on a sense of belonging and home

Discussion

1. Have you ever gotten lost?
 1. Where?
 2. How did it happen?
 3. What did you do to find your way back?
2. In our story, *Stepping Stones*, a family has lost their home, and this is how it happened... (For example: Every country has a government that helps their citizens with things like roads, education, and medical care. But governments can kind of be like people. They can get grumpy and get into fights with other governments. In this story, our family loses their home because their government (Syria) got into a fight with the Russian government about who owned the land). Our family had to find a new, safer place to live.
 - They had to find a new country to live in. Think of it like this: your family moves out of your home, but the new home you're moving into already has a family living there. That's kind of what it's like when you move to a new country. People are already there. Sometimes, those people aren't happy to have someone take up space, but sometimes, they're okay with it. In our family's case, the new country was happy to have them.

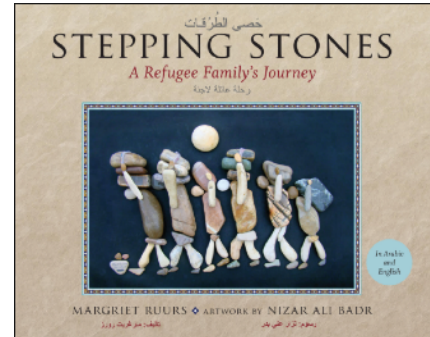
Activities

1. Have a talk with students about what they think makes a home. Draw up a list of the intangible items (love, family). Then have students collect stones similar to the ones shown in the book, and have them print those words on their stone. The stone can be kept as a touchstone/pocket stone, and held onto when the student feels anxious, or it can be gifted to someone the student chooses.
2. The idea of finding a home isn't just a refugee story. Many people in our cities are homeless. A possible activity would be to partner with a homeless shelter. Students can write encouraging notes that can be mailed to the shelter. (This idea can also be expanded to the notes being tied to a gift, such as gloves, and then distributed).
3. A twist on idea #2 can be to partner with a hospital or Ronald McDonald House and have the letters sent to parents and children (in RMH, families are housed, meaning siblings of the sick children are there—while the organization does as much as it can to create a sense of home, it's not unusual for families to feel disconnected from the world around them).
4. Students can write a non-fiction account of the time they got lost.
5. A twist on idea #4, turn that non-fiction story into a genre story (mystery, fantasy) by tweaking elements such as the location where the student was lost, or tweak the characters in the story (i.e., from a human child to a unicorn living in outer space).

Grade 4-6: Focus on geography and culture

Discussion

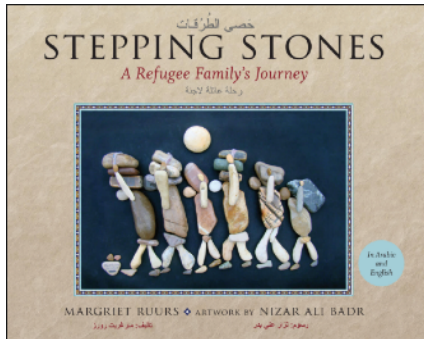
1. When you think of home, what do you think of?
2. What are some things you think you couldn't live without?
3. How do you think other cultures define what a home means? (In our story, *Stepping Stones*, a family has lost their home because of war. The family lived in Syria, and unlike most Canadians who wake up to alarm clocks, our family woke up to the cry of a rooster. They had orange trees in their yard, and ate food grown in their garden).



Activities

1. Have a discussion with students about what they think is involved when a family has to leave their country. What do they pack? Where do they go—how do they decide where to go? If they had to leave Canada, where would they go? Why? What would they take? (For example, if they went to Britain and wanted to take their phone/device chargers, do they know those chargers wouldn't work in British power outlets?). Either in groups or as an individual project, have students come up with their plan
2. The world is glorious and wonderful, and every region has a distinctive geography. A great science-based project would be researching the different microbes found in different parts of the world, and coming up with an essay/discussion for the students to show what they've learned. For example, North American travellers to other countries know of Montezuma's revenge, but what may be less known, is when immigrants from other countries come here, they can risk a similar stomach ailment because of the water microbes. (A fun twist on this project could be to incorporate elements of the research, flip it into a maker-space project where students can create a disaster/Godzilla type movie about a bacteria that invades the world).
3. In our current culture mindset, there can be a negative bias towards developing countries and cultures. Yet, instances such as the tsunami in Thailand prove that bias is unfounded (while there were many human casualties, very few members of the indigenous tribes suffered loss because they saw the migration of the animals and followed them inland). What are some of the technological, social, and medical innovations being made by developed countries who are looking at what developing cultures are doing?
4. An interesting mix of social studies and language arts is looking at how countries got their name, and how names were changed/modified when the country was taken in war. Another extension of this project could be looking at how countries victorious in war incorporate elements of the surrendering nation, in order to facilitate cultural assimilation.
5. When we think of the world and time, and globalization, we think of it as a recent phenomenon. However, the idea of world unity has its roots in something we don't really think about—the standardization of time. Have students look into what it was like when we didn't have MST, PST, CST, and EST, and time was tied to the movement of the sun. What do they think life would have been like, and how did it affect a town's ability to trade or engage in travel? They can then do a historical fiction story or an essay incorporating what they've learned.

Grade 7-12: Focus on definitions



Discussion

We live in a world that divides people into two types: good people and bad people. These definitions show up in a multitude of areas, from how countries use these terms to justify war and genocide, to how North American culture uses “good” and “bad” to influence its citizens’ choice of clothing.

1. Do you think there is an innate “good person” or “bad person,” or do you think we are a mix of each?
2. Are there any truly evil people out there? (This is a great question for sub-questions. For example, the Nazi government and Hutu government slaughter millions of their citizens by defining those people as “bad.” However, in a larger view of the wars, it can be argued that other nations, including Canada, America, and Great Britain were culpable in creating the environment and giving rise to those governments because of their national policies and history of colonialism. Given this, how responsible are we as individuals and groups in creating these scenarios, either through our direct action or inattention? (This can also create a sub-question for psychology or health classes in the debate of nature versus nurture).
3. How do you think definitions of good and bad play a role in how we perceive criminals, crime, and how we instruct our political representatives in creating laws (i.e., victim blaming, stricter jail times for certain drugs (and a sub-question on the racial component of sentencing when it comes to cocaine users (Caucasian) versus crack users (African)).

Activities

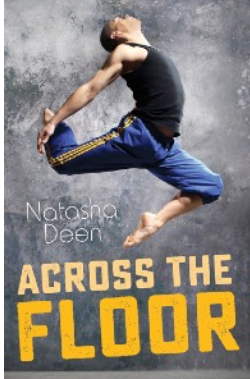
1. One of the more subtle ways good versus bad shows up in our society is in the way fashion is used as code for morality and value. While a person showing up for a job interview wearing sweat pants is not less qualified for the job, generally speaking, we perceive them as less qualified. This also shows up in dress codes, which tend to negatively focus on females over males. A great project could be getting students to trace the history of fashion and how certain types of dress were used to signal a certain type of person (for example, the colour purple was once restricted solely for members of British royalty. Why?).
2. In narratives, the idea of good and bad pervade our society. One of the most recent examples is the story told when one of the people involved is a police officer. How does the notion of police officers as bastions of law and order conflict with the reality? And how does the media help or hinder these stereotypes? (An interesting research project could also include the controversy over the 1964 killing of Kitty Genovese. While the prevailing story says none of her neighbours came to her aid, there are neighbours who claimed they did phone the police. The opposing theory goes on to suggest the police had suffered negative public opinion leading up to Genovese’s death, and there was a conscious effort to portray the neighbours as the bad people in order to spare the police department more criticism).
3. Negative public opinion continues to grow regarding smoking, junk food, and drunk driving. Given the history of cultures to ostracize those they perceive as bad, can students imagine a near-future story where one of these things (smoking) has become on par with murder. What do they imagine the world would look like and how the society would function? (Would smokers be sent away as they once did by sending prisoners to Australia? Would they be

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put in restricted neighbourhoods or homes such as convicts in halfway homes and given parole-type conditions?

4. *Stepping Stones* focuses on a family immigrating to a new land. What is involved in immigrating to Canada? Could students get into Canada if they were from another country? (This is a good project to springboard into discussions/stories regarding family separation, as it's not uncommon for a person to be separated from their family for years while they are in Canada, their family is in another country, and the immigration paperwork is being processed).
5. In political & editorial cartoons, the idea of bad versus good shows up in how characters are depicted. For example, the controversy surrounding football players who kneel during the national anthem to protest the killing of African-American men by police officers. Another example could be the recent interaction between the police, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Toronto Gay Pride Parade. An interesting discussion could centre on how the villains are represented (obese, unattractive), and how the visuals influence our perceptions. It can then be rolled into a science-based project concerning the human visual system, and/or a social media project that talks about how visual images are used to influence consumers and citizens.
6. Cultural stereotypes abound, and they are used not just for political topics, but in advertising, as well. Viewing commercials that poke fun at stereotypes, can prompt a lively discussion about gender, language, and culture. Examples can be found here: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ca-HZ7qiR0I>, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=yR0IWICH3rY>, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=JJCLKenykco>. Students can then try their hand at creating a funny commercial to sell a product (this can also create a discussion on where the line is between good-natured fun and harmful stereotyping).

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Premise: A football player with a chance to play for the NFL must take dance class if he's to stay on the team, and have a chance

Large themes: athletics, dance, teamwork, responsibility, accountability, overcoming obstacles, family, friends, self-identity

Other themes: civil rights, history, World War II, achievement, self-reliance, investment in self, social constraints, psychology of relationship dynamics, disabilities, perseverance, goal setting, environment, slavery, illegal aliens

Kindergarten - Grade 3: Focus on goal setting & alternative story-telling

Discussion

In our story, a teenage football player is so good, he has a chance to be in the NFL. The only problem is that he's always seems to get injured. So his coach tells him that he can stay on the team, but only if he takes a dance class to strengthen his muscles and flexibility. Our football player agrees, but the truth is, he hates dance.

1. Would you be willing to do one of the things you like the least, if it means you can have the thing you like the most?
2. Why or why not?

Activities

1. There are many types of dance forms. A fun activity could include having students learn a few dance moves (for some simple steps, check out <https://youtu.be/oejgTGo-BCc>), then have them choreograph a dance (they can do this individually or in pairs.). A fun twist on this would be to partner with another class in school. Students can create a class dance that they teach to students of another class.
2. Part of achieving success with goal-setting is to break down the goal into micro goals. A twist on this that also helps students get active is to create scavenger hunt that allows them to move around the school, and also engage in teamwork. For example, have them find the pieces of a puzzle (or pieces that make up a slogan). Hide the items in different locations, then create clues (i.e., a puzzle piece could be taped to the underside of a swing or slide, and a clue, "Find it on the playground, under an up and down thing, boy it's always fun, playing on a (swing).") For younger students, the clue gathering could be done as a group activity.)
3. Every dance has a story. Have students view a dance video (for example, <https://youtu.be/FcWAocmMfuM>). What do they think the story of the dance is? Who are the characters? What kind of adventure do students think the dancers are having? (The trick to this activity is to find a video that has only instrumental music, or is sung in a language none of your students understand).
4. Dance celebrates not only movement and music, but the cultures around the world. Why not connect your social studies class with a journey around the dance world and how different cultures explained natural phenomenon via dance? (i.e., Polynesian dance in Hawaii, Celestial dance in Cambodia)
5. An interesting twist on #4 is how dance can be used covertly, for example, capoeira.

Grade 4- 6: Focus on sports & physical movement

Discussion

Our society emphasizes physical activity as an important part of a healthy lifestyle. What do students think constitutes physical activity (i.e., does it have to be an organized sport? Does the person have to sweat a lot for it to be exercise, or can something as simple as walking be considered a valid exercise)?

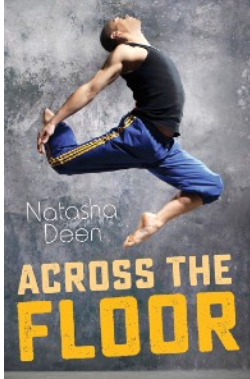
1. Are there any sports that should be considered too dangerous to participate in? Can extreme activities such as cliff diving be considered a legitimate sport?
2. There is a lot of money that gets funnelled into sports, both professional and amateur. Should there be a restriction on how much money athletes can make, or restrictions on how much money colleges can put toward their athletic programs?
3. There is growing controversy with colleges not paying their athletes during sporting competitions (NCAA/March Madness), but reaping millions of dollars based on their athlete's performances. There is also debate about the ethics involved in using an athlete's image for video games, while not paying the athlete for this. Colleges justify it by saying these athletes go on to pro contracts, yet many of them do not. How do students feel about this?



Activities

1. Countries and nations have particular sports they enjoy—soccer in Europe, baseball in America, but there are also unusual sports few of us have heard of (see here: <http://read.bi/1TyQJwW>) They can either do an essay on what they have learned, or hold a lesson where they teach the sport to their fellow students.
2. One of the growing debates concerns player injuries. The NFL is facing multiple lawsuits over concussions, and players are retiring early to preserve their health (<http://cbsprt.co/2fvx96a>). Have students break into groups to research this topic. An interesting activity could be having students debate whether the NFL, NHL, and WWE should be sued, and if payments for head injuries should be retroactive to past players and/or their families. (An interesting twist on this could be to fictionalize what they've learned, and create a dystopian story in the vein of Hunger Games, Tron, or Maze Runner).
3. Sports and dance aren't just for the stage and field, they show up in movies, as well. What do students think is involved in choreographing a fight scene? What is involved if someone wants to become a stunt coordinator or stunt player in Hollywood?
4. A fun twist on dance/sports as action can show up in comic books. Heroes (especially female heroes) are often depicted in poses that are almost impossible to replicate. Have students look through comic books, and find poses for both male and female superheroes. Can they reenact those poses? Is there a gender bias towards how males are shown and how females are shown?
5. Sports and dance have been around for a long time. What are some of the ways ancient peoples passed their time? For example, the Mayans had a game called the Ball Game (a precursor to basketball), but the game held much ritual significance to the people, with the captain of the losing team often being beheaded.

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Grade 7-12: Focus on personal & world connections

Discussion

One of the issues Luc grapples with in *Across the Floor* is trying to keep everyone happy, from his teammates to his coach, his family, and himself. It's an impossible task, and he must deal with the fallout of wanting to achieve something, even when it might put him at odds with those around him.

1. Did you ever have something you really wanted?
2. Do you have a dream about something you want to achieve?
3. Is there a point where the cost of a dream is too high?

In *Across the Floor*, Luc has to make sacrifices if he's to stay on the team, and he must listen to his coach, dance teacher, and family. He's lucky because those around him want only the best for him. But as is often the case when it comes to sports or life, the people surrounding us may not always have the best intentions.

1. Can you think of an incident where someone's celebrity or power allowed them to get away with bad behaviour? (i.e., Bill Cosby, Penn State, Gitmo).
2. When someone is working under the authority of someone else, how much responsibility do they bear if they see something going wrong?
3. When we think of power and authority, one of the things we don't often think about is how clothing factors in. Do you think clothes play a role (and what kind) in how people are perceived in terms of their power?

Activities

1. The psychology behind group dynamics can be quite fascinating. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest the "yes men" phenomenon was in play during one of the NASA missions, and helped lead to the Challenger disaster. When it comes to clothing and authority, there is intriguing information concerning "ordinary" citizens and those in power (i.e., doctors, prison guards). Have students look into the Milgram experiment and the Stanford prisoner study, and come up with their thoughts on connections between power, abuse, and the treatment of those considered vulnerable.
2. Sacrifice and tough choices are part of norm when it comes to achieving a goal. However, there is pressure for athletes and dancers to achieve levels that are almost impossible, and dangerous to their health. An interesting case study could be Lance Armstrong and the doping controversy. Another case study could be female ballet dancers and the pressure they face to maintain an unrealistic body size, and the link with eating disorders.
3. The idea of beauty isn't restricted to only humans. In the past, a beautiful home had a certain standard when it came to lawn maintenance. In recent years, this attitude has changed as people have learned about the disastrous effects of weed killers on wildlife and the sewage system, as well the strain on city water systems. More and more people are moving to a wild lawn. Yet this push for natural environments is met with resistance from city bylaws and neighbours. What are the pros and cons of a wild lawn, and how can conservationists choose this path without incurring disapproval from their towns and neighbours?
4. Luc works for his father during the summer, and though the work is difficult, Luc is never under duress. However, there are many children who are forced into work at factories, sold into slavery, and some of these sweatshop conditions exist in America. How does the life of an average North American teenager compare to those in developing countries? How does

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that teenager's life compare to a teenager, also living in North America, but there illegally? (It would be interesting to turn the research into a fictional story, where a character must escape the confines of their sweatshop, and the people who bought them.) Some background reading can be found here: <http://www.refinery29.com/2015/12/99481/los-angeles-garment-workers-child-care-problems> and http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/woman-chief-breaks-up-850-child-marriages-in-malawi_us_56fd51c2e4b0a06d580510da

5. Stereotypes exist everywhere, especially in the sports world. What are some of the stereotypes athletes face? How are these ideas changing? An interesting case study would be to investigate athletes' responses to President Trump's defence that his inappropriate remarks concerning Arianne Zucker were "locker room talk." Students can also investigate the changing culture concerning athletes who are LGBTQ.
6. Quite often, when it comes to dance and sports, the focus is on the elite levels of the human body. Yet, dance and sports exist for people with disabilities, and their athleticism is just as valid. How does our society exclude people with disabilities from "having a seat" at the sports and dance tables, and how does this elitism inform body image and body worth for the rest of society?
7. Dance and athletics have been catalysts for social change and civil rights reform. Have students research some of the iconic figures and how their journey had an effect not only on the sport or the dance form, but on civil rights.

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Extra Resources - Please note, some of these videos contain coarse language, situations, or subject matter that may be offensive to some. Viewer discretion is advised.

[Women try to pose like Victoria Secret Models](#)

[South Koreans \(living in North America\) try to achieve the South Korean standard of beauty](#)

[Boyfriends dictate their girlfriends' make up](#)

[A cat's guide to taking care of your human](#)

[Be more dog](#)

[People Train like the Kardashians for a Week](#)

[Try Guys get Photoshopped](#)

[Girls try to Pose like Female Comic Book Heroes](#)

[Follow up to Female Comic Book \(photoshop\)](#)

[People try the Mary Jane pose](#)

[Male author tries to pose like females on book covers](#)

[Contortionist tries to pose like female superheroes](#)

[Always like a girl](#)

[Always like a girl #2](#)

[Canadian Tire commercial](#)

[Dove, Dad commercial](#)

[Dove, Evolution](#)

[Rubik's Cube: A question, waiting to be answered](#)

[Ken Robinson: Changing education paradigms](#)