

Moses Goes To School

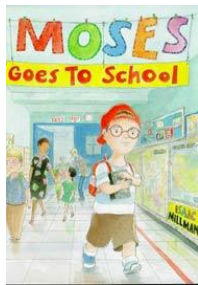
Author: Isaac Millman

Illustrator: N/A

Date: 2000

Grade Range: K-3

Category: Main character out of the mainstream



Summary Information:

The story is of a young boy named Moses, who attends a school for the hearing impaired. The students come back to school from break and tell one another what they did. Moses interacts with his peers through sign language. This school displays how all staff knows sign language, although some do not have hearing loss. It also shows the technology used and different methods taught to the hearing impaired. The students use vibrations from the speakers of a boom box in a passage, in order to sign along to the song “Take Me Out to the Ballgame”. The book gave diagrams for the conversations signed, and even the song to help readers learn sign language.

The story represents the social interaction in the learning environment. Their challenges were introduced, however, with teaching, learning methods and technology Moses was able to perform the same tasks just with different methods. When writing to pen pals the students used a special program to help them write a letter with a computer.

The positive message is that everyone is different, but can accomplish the same things. Different methods and techniques can be used in order to reach the same goal.

Learning Activity:

In order to have the students relate to the hearing impaired, as an activity we can have them experience barriers. For instance, a student can cup their hands over their ears while another person talks to them quietly. This will show them how difficult it is to have a conversation when you have no idea what the other person is saying. After reading this book to the students, we could go back and sign with the book and sign along while singing “Take Me Out to the Ballgame”.

Ain't Nobody a Stranger to Me

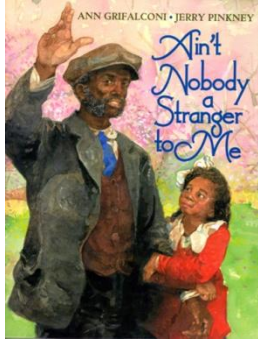
Author: Ann Grifalconi

Illustrator: Jerry Pinkney

Date: 2007

Grade Range: 5-6

Category: Positive Portrayal



Summary Information:

This book is about a granddaughter listening to her grandfather's experience as a slave. He explains the goal he had that kept him going. He also mentions the reason why no one is a stranger to him, even if he doesn't know their name. His goal was to plant his apple seeds in soil that he owned. No one is a stranger to him, because we are all here to help one another.

This story represents positive portrayal so well because it exhibits the hardships and suffering of slavery. However, with all of the hard work, and pain, there is a silver lining. Freedom, love, perseverance, and aspiration are shown in this book. Her grandpa had a goal to have his own land to plant the apple seeds, and with hard work he achieved this goal. The apple seeds also resemble his history, and how he will never forget with every bloom.

A positive message is remembrance of the African American history. Her grandfather demonstrates appreciation of freedom and explains his desperation to his accomplish goals. Hard work is essential to make your dreams come true.

Learning Activity:

I would assign a project to have the students interview an older family member, and ask about their culture. They can then research the culture further and design a poster of her family's culture. Have them ask questions about their personal hardships and ask them if they any specific goals they made that they accomplished.

<http://www.theafricanamericanbookcompany.com/index.php?cPath=65>

Malcolm X: A Fire Burning Brightly

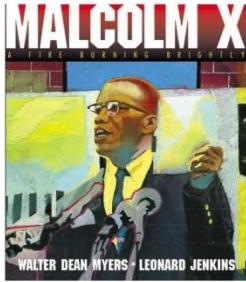
Author: Walter Dean Myers

Illustrator: Leonard Jenkins

Date: 2000

Grade Range: 4-6

Category: Biography



Summary Information:

A Fire Burning Brightly described the rough childhood Malcolm Little, Malcolm “X” had grown up in. He grew up troubled, and even though his father died when he was young, he instilled in Malcolm that anything was possible with education and that he could make something of himself. Prison had changed this man; he wanted to start a revolution to stand up for freedom and equality. He originally thought the only way to achieve this was through violence. He later founded a religious organization in which he came to the realization that every race should be accepted and no violence is necessary. He was later killed.

This is Malcolm Little’s or Malcolm “X”’s life. The book goes through his childhood, early adult life, and up to the day of his murder.

The positive message is not only to believe in yourself no matter where you come from, but also that education is highly valuable. A main message was to respect everyone’s rights, everyone is equal. Violence is not necessary in order to influence others. Having heart, and truly believing in what you feel is right will influence others. In life, every human being changes, sometimes for the bad, and sometimes for the good. Malcolm “X” had courage because he knew what he was saying was upsetting others and that he could get hurt or killed in the process. The fact that he stood up for what he believed in was courageous.

Learning Activity:

Asking the students to think of a time where they stood up for what they believed in. If not at all, is there a situation where they would have done something differently? Would they stand up for something they believed in, knowing there would be consequences?

<http://www.millvalleylibrary.net/blog/?p=2837>

Fly Away Home

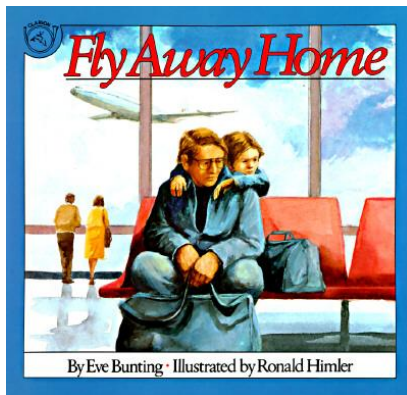
Author: Eve Bunting

Illustrator: Ronald Himler

Date: 1991

Grade Range: 3-6

Category: Low socioeconomic situations



Summary Information:

The book is about a father and son who live in an airport because they are unable to afford a place of their own. The boy may be young but he understands that he needs to do certain things in order to be unnoticed and to prevent security making them leave the airport. There are other families who are in the same situation in the book, and one in particular helped watch the boy when his father went off to work. The little boy sees a bird trapped in the airport and after a while he sees that the bird found a way out. He thought of his situation and how he wanted to be able to leave and fly away home.

The story represents low socioeconomic situations because it is about a family who lives in poverty. After the little boy's mother died the father was not able to keep their home with only one income. His position as a janitor is not enough to provide for a home and he cannot find any more work. In order to have shelter they stay in the airport and have a mapped out schedule so they will not be suspicious or noticed.

The positive message is that although there are obstacles in life, it is important to have hope. The little boy in this story had hope that he and his father would eventually have a home. This book also makes you appreciate what you have in your life, and to appreciate the roof over your head.

Learning Activity:

A learning activity could be a class discussion of how we could help this family. What are some things we would donate to this family? How would you feel if you were in this situation? What do you think the bird symbolizes?

<http://www.betterworldbooks.com/fly-away-home-id-0395664152.aspx>