

Family Literacy Guided Lesson

For Carlos and the Cornfield/Carlos y la milpa de maíz

NY State Learning Standards

Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English

Standard 2:

Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understandings.

Learning Standards for English Language Arts Standard 3:

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation. Students will analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented by others and present in oral and written language their opinions and judgements.

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About the Book

Carlos and the Cornfield/ Carlos y la milpa de maíz

Jan Romero Stevens, Author and Jeanne Arnold, Illustrator

Carlos, a young school boy, is eager to plant the seed corn in his family's garden, especially as his father promised to give him five dollars upon completion of the job. This is just the amount he needs to buy the red pocketknife in Señor Lopez's store. After instructing Carlos in the proper way to plant corn, his father warns, "Remember Carlos, cosechas lo que siembras - you reap what you sow." Carlos begins carefully, placing just three kernels of corn in each hole as his father had instructed. However this becomes tedious, and to bring the job to a quick completion, he tosses hands full of seeds into the holes of several rows. This instructive story about the rewards of hard work is enriched by colorful whole-page oil paint illustrations and expanded by Carlos' Mama's recipe for panqués de maíz – cornmeal pancakes.

Contents

- 1.....About the Book
- 1.....The Language/Literacy Connection
- 1.....NYS State Learning Standards
- 2-3..... PLS-4 Related Skills
- 2.....Early Childhood Education
 - Infant/Toddler Level
- 3.....Early Childhood Education – Preschool and School age Levels
- 4.....Parenting Education Activity
- 5.....Interactive Literacy Between Parents and Their Children
- 6.....Adult Literacy – ABE Level
- 7.....Adult Literacy – GED Level
- 8.....Adult Literacy – ELL Lesson

The Language/Literacy Connection

Connecting with Stories

When readers make connections to books from their lives, from other books, or from the world, they enhance their understanding of the text. Such connections help readers comprehend difficult parts of a story, talk about favorite parts of a story, and engage in meaningful conversation about the book. By the same token, connecting with books expands the reader's vocabulary and background knowledge. There are several strategies that help readers make meaningful connections to text. Explicit labeling of actions and objects help very young children know the meaning of new words they hear in the context of a story. Open-ended questions jump-start readers' thinking about a story's meaning. Story maps and two-column notes help more experienced readers make sense of their reading.

Early Childhood Education-Infant/Toddler Level

Connecting Daily Happenings to Language

During the Visit

PLS-4 Skills

Auditory

Comprehension

16. Understands a specific word or phrase for family members, pets, objects or social situations

Expressive

Language

17. Has vocabulary of at least 1 word

- ◆ Say to the parent: *While the complex themes in the story of Carlos and the Cornfield / Carlos y la milpa de maiz may be too mature for very young children to appreciate, infants and toddlers still enjoy the sound of their parent's voice and the cozy feeling of sitting together.*
- ◆ Read several pages. Discuss the story with the parent. Ask: *When is the first time you remember helping your parents with an important family job? How was that job like planting corn? How was it different? Say: Drawing on your memory bank to recall a job that you did to help your family is a way of making a real-life connection to the story. Such connections make stories personally meaningful. As an adult you have years of experiences that you can relate to stories, but young children have only a few months of experiences to draw on. And, they do not have the language needed to express those experiences. You can help (child's name) build a storehouse of recollections and learn the language needed to talk about them by repeating aloud his/her daily experiences. At a relaxing time quietly recall the experiences of his/her day. Make your voice soothing and your words like a lullaby. You might even sing about the day's activities.*

You've had a busy day. Think of all the things you've done. You ate rice cereal and bananas. You played with Daddy's keys. Your teacher came to see you. Now you're snuggling down with your blanket for a nap. What a busy day you've had.

- ◆ Build your child's language by singing songs that make a connection between the words in the song and what he/she sees or does. Change the words to fit your child's activities.

Before the Visit

Prepare Lesson Props

None

Gather Needed Materials

None

When something is lost sing:

Where oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone? Traditional

Where oh where has your little coat gone?
Where oh where can it be?
With blue and white stripes
And a soft, warm collar,
Oh, where oh where can it be?

On rainy days sing:

It's Raining, It's Pouring Traditional

It's raining, it's pouring,
Little Tomas is snoring.
He went to bed and covered his head,
And couldn't get up in the morning.

For the family pet sing:

The Bear Went Over the Mountain Traditional

The cat (dog, cow) ran through the barn (yard).
The cat ran through the barn,
The cat ran through the barn,
To see what he could see.
He saw a little mouse (bone, bird),
He saw a little mouse,
He saw a little mouse,
That's what he did see.

For spiders and insects sing:

Itsy Bitsy Spider Traditional

The itsy bitsy ant crawled along the wall,
Out of the kitchen and down the hall,
With a tiny crust of bread in its tiny mouth,
The itsy, bitsy ant was headed for the south.

Early Childhood Education-Preschool and School Age Levels

Leading Questions and Fingerplays

PLS-4 Skills

Auditory

Comprehension

- 37. Makes inferences
- 38. Identifies categories of objects in pictures

Expressive

Language

- 44. Answers questions about hypothetical events
- 65. Tells a story in sequence, using grammatically correct sentences

Before the Visit

Gather Needed Materials

- ♦ Corn seeds
- ♦ Corn husks and silk
- ♦ Construction paper/ cardboard
- ♦ Glue
- ♦ Scissors
- ♦ Markers

Make Lesson Props

None

- ♦ Leading questions for preschoolers might be: *In this story Carlos helps his father plant corn in their family's garden. What jobs do you help your mother or father do? Looking at the picture of Carlos with the hoe, ask: What is this tool called? What is Carlos doing with it? Why do you think he is doing that? What kind of tools do your parents have?* Looking at the picture of Carlos getting the pail of corn seed from his father, say: *Carlos' father said planting the corn seed would be a big job. What was the biggest job you ever did for your family?*
- ♦ Leading questions for school age children might be: *If you were helping your father or mother and grew tired of the job, what do you think you would do? If you made a mistake when you were helping your parents with a job, what would you do? Do you think the story had a good ending? Why?*

Fingerplays

- ♦ Fingerplays are mini-stories told in just a few words paired with finger and hand motions. The finger and hand motions are bridges that help children make connections between the story and real life experiences. Here is a fingerplay about planting corn.

During the Visit

- ♦ With the parent and child sitting together, read *Carlos and the Cornfield / Carlos y la milpa de maíz*. If the parent and child are readers, ask them to share in the reading. If the child is a preschooler, say to the parent: *Because this story is rather long, "telling" the story may be a better, more enjoyable approach for (child's name). Say: Choose one theme from the story, perhaps that Carlos helps his father plant corn in the family garden. Ask leading questions to involve (child's name) in the story and help him/her make a connection between him/herself and the story.*

Three Little Corn Seeds by Patricia Ward

Words

I had three little corn seeds.

I put them in the ground.

The sun came up.

The rain came down.

I raked and hoed,

And pulled up the weeds.

Then tall green corn stalks,

Grew from my seeds.

Hand and body motions

Hold up three fingers

Place the three fingers in palm of other hand.

Circle arms over your head to form a sun.

Wiggle fingers as you bring arms down to your sides.

Make raking and hoeing motion.

Make weed-pulling motion.

Stand up tall with arms extended over your head.

Hold up three fingers.

Collage

Using the corn seed, husks and silk, make a corn collage on the construction paper or cardboard. Ask the child to tell a story about his/her collage. Ask school age children to write their stories. Record the stories of preschool children.

Parenting Education Activity

Asking Questions

Asking children questions helps them connect to stories, focus on topics, and participate in conversations. When parents ask questions and listen attentively to children's answers, they help children think about issues, provide a model for forming and asking questions, invite children to use language, and give children experience in a form of dialogue used in school.

Ask:

- ◆ How often do you ask (child's name) questions?
(a yes/no question)
- ◆ What kind of questions do you ask?
(an open-ended question)
- ◆ Do you think asking (child's name) questions helps him/her with reading and writing? Why?
(a probing question)

Yes/No Questions

Say: Questions that can be answered with yes or no are the easiest to ask and answer. This is a good type of question to ask to preschool children. Show the picture of Carlos running into the house after planting all the seed corn (7th picture in the book). Model a yes/no question based on the picture. Example: *Does Carlos feel happy?* Wait for the parent to answer then ask: *What other yes/no questions could be asked about this picture?* Wait to give the parent time to form a question. Answer the parent's question. Possible questions include:

- ◆ Is the father having a drink?
- ◆ Are there clouds in the sky?
- ◆ Is it raining in the picture?
- ◆ Does the father believe Carlos?

Open-Ended Questions

Say: Open-ended questions often begin with how, what or why and have no single right answer. They encourage children to recall details, infer, predict, and compare and contrast. An example of an open-ended question based on the picture is: *Why does Carlos feel happy?* Wait for the parent to answer then ask: *What other open-ended questions can you ask?* Wait to give the parent time to form a question. Answer the parent's question. Possible questions might be:

- ◆ What is Papa thinking?
- ◆ How did Carlos finish planting the corn so quickly?
- ◆ Why did Carlos hurry through his task?
- ◆ What will happen to the corn?

Probing Questions

Say: Probing questions ask children to think about how they feel about an issue. For example, you might ask: *Do you think it was right for Carlos to take the money for planting the corn? Why?* Wait for the parent to answer then ask: *What other probing questions can you ask?* Wait to give the parent time to form a question. Answer the parent's question. Possible questions might be:

- ◆ What would you have done if your Dad had asked you to plant the corn in a certain way?
- ◆ When Carlos said that he had finished planting the corn was it a lie? Why?

Interactive Literacy Between Parents and Their Children

Planting Seeds: A Real-Life Experience Related to a Book

Both books and first-hand experiences help children learn new words and expand their background knowledge. For children under the age of two it is important to talk clearly about experiences and point out the names of objects and actions. Children older than two can work out the meaning of new words and figure out connections between real-life experiences and stories through more general conversations.

Planting Seeds

Reproduce Carlos' gardening experience by planting different varieties of corn seed in clay flowerpots. You need two or more varieties of corn seed, a small flowerpot for each variety, potting soil, a few pebbles, spray bottle, liquid plant fertilizer, and a warm sunny window.

- ◆ Place a few pebbles in the bottom of each flowerpot.
- ◆ Fill the flowerpots with potting soil.
- ◆ Plant three seeds in each flowerpot, a different variety in each pot.
- ◆ Moisten the soil. It should be damp but not soaked.
- ◆ Check the soil everyday and moisten with the spray bottle when necessary.
- ◆ Once a week add liquid plant fertilizer to the spray bottle.

Use Words

- ◆ Name Items and Actions: Name the items you use in your seed planting experiment: corn seed, pebbles, fertilizer, flowerpots, spray bottle, potting soil. Use words for the actions involved. We are dumping soil into the flowerpots. We are moistening the soil with water. This is how we plant the seeds.
- ◆ Use Rare Words: Give older children specific words related to the science of growing seeds.
 - ◆ Germinate: to sprout a new plant from a seed
 - ◆ Soil: a layer of earth made up of mineral particles, dead plant matter and other natural materials that provide nutrients plants use to grow
 - ◆ Photosynthesis: the process that plants use to make their own food
 - ◆ Nutrient: a substance used to feed a plant
- ◆ Recall the Story: *Carlos and the Cornfield / Carlos y la milpa de maíz*. The corn seed that Carlos planted haphazardly did not grow well. Carlos tried to correct his mistake by planting more corn seed. But the corn seed Carlos purchased was not the same variety as the seed his father had given him.
- ◆ Ask Questions: Encourage conversation about Carlos' experiences in the story by asking questions. Ask: What happened when the two varieties of corn grew? What do you think will happen to the different varieties of corn seed in our clay flowerpots?

Write

- ◆ *Record Observations*: Carefully observe the progress of the corn seed and note your observations on a calendar. Mark the date the seeds are planted. Record each day the seeds are watered and each time they are fertilized. When they begin to sprout, in about 10 days, measure their height with a ruler and make a notation for each variety.
- ◆ *Create a Book*: Use the information recorded on the calendar to chronicle your flowerpot gardening experience. Write the narrative. Draw pictures or use photographs of the activity and plant progress. Make a cover with a title. Include a title page with the names of the authors and date written.

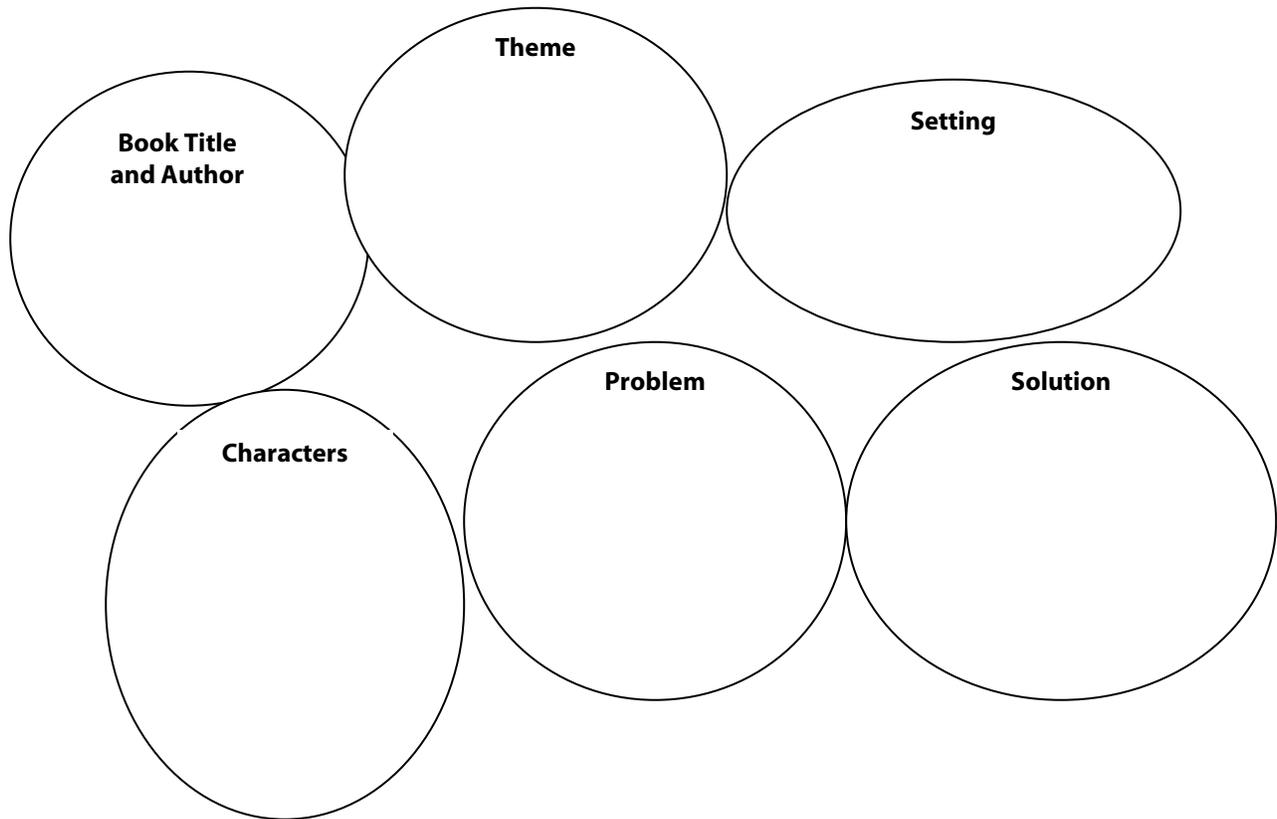
Adult Literacy - ABE Level

Story Maps

A story map is a strategy that readers use to help them remember stories. Story maps use words and pictures to show the parts of a story. Read *Carlos and the Cornfield*. Then draw six large circles on a sheet of paper. Print the following words in the circles: *Book Title*, *Theme*, *Setting*, *Characters*, *Problem*, and *Solution*. In each circle write a sentence or a word, or draw a picture, to explain that element of the story.

Make your story map circles whatever size seems best for the story and place the circles in whatever arrangement seems best to you.

- ◆ **Book Title:** Title of the book and name of the author.
- ◆ **Theme:** What is the story about?
- ◆ **Setting:** Where does the story take place?
- ◆ **Characters:** Who are the people in the story?
- ◆ **Problem:** What trouble or difficulty do the characters have?
- ◆ **Solution:** How do the characters work out the problem?



In a sentence or two, tell one way that you connect with the story.

Adult Literacy - GED Level

Two-Column Notes

Two-column notes are tools readers use to better understand stories they read. Make two columns by folding a sheet of note paper in half lengthwise. At the top of the first column, write *Quotes from the Story*. In that column copy the three quotes below and add three additional quotes from the story that are of particular interest to you. At the top of the second column, write *My Thoughts*. In that column write a short responsive paragraph opposite each quote that describes images, reflections, or memories that the quote brings to your mind. A response is written after the first quote as an example.

Quotes from the Story

"Lying on a piece of dark blue velvet was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen – a red pocket knife with two blades, a tiny pair of tweezers, scissors, a can opener and a plastic toothpick."

"Carlos and his family lived in the fertile Española Valley in northern New Mexico. Their home, with its thick adobe walls and high-pitched tin roof, was next to a large field that Carlos' father planted each spring in rows of sweet yellow corn."

"Mijo, my son, I have a big job for you. Now the ground is ready, I want you to plant the seed. Come here and I will show you what I want you to do."

My Thoughts

When I was eight years old, my mother took me to a small store in our hometown. In the store I saw a wonderful doll with "real" hair and glass eyes that opened and closed. She was dressed in an elegant red dress, tiny white socks and black buckle shoes. I thought she was the most beautiful doll in the world. I longed to own that doll, just as I imagine Carlos wished to own the pocket knife.

When writing your responses, organize your ideas clearly and logically. Provide relevant details and examples. Choose words that are varied and precise. These are elements of writing that are required for high scores on the essay section of the GED.

Adult Literacy - ELL Lesson

English Words and Memory Banks

Many English language learners may be experienced cooks. Use their skills to teach English words that are related to *Carlos and the Cornfield* / *Carlos y la milpa de maiz*.

Vocabulary

Nouns

Egg Milk
Oil Flour
Sugar Cornmeal
Baking powder
Baking soda

Verbs

Put / putting
Beat / beating
Turn / turning

Before the Visit

Gather Needed Materials

- ◆ Ingredients for recipe
- ◆ Large mixing bowl
- ◆ Whisk
- ◆ Measuring spoons
- ◆ Measuring cup
- ◆ Large fry pan
- ◆ Spatula
- ◆ Sturdy paper plates
- ◆ Plastic forks and knives
- ◆ Copy of the recipe

Recipe for Cornmeal Pancakes

Ingredients

- ◆ 1 egg
- ◆ 1 cup milk
- ◆ 2 tablespoons salad oil
- ◆ ½ cup flour
- ◆ ½ cup cornmeal
- ◆ 1 tablespoon sugar
- ◆ 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ◆ ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ◆ ½ teaspoon salt

Directions:

Beat egg. Add remaining ingredients and beat until smooth. Grease fry pan with oil. When hot, drop batter onto fry pan in small amounts. Turn to brown on both sides.

Introduce Vocabulary and Cooking Activity

- ◆ Place the ingredients onto the workspace. Point to the egg and say: *This is an egg. What is this? This is an egg.* Ask again: *What is this?* Motion to the learner to repeat: *This is an egg.* Introduce remaining nouns using the same procedure.
- ◆ Place the mixing bowl onto the workspace. Put the egg (not cracked) into the bowl. Say: *I put the egg into the bowl.* Give egg to the learner. Say: *Put the egg into the bowl.* Motion to the learner to put the egg into the bowl. Say: *I put the egg into the bowl.* Motion to the learner to repeat: *I put the egg into the bowl.*
- ◆ Repeat procedure for remaining ingredients, leaving each ingredient in its box or package. Repeat the procedure until the nouns are mastered.
- ◆ Take the ingredients out of the bowl. Crack the egg into the bowl. Say: *I am putting the egg into the bowl.* Beat the egg. Say: *I am beating the egg.* Give the bowl and whisk to the learner. Say: *Beat the egg.* Motion to the learner to beat the egg. Say: *I am beating the egg.* Motion to the learner to repeat: *I am beating the egg.*
- ◆ Measure the milk into the measuring cup. Give the cup to the learner and say: *Put the milk into the bowl.* Motion to the learner to pour the milk into the bowl. As the milk is pouring into the bowl say: *I am putting the milk into the bowl.* Motion to the learner to repeat: *I am putting the milk into the bowl.* Give the whisk to the learner and say: *Beat the milk.* Motion to the learner to beat the milk and egg. Say: *I am beating the milk.* Motion to the learner to repeat: *I am beating the milk.* Repeat procedure for the remaining ingredients.
- ◆ Grease the fry pan and heat. When hot, drop a tablespoon of the batter onto the fry pan. Say: *I am putting batter onto the fry pan.* Give the spoon to the learner and motion to him/her to put batter onto the fry pan. Say: *I am putting batter onto the fry pan.* Motion for the learner to repeat: *I am putting batter onto the fry pan.*
- ◆ When the batter is browned, use the spatula to turn a pancake. Say: *I am turning the pancake.* Give the spatula to the learner and motion for him/her to turn a pancake. Say: *I am turning the pancake.* Motion for the learner to repeat: *I am turning the pancake.*
- ◆ Make several pancakes modeling and asking the learner to repeat appropriate English nouns and verbs. Serve hot pancakes with butter and syrup and enjoy!
- ◆ Adjust the lesson to include additional English words for learners with advanced English language skills, or eliminate infrequently used words such as baking powder and baking soda.