

Cyril The Seagull

TEACHER'S NOTES

by Patricia Lines, illustrated by Kim LaFave

Young Cyril the Seagull has an embarrassing problem: he gets seasick. “He was afraid the sickly, sinking feeling in the pit of his tummy and the dizzy feeling in his head would come back if he went out on the tumbling waves again.” But when his friend’s ferry boat gets into trouble in a terrible storm off the coast, Cyril forgets his fear, ventures out to sea, and perseveres until the ferry is safe. Kim LaFave’s lively illustrations fill the pages with light-hearted images of the coastal landscape and the people and animals that inhabit it.

The range of emotions experienced by Cyril as the plot unfolds, makes this story an ideal vehicle for opening discussions about feelings. Courage, overcoming fear, growth in capability and responsibility, family relationships, teasing, support of others, celebration of accomplishment, concern for others’ safety are key concepts that are developed by a likeable character that young children will relate to easily.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Language Arts—character study, description of setting, poetry writing, plot—beginning/middle/end, reading for proof, paragraph writing, adjectives; listening for proof, vocabulary development, spelling

Science—seashore life

Social Studies—Canadian landscape (the coast), coastal careers

Art—illustrating, mural of coastal scene, designing awards

Healthy Living—feelings, family relationships, personal growth

VOCABULARY LIST

Seashore

bay	ripple
straits	overboard
seagulls	minnows
crabs	shore
waves	ferry boat
starfish	seasick
swells	fog
fog horn	lighthouse
point	ships
storm	driftwood

Other

cooing	scolded
teased	dizzy
tumbling	tossing
mossy	ledge
frolic	surging
moan	crashed
vision	pounded
gobbling	howl
fear	sink
paddled	furiously
heaved	scream
rumble	panic
deafening	moan
juniper	flock
squawking	hero

BEFORE YOU READ

LANGUAGE ARTS

Vocabulary

Brainstorm words that describe the feeling of being sick. Accept the gross ones that are likely to be suggested.

Discussion

- Show pictures of a lighthouse and a fog horn and discuss why they are needed.
- Ask students what parts of the body are affected when they feel sick. *What makes you sick? What makes you feel better? Has anyone ever been seasick? What do you think causes seasickness?*

SOCIAL STUDIES

Museum Collection

Suggest to students that they bring in pictures of boats, toy boats, models of boats, etc.—any artifacts relating to boats, past and present. Teach and insist upon respect for people's donations to the collection. This display could then be used for discussion, creative writing, story telling, dramatization, art and poetry.

Museum Collection	
Please look, but do not touch.	
Item	Donator

AS YOU READ

First Reading

Read the story aloud for sheer enjoyment. Show the picture of Joe's ferry boat and ask students if they have ever been on a ferry. Allow discussion time for children to share their experiences on ferries.

Discussion Topics

- Ask students if their moms have ever said to them the same thing Cyril's mom said to him about junk food.
- Discuss how Cyril might have felt when his brothers, cousins, and sisters teased him. *Why do people tease? What do you do when someone teases you?*
- Discuss fear and courage. *Has there ever been something you were afraid to do but you found the courage to do anyway? How did you feel before and after this?*

Listening for Proof

Reread parts of the story and ask students to listen for sentences that prove that:

- Cyril was young.
- Cyril was brave.
- Cyril persevered.
- Cyril's family members behave differently.

If you have multiple copies of the book, students could read for proof. This activity could be set in a Reading Centre with a single copy. Students could work with a partner.

Listening

While students might be too young for the story of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, they could appreciate the music played in the background as you reread.

AFTER YOU READ

LANGUAGE ARTS

Character Study

Photocopy the outline of Cyril the Seagull, (see worksheet) or have students draw their own. After reading the story, brainstorm words that describe Cyril, and list on the blackboard. Teach the term “adjective” if appropriate for your class. Reread the story and ask students to listen for additional words that the author used. Add these to your list. Ask students to print the words that describe Cyril’s inner characteristics inside, and the words that describe his outward appearance around the outline of his body. Use an overhead to demonstrate or to work through the list with the class.

Character Description

After completing the Character Study activity, ask students to write two paragraphs to describe Cyril. The first paragraph should tell what he looks like, the second should tell what he is like inside.

Poetry Writing

Discuss how Cyril is different at the beginning, middle and end of the story. Brainstorm words and classify them according to when they describe Cyril. Have students write three-stanza poems to reflect the changes.

Descriptive Writing

Discuss how the setting is crucial to this story. Could the story have happened on a mountain, in a desert, on the arctic tundra, or in a city? Reread the story and ask students to identify any words that name or describe features of the coastal setting. Compile a list of words that the students can refer to while they write a description of Cyril’s environment.

Creative Writing

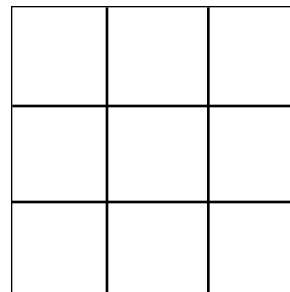
Have students write and then broadcast a radio or TV news report describing how Cyril saved the ferry boat.

Feelings

Ask students to name the emotions Cyril felt at each stage of the story and why he felt that way. Compile a word bank of words to name feelings. Have students write sentences using the following sentence frame: Cyril felt ____ (name emotion) _____ (tell when or where) because _____. e. g. *Cyril felt gloomy one windy day because he was seasick.* Discuss when students have felt the same emotions as Cyril felt. Have students write sentences using the following sentence frame: I felt _____ (name emotion) _____ (tell when or where) because _____.

Book Bingo

Use the vocabulary lists provided to play Book Bingo. Have students create bingo cards with nine spaces using paper from your recycling box.



Display a word list on chart paper or the blackboard. Write clues for the words on your list. Ask students to choose nine words and print one in each box on their bingo cards. Read the clues and ask your students to circle the corresponding words if they are on their cards. The first student to circle all the words calls out “Bingo.” The cards can be used for a second game if students use a different colour to circle the words.

AFTER YOU READ

ART

Bravery Award

Discuss the reasons that people are presented with awards. *What is a hero? Was Cyril a hero?* Discuss why Cyril deserved an award. Have students design awards that they would like to present to him. Use the worksheet provided, or supply suitable materials and the language structure that you would like them to use. Invite students to bring their own awards to school.

Driftwood Art

Bring driftwood for the students to paint, or with which to create a work of art.

Mural

Have students work cooperatively to create a mural of a coastal scene. Some students could paint the background, while others paint features to be pasted on (e.g. seagulls, boats, lighthouses)

SCIENCE

Research

Have students research facts about seagulls such as life expectancy, number of eggs, etc.

Fog

Discuss what makes fog and if they have ever been in fog. The analogy of a steaming kettle may help students understand how fog is formed.

Environment

Have a naturalist visit and discuss whether it is good for Cyril to eat scraps. *Is it a good idea for Joe to throw scraps overboard? Should we feed wild animals? Is Cyril a wild animal?*

SOCIAL STUDIES

Careers

Brainstorm words to name and describe jobs that are mentioned or implied in the story. If possible, arrange a guest speaker to talk to the class about his/her job.

NOTES



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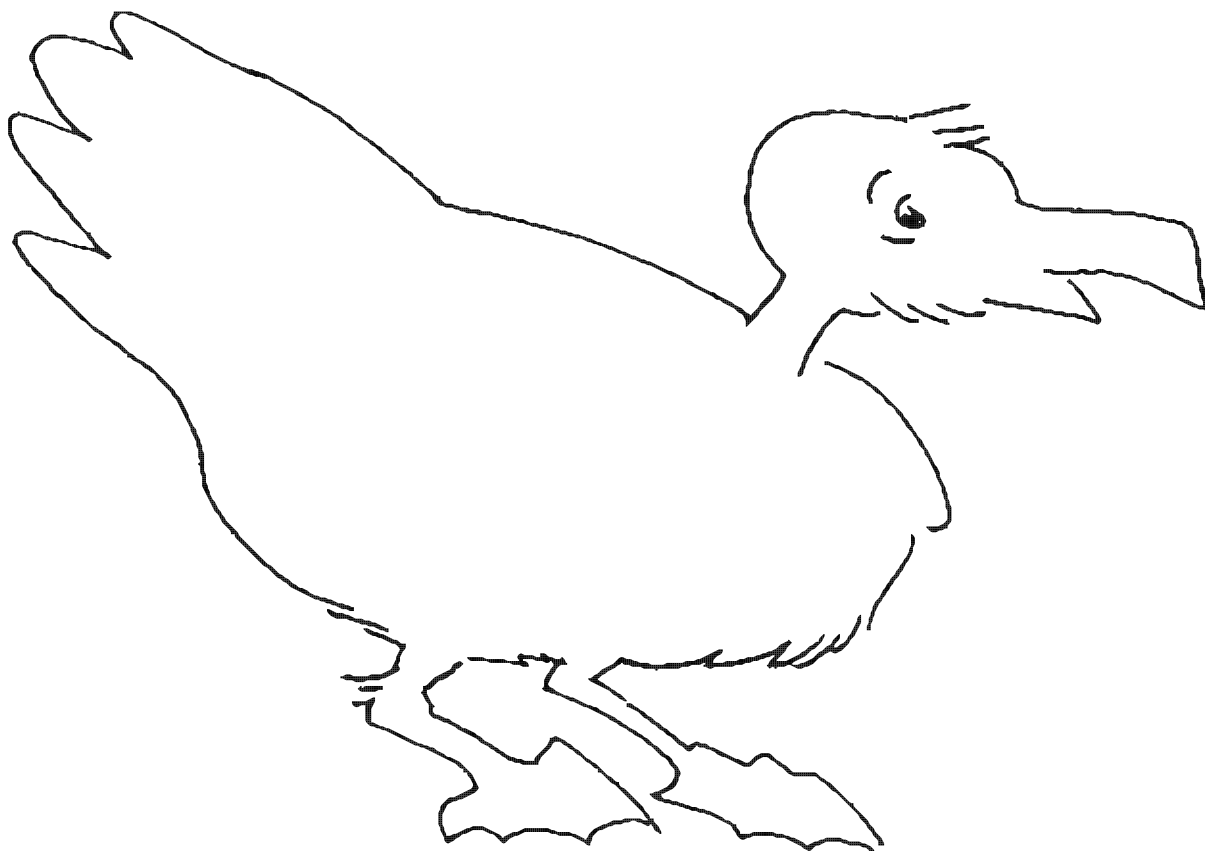
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Date _____ Name _____

CYRIL THE SEAGULL



Name _____ Date _____

Feelings

1. Print a feeling Cyril has in the story.
2. Print a phrase to tell when or where Cyril had that feeling.
3. Tell why Cyril felt that way.
4. Use one set of words and phrases to write a complete sentence.

feeling	where/when	why

BRAVERY AWARD

This award is presented to Cyril the Seagull because

Date

Signed

Date _____

Name _____

DANGERS AT SEA

*Draw a boat at sea and add the dangers that a boat might meet.
Some dangers might be huge waves, big logs, rocks, fog and other boats.*