

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

Interpret the meanings of these pre-Civil War expressions: carry the staff, winderlight, injury "going green," flying union colors. (Keywords: Civil War slang)

MATH

1. Figure out how old Say was in 1924 when he died.
2. Research fatality statistics for the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War, the Korean War and the Gulf War. Graph the results.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. In your class studies of the Civil War, discuss the significance of the names of the armies of the Confederacy and the Union, Rebels and Yankees.
2. On a map of the eastern United States, shade in the areas where fighting occurred. On another map, shade in the states that allied with each of the sides.
3. In small groups, research ways to stand up for loyalties or causes without fighting. (Keywords: methods of non-violent action) Report findings to the class.

ART

1. Examine the illustrations in the story. How do the pictures lessen the sadness and fear dealt with in the story?
2. Look at how Polacco used illustrations of human hands. Using various media, try drawing hands in ways that express something about the people or situations.

Pink and Say

Patricia Polacco
1994
New York: Putnam & Grosset Group

LOYALTY

USA

Historical Fiction

Reading Time: 17 minutes

CONCEPTS

Loyalty
Courage
Duty
Commitment
Sacrifice

SUMMARY

In some ways this true story from the Civil War is not easy to read. The heroes, two fifteen-year-old boys, one black and one white, suffer harsh losses. But their depth of character touches the heart and offers a vivid example of loyalty to a calling higher than personal safety. Upbeat watercolor illustrations temper the story's serious themes.

OBJECTIVE

The student will be able to define and discuss loyalty, courage, duty, commitment and sacrifice as they apply to the story. The student will gain insight into the human side of war.

After the Story

Pink and Say

DISCUSSION

1. Identify loyalties shown in this story. Do we know why these young boys were involved in war? Why do you think each decided to enlist?
2. Why was it risky for Pink to help Say? Why do you think he helped him? What does this tell you about Pink?
3. What was the "sickness" that Pink talked about? Talk about the differences between Pink's loyalty to the Union "cause" and Say's involvement in the war. Did Say's understanding of the war change after his encounter with Pink? What did he learn from Pink?
4. Say has a dilemma about returning to battle. What is his dilemma? Why does he choose to return?
5. Why is the handshake so important in the telling of this story?
6. How do we choose our loyalties? What would you be willing to stand up for? What loyalties can you name that might be worth fighting for? Discuss.

ACTIVITIES

1. Find the southeast United States on the world map and place a story pin.
2. Read Eve Bunting's *Blue and Gray* and discuss the meaning of the Civil War and how it divided friends. What did Pink and Say think about this? Discuss how loyalty to a friend and loyalty to a cause might conflict.
3. In small groups, choose a character (Pink, Say or Moe Moe Bay) and make a list of character attributes for that person. Share with the class and explain your choices.

HOME CONNECTION

Retell the story at home. Talk about loyalty and courage during times of war. Ask if you may share responses at school.

JOURNAL

1. Pretend you are Say. Write a letter to your mother at home telling her about Moe Moe Bay. Why did she stay at the farm when she knew it was dangerous?
2. The characters make a lot of hard choices in the story. Select one and write about it. Share your thoughts with the class.

HOME CONNECTION

VOCABULARY

marauders
root cellar
hillock
vittles

mealie worms
stockade
dysentery