



# THE TREE LADY

AUTHOR: H. JOSEPH HOPKINS

ILLUSTRATOR: JILL MCELMURRY

See a video of the book read aloud here: [The Tree Lady](#)

**\*\* REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! \*\***

## OVERVIEW

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Katherine Olivia Sessions never thought she'd live in a place without trees. After all, Kate grew up among the towering pines and redwoods of Northern California. But after becoming the first woman to graduate from the University of California with a degree in science, she took a job as a teacher far south in the dry desert town of San Diego. Where there were almost no trees. Kate decided that San Diego needed trees more than anything else. So, this trailblazing young woman singlehandedly started a massive movement that transformed the town into the green, garden-filled oasis it is today. Now, more than 100 years after Kate first arrived in San Diego, her gorgeous gardens and parks can be found all over the city. ([Amazon.com](#))

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"H. Joseph Hopkins took book writing late in life. After decades of writing reports describing communicative disorders of children and adults, and applying for grant monies, Joe discovered email storytelling in the mid-nineties. Through the years Joe attended writing classes and workshops. *The Tree Lady* is Joe's first book and he is overwhelmed by the positive response it has received." ([H. Joseph Hopkins](#))

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Jill McElmurry was born in Los Angeles, CA, into a family of artists and musicians. She studied art at SUNY Purchase and School of Visual Arts in New York. Before fulfilling her lifelong dream of creating picture books, Jill illustrated magazines, book covers, posters and design projects in the United States and Germany. She's had several pieces shown at the NY Society of Illustrators. When she's not working on books, she's painting the New Mexico landscape or enjoying herself with her partner Eric and their dog Harry in Taos, New Mexico. ([Jill McElmurry](#))

## THE READ ALOUD

### BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- Whisper to your neighbor why this little girl is lying down among the trees.
- What do you think this book might be about?
- Do you think this is fiction or non-fiction and why?
- Listen and find out if you recognize anything familiar about the setting of the story.

### DURING THE STORY

Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content:

## THE TREE LADY

### TOPICS & THEMES:

- Nature
- Trees
- Development of San Diego

### Tips for every book!

### POWER PHRASES:

*I WONDER...*

*I NOTICE...*

*TELL ME MORE...*

### DIGGING DEEPER:

*"Tell me more, why do you think that?"*

*"How do you know that?"*

*"Why do you think they feel like that?"*

*"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"*

- (p. 2) How long ago was 1860, and why didn't girls get their hands dirty back then?
- (p.4) How would you feel if you were discouraged from learning about science?
- (p.10) What other woman have we read about was the first to accomplish her goals?
- (p.16) Why did people think trees couldn't grow in San Diego?
- (p.20) Give me a thumbs up if you have ever seen this tree in San Diego?
- (p.26) How long do you think it took to plant all the trees in Balboa park?

## AFTER READING

*Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read:*

- Why did the author choose to repeat the same words throughout the story?
- (p.32) What message did the author want us to take away from this story?

## BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- Ask students if they have ever been to Balboa Park and what they did there.
- How do you think cities like San Diego would look like if it weren't for Kate Sessions?
- Why do you think Kate is called the *mother* of Balboa Park?

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- Discuss some of the challenges Kate Sessions overcame so long ago. Why do you think Kate persevered despite these challenges? How have some of these things changed over the years?

## SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

### 1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- Conduct a picture walk and let each child find their favorite page and tell why.
- Read p.5-6 and discuss the similes the author used to help us visualize the story.
- Ask these questions about the vocabulary words in the story:
  - Can you think of anything taller than a redwood tree?
  - Share about a time when you were discouraged.
  - What does it mean to be sheltered?
  - What would you like to look at under a microscope?
  - What kind of animals graze in a field?
  - Explain some attractions you might have found at the San Diego exposition.

#### **Suggested Optional Activity:**

- Show the video [Kate Sessions](#) . Draw a picture of what you would do at Balboa Park.

### 2. WRITING ACTIVITY

- Write about all of the uses and activities that trees bring to the world.

### 3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Talk about the phrase 'money doesn't grow on trees', and how fortunate we are to have lots of trees around us. If anything could grow on trees what would they like to see on trees? What would they like there to be an abundance of in the world?
- Extend further by having them draw their tree – bring in magazines for them to cut out and stick things on their tree – this could be pictures of things, or words like 'love', 'kindness', 'candy'!

## COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7.