

HOME Story Time | September 2021

Lynden Sculpture Garden

HOME program: www.home-at-lynden.org

Recordings and downloads: www.lyndensculpturegarden.org/calendar/home-story-time

Book, English & Spanish edition: Calling the Doves / El Canto de la Palomas written by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrated by Elly Simmons

HOME Story Time Reader: Claudia Orjuela [English and Spanish reader]

Art activity by Lynden art educator: Claudia Orjuela

Synopsis

In this self portrait, Mexican-American author and poet Juan Felipe Herrera recalls his childhood as the loved son of migrant farmworkers. In addition to his memories of traveling from place to place to harvest California's crops, he recalls sleeping under starry skies, bathing in a gigantic tin bucket, eating meals cooked over an open fire, his mother's poems and his father's bird calls.

Activity 1: Let's Share, Reflect! Questions and prompts for further discussion.

For children to make meaningful connections with a story, they need to build a storehouse of background knowledge from which to draw. That storehouse begins with their daily activities or special events. Everything a child experiences adds to their background knowledge, so when you read a book with a young child or student it is useful to highlight the parts of the story that describe experiences they might be familiar with. While the experiences of the child might not be exactly like the story, pointing out how their experiences are similar helps the child connect with and understand the story better.

1. Juanito and his parents slept in a tent. Have you ever slept in a tent before, maybe on a camping trip?
2. Juanito ate his meals outside. Have you had meals outside like a picnic with parents and friends? What did you eat? who did you have meals with outdoors?
3. Have you looked at the stars in the sky at night? When? Where? Why do you think Juanito likes to look at the stars?

Activity 2: Let's Play!

Play pretend is another way to help children make connections and understand a story. With just a few play props, a child can build background knowledge to relate and imagine what Juanito's experiences were like.

1. **Pretend play exercise.** In the story, the author wrote: "We slept huddled together under blankets and quilts and I would look up and see the stars". Recreate Juanito's tent and the stars he looked at. You can simply throw a blanket over a small table allowing the edges to touch the floor. Create a door by opening one side of the blanket. Stick glow in the dark stars underneath the table. Go under the tent and blankets and look up the stars, count them, compare them, sing songs.
2. **Pretend play exercise.** Juanito's mom cooked breakfast outdoors. She made huevos con papas - scrambled or fried eggs with potatoes and tortillas. On a warm summer morning, prepare and have breakfast outside or prepare an inside picnic.
3. **Play exercise.** Try making animal sounds. Juanito's father called to doves by cupping his hands around his mouth and whistling deeply. While enjoying the picnic outside, practice dove calls by making the cooing sounds. Listen to birds around you. Practice the sounds other animals of the book make, such as the wolf, chicken, turkey.

Resources

- Book. Side by Side / Lado a Lado. The Story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez/La Historia de Dolores Huerta y Cesar Chavez. By Monica Brown and illustrated by Joe Cepeda.
- Book. Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez. By Yuyi Morales.
- Video. [The Farm Workers Movement](#). Explore the early days of the United Farmworkers under the guidance of Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta.
- Video. [Hispanic Heritage Awards: Farm Workers](#). America's farmworkers, 33rd Hispanic Heritage Award Heroes honorees.