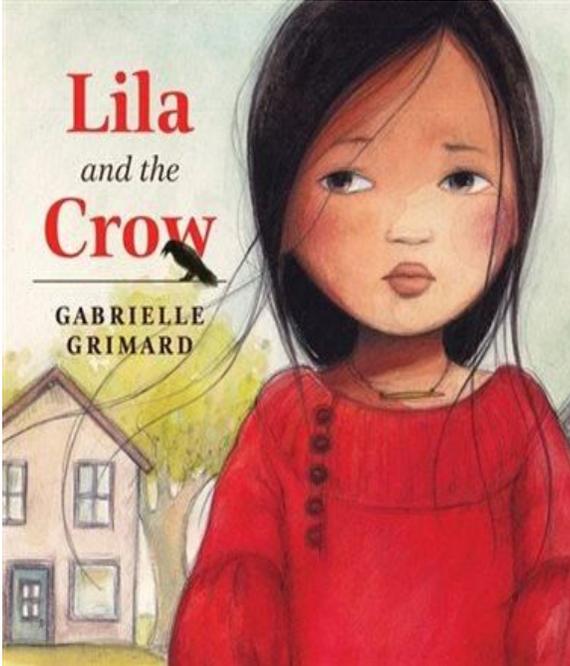


LILA AND THE CROW

Lesson Plan



Summary: During her first few weeks in a new school the children join their classmate Nathan in calling Lila “a crow” because of her dark hair, eyes and skin. To avoid her classmates’ taunting, Lila tries to hide under hats and clothing. She starts to feel lonelier and more isolated. One day, Lila stops to look and listen to the crow that has been following her home every day. Lila sees how beautiful the crow is and has an idea to bring to the great autumn festival coming to her school.

Gabrielle Grimard has been drawing since she was a very young child. Born in Montreal, she studied Fine Arts at Concordia University. She has won numerous awards for her illustrations and the Toronto Public Library’s “First and Best” for this, her first authored book. Enjoy this brightly coloured book and its important message with your class.

WITS Connection: Seeking help, understanding relational victimization. Children have a pretty sound understanding of differences among children by the time they are in early grades but they may not know how hurtful it is to use “mean names”, especially when these are connected to racism and bias. Empathy is growing at their age and teachers can help. The victims of relational victimization often think it is their fault because they are different in some unchangeable way from their classmates. This can make it hard to get help! Lila needs help but thinks she has to solve the problem herself!

Pedagogical intention for Language Arts: understanding oral narrative, oral inference, sentence writing, reading words.

Pre-reading Activities

1. Look at the cover! How would you describe Lila?
2. What do you think is her favourite colour?
3. How do you think she is feeling? How can you tell?
4. What do you already know about crows? (Big and black. Noisy. Smart)

Reading Activities

1. **Nathan calls Lila a crow! What do you think Nathan means by that?** (Lila is different – how? – he has red hair and light skin while she has long dark hair and dark skin).
2. **Why does Nathan call Lila a name** (to make fun of her, he thinks others will laugh, he’s just joking, he doesn’t want others to like her)?
3. **How do you think Lila feels when Nathan calls her a name?**
4. **Do you think he knows he’s upsetting Lila? How can you tell?**
5. **Does Lila think what he said is funny? How can you tell the difference between a joke and a hurtful comment?** (Look at who is laughing. Is Lila laughing?)
6. **What do the other children do each time Nathan makes fun of Lila** (stare, do nothing, whisper to each other, turn away, laugh, join in)? **What else could they do to help Lila** (befriend her, play with her, say they like her hair, tell Nathan to stop)?
7. **Why does Lila try to hide her hair, skin and eyes? Why does she dream of having an invisibility cloak** (to stop the teasing)? **What else could she do to stop the teasing? How could Lila use WITS in this situation)?**
8. **Why do you think the crow follows Lila home? Why does Lila yell at the crow to leave her alone? What do you think the crow whispered into Lila’s ear? How does the crow inspire Lila** (to appreciate and celebrate her appearance, to love herself and embrace what makes her unique and special, to find strength in her differences)?
9. **How does the crow help Lila deal with the problem? Why does this work?** (She’s proud of being like a crow).
10. **Why does Lila’s “heart soar” when her classmates touch her crow costume at the great autumn festival?**
11. **After the autumn festival, Lila is still called crow, but she doesn’t mind. Why do you think she is now okay with being called a crow?**
12. **What’s different in Mr. Nicholas’s class after the great autumn festival?**
13. **What autumn festivals do the people in the class celebrate?** (Thanksgiving, Halloween, other?)

After Reading Activities

1. Science and Ornithology! Who wouldn't want to be a crow? Crows Are Amazing!

Crows are everywhere and are very social and communicative! They can make as many as 250 different sounds! They live with other crows in family and social groups and help each other with protecting their nests! **See:**

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/a-murder-of-crows-crow-facts/5965/>

2. Birds as Ecologists: Pick your favourite bird. Do a bird study on a sheet of paper or create a book. What does your bird look like? What are its habits, living spaces, food, groups, songs? What is your bird's super power (intelligence, song, speed)? What do birds do to help the planet (collect litter and garbage, eat insects, pollinate flowers)?

3. Everyone dreams of flying. Make the wings of your favourite bird (blue jay, crow, raven, eagle, hummingbird) and have a FLYING RUN around the school or create your very own bird dance. [Here's how to make your own wings.](#)

- Get a large piece of cardboard and cut the shape of the wing of your bird. Look carefully, is the wing long and narrow, oval, a rectangle?
- Create feathers to show the many colours of your bird. You can use streamers, paper, or even old magazines!
- Paste the feathers on the cardboard wings. Put an elastic ribbon around the wing at the level of the wrist and upper arm and FLY!

4. Want something calmer? [Make a bird mask.](#)

5. The Cree word for crow is âhâsiw. Look up the name of your bird in an Indigenous Language.

Link:

<http://www.creedictionary.com/search/index.php?q=%C3%A2h%C3%A2siw&scope=1&cwr=22222>