

The Boy and the Gorilla Educator Guide

Questions For Discussion

1. Did the story make you think of a loss or death of someone in your life?
2. Do you know someone whose experienced death and sadness like the Boy?
3. The Boy has no name in the story. Why do you think that is?
4. What do the colors used in the illustrations at beginning, middle and end make you feel? Do the colors reflect the Boy's emotions?
5. Who do you think or what is the Gorilla? What might it symbolize?
6. Who do you think or what does the red bird symbolize?
7. At the beginning of the story notice the space between the Boy and his father. Why are they so far apart? Are they physically closer at the end? Why?
8. Why did the Boy think he'd find his mother at the top of the tree?
9. What did the Gorilla mean when he says to the Boy that his mother is always with him?
10. What activities or things reminded the Boy of his mother?
11. What activities do the Boy and his father do together in the end that help them think of the Boy's mother and allows them to grieve together?
12. Why do you think the gorilla and the red bird went away in the end?
13. Did this book remind you of another book you've read?

Personal Responses To The Book

1. The Boy likes to garden with his mother and fly kites with his father. Is there something you like to do with your mother or father?
2. The Boy tells the Gorilla his mother liked the waves at the beach. Is there a place you love to go?
3. The Boy liked Mom's pancakes and her special cookies. Do you have a favorite food that someone in your family makes?
4. The Gorilla tells the Boy that everyone needs quiet time. What do you do when you want to be alone?

Suggestions For Creative Writing

1. Try writing about someone you love that died or just moved far away. It could be a pet. Try to include memories like activities you did together, places you've been together or family events.
2. In the book there is one wordless spread where you see the Gorilla, Boy and his father hugging. Write a poem that could express what is happening and what they may be feeling.
3. For each of the Gorilla's quotations below, explain the meaning in your own words.
 - *"Yes. We all do. But you have many more kites to fly."*
 - *"No one knows for sure."*
 - *"No. But she's always with you."*
 - *"That's all right. Everyone needs quiet time."*
 - *"Yes, each bite is like a memory."*

Art Craft

1. Emotion Garden: Draw a garden of flowers that expresses the feelings the Boy has throughout the book. For example-for anger, one might draw a red, spiky flower.
2. Memory Box: Using a shoe box decorate it any way you like. Perhaps using construction paper, markers, stickers and photographs. Fill the box with things that remind you of someone you love. For example- the Boy might put a baseball, seashell or cookie recipe in his box which are filled with memories of his mother.