

The Call to Shakabaz

Teacher's Study Guide

Dear Educator,

This study guide includes study questions, related activities, and vocabulary lists for each chapter. It is provided to you in a format that makes it possible for you to easily cut and paste portions into your own materials for your own use with your students. Please provide a brief statement on any reproductions of portions of this material to credit me with developing it. Chapters are clustered together into study units. I have provided a lot of material here. If you don't want to plough through all of this, please check out the short and sweet study question lists also provided on this website. I encourage you to explore resources offered by the Metta Center for Nonviolence Education (www.metacent.org) and Educators for Nonviolence (www.efnv.org). I hope you find the teaching materials I have prepared helpful and that *The Call to Shakabaz* takes you and your students into challenging discussions that spark new ideas and creative thinking.

Sincerely,
Amy Wachspress

CHAPTERS 1-3

Chapter Synopsis

On Midsummer's Eve, the recently orphaned Goodacre children (Doshmisi, Denzel, Maia, and Sonjay) are awakened by their aunt and uncles and whisked off to a cabin in the woods to meet an old woman from another world. Having been told that they must retrieve the Staff of Shakabaz from the evil enchanter Sissrath, the children are sent to Faracadar. They are met by their guide, Jasper, who takes them to his home where his mother is deathly ill. In an effort to heal Jasper's mother, the children seek a collection of plants from which to brew a medicine. While searching for the healing plants, the children narrowly escape capture by one of Sissrath's minions. Doshmisi discovers she can communicate with the trees.

Study Questions

Chapter 1:

1. How do the Goodacres feel about their Aunt Alice? Think about someone you like who is very different from you. What do you like about them? What things do you learn from them because they are different from you? What things do you think they learn from you?
2. Aunt Alice and Deborah Goodacre did not tell the Goodacre children about Faracadar. Why do we keep secrets from people? Are there some things that should remain secret? Why? Can secrets be dangerous? Why?

Chapter 2:

1. Why is Doshmisi afraid to try to help Crystal get well? Why do people often feel afraid when they have to learn something new? Can you remember a time when you were afraid before learning a new skill? What helped you overcome your fear? What helped you learn the new skill?
2. Different people learn things in different ways. The way we learn is called a learning style. How do you learn things best? What is your learning style? For instance, do you prefer to see how something is done or to read about how to do it? Do you learn by writing things down? Do you learn better from words or pictures? From books or activities? Do you learn better if you study by yourself or with your friends? What is the best way for you to memorize things for school? How does your learning style compare to the learning styles of other people you know? Are there things you notice about your learning style that can help you figure out how to be a better student?

Chapter 3:

1. Everyone joins in to help find the ingredients for Crystal's medicine. You may have heard the expression "two heads are better than one." What does that expression mean? What are the advantages of doing a task together with other people? What are the disadvantages? In the story, what are some of the special skills that individual characters have that help them gather ingredients for the medicine?

2. Doshmisi discovers that she can communicate with trees. Do you think that trees have anything to tell us or teach us? If trees could talk, what do you think they would say? Is there a way that trees communicate information to us? Have you ever learned something from observing a tree? What other things have you learned from observing natural objects and living creatures that are not human? Do you think animals and plants have lessons for us? If so, what kinds of lessons and how can we learn these lessons?

Related Activities

Chapter 1:

If you are a city person, write a letter to a country person telling them the good things and the bad things about living in the city. If you are a country person, write a letter to a city person telling them the good things and the bad things about living in the country. If you live in the suburbs or a small town or other locality, write a letter about the kind of place where you live.

Chapter 2:

If you could have an enchanted object that would allow you to help other people, what would you choose to have? What would your enchanted object do (what are its properties)? What would it look like? Draw a picture of your enchanted object and write a list of the special things it can do. Then write a description of how you would use this object to help others.

Chapter 3:

Write a recipe for a brew that would make your community or school a better place. You can put anything you want in the recipe, including people, objects, qualities (e.g., beauty), and feelings (e.g., joy). Remember to write how much of each ingredient is needed.

Vocabulary

Chapter 1:

Sinister = suggesting or threatening evil or trouble

Ponder = to think about carefully; contemplate

Exotic = from another part of the world; intriguingly different

Pronouncement = formal declaration

Amulet = a charm worn as a talisman against evil or injury

Gallant = showy in appearance; majestic

Tuft = a clump of strands, such as hair or threads, joined at the base and cut off at the top

Prospect = something anticipated; expectation

Chapter 2:

Utterance = something spoken

Vibrant = full of energy

Subtle = barely perceptible

Contrary = completely opposite

Alcove = a partly enclosed extension of a room; nook

Administer = to give as a remedy; to manage

Compost = decayed organic matter (such as food) used as fertilizer

Speculate = to think deeply

Chapter 3:

Incredulously = disbelievingly

Scruff = the back of the neck

Inadequate = not able to meet a requirement

Canopy = the uppermost layer of tree growth in a forest

Lichen = a plant fungus that forms a crusty growth on rocks and trees

Appetizer = food or drink served before a meal to excite the appetite

Brew = to make a drink by boiling

Dismay = to discourage or greatly trouble

CHAPTERS 4-6

Chapter Synopsis

Doshmisi heals Crystal with the recipe in her herbal. Denzel helps Diamond figure out how to make a solar panel to use solar energy to recharge a battery. Crystal explains to the Goodacres that they are “the Four” and the people of Faracadar hope they will break Sissrath’s grip on the land by taking from him the Staff of Shakabaz. Following her advice, they set out for Whale Island to meet Clover the Griot. Jasper goes with them as their guide. With the help of a tribe of butterflies they elude Compost on the road and travel past Akinowe Lake to the Dome Circle where a kindly innkeeper named Jelly gives them a tour of the Crystal Communication Dome. They are joined in their travels by Jack (the intuit), a clairvoyant little boy.

Study Questions

Chapter 4:

1. Doshmisi has a gift for healing. Denzel has a gift for science and engineering. Each person has his or her own gifts and abilities. What gifts do you have? What do you do to learn ways to use your gifts? What gifts do people in your family have?
2. Crystal and her family try to explain to the Goodacres how things work in Faracadar without money. When people use a system of trade to exchange goods and services it’s called a barter system. Imagine what it would be like if we didn’t have money. How do you think things would work where you live if people traded instead of using money? Have you used a system of trade for anything recently? How did that work?

Chapter 5:

1. Even though the butterflies are very small, they are able to protect the travelers from harm. Can you think of a time in your life when something small accomplished something big, or an example of something small accomplishing something big? Can you think of an example of many small things joining together and using the strength of numbers to accomplish something big that they could not each accomplish alone?
2. Why do you think that Doshmisi’s conversation with Mama at Akinowe Lake makes it easier for her to accept Mama’s death? What things can people do to help them recover from the death of a loved one?

Chapter 6:

1. Doshmisi chooses not to tell the others about her conversation with Mama. Why do you think she wants to keep this to herself? Do you think she should tell her sister and brothers about her conversation or do you think it’s OK for her to remain silent about it? Do you think it would make any difference to Denzel, Maia, and Sonjay if they knew about the conversation? What do you imagine they would think about it?
2. Violet explains that Sissrath uses the Crystal Communication Dome as a strategic tool to maintain control of Faracadar. Why is the communication center so important to the person in power in Faracadar? What kind of power does a leader have when the leader controls the communication of information to the people? How are radio, TV,

newspapers, internet, and other media used in our country to control the communication of information to the people? How do you know that information you receive is accurate and correct?

Related Activities

Chapter 4:

Set up a trade day in your classroom. Everyone bring in two things in good condition that you don't want anymore that you think someone else might want. If you have a special skill, make a card telling what you do and offering your services in trade.

Examples of special skills are: making music CDs, cutting or fixing hair, putting on nail polish, baking good cookies, stenciling skateboards or making other kinds of art, training dogs, playing a musical instrument, fixing bicycles, sewing, or telling funny jokes. Set up a trade marketplace and see what you can get. Consider doing a trade night at your school. (Check out www.freecycle.org to find out more about an international network of traders.)

[Teacher's note. In this chapter, Denzel and Diamond build a solar panel. The chapter could be tied to a science and engineering unit on solar energy and you could build a solar-powered device as a project. You may wish to tie this in with Chapter 8, in which Denzel works with the battery makers of the Passage Circle to build a windmill. A science unit on alternative energy would work well in conjunction with the events in the book.]

Chapter 5:

Our sense of smell can be much more important than we realize. Some people have more sensitive noses than others. Have everyone in the class bring in one item with a strong scent. Have each person put the item into a paper bag so that it is not visible. Number each paper bag with a different number. Close your eyes and smell the item in each bag and write down what you think is in the bag just from smelling it. When everyone has done their list of all the items, compare notes. See how many items you could figure out just by smell. What are your most favorite scents? What are your least favorite scents? Scents can trigger feelings. For instance, familiar scents can remind us of things and make us feel a certain way. The scent of fresh basil supposedly makes people feel joyous. So if you are feeling sad, smell some fresh basil!

Chapter 6:

In this chapter, Jelly draws a map of Faracadar for the travelers. Jelly's Map appears at the front of the book. Draw a map of your neighborhood and the places most familiar to you. Pretend that you are drawing the map for someone who needs to find their way around the places in your life. Be sure to label all the key places. Do you think that a stranger could find all the places necessary from your map?

[Teacher's note. This map-making activity might be expanded to a study of maps and cartography. Maps play a role later in the book as well. Maps have the power to influence our perception of the places they depict. Further study of the power of maps to influence our perception offers many learning opportunities. In another vein, you might choose to tie this chapter in with a science unit on growing crystals and the study of the

real properties of crystals, which obviously can't be used for communication as described in the story!]

Vocabulary

Chapter 4:

Griot = an African tribal storyteller who passes on the people's history through the oral tradition (sometimes called a "human library," the griot is the tribe's link to the past)

Harness = to control and utilize

Interject = to insert between other parts

Mica = a type of rock that splits easily into sheets

Designate = to specify

Paddock = an enclosed area in which horses are kept

Hewn = shaped using an axe or looks like it was shaped with an axe

Tentatively = not definitely; unsure

Chapter 5:

Lavender = a small fragrant purple flower

Glade = a clearing in a forest

Makeshift = used temporarily

Grateful = thankful and appreciative

Escort = a person or people who go with someone as a guide or protector

Awe = a feeling of reverence and wonder and sometimes dread

Iridescent = produces an array of rainbow-like colors

Solferino = a purplish pink dye discovered in the Italian town of Solferino

Chapter 6:

Hospitable = treating guests with warmth and generosity

Ruefully = with feelings of regret or sorrow

Diode = a device made of a crystalline substance that has electrical conductivity

Converge = meet

Surmise = guess

Eucalyptus = a tall tree with fragrant leaves that produces an oil often used in medicine

Characteristic = typical

Intuit = to understand or sense through a keen insight without the use of thought

CHAPTERS 7-9

Chapter Synopsis

Although Jasper assures them that the Marini Hills are safe, the travelers awake to find their belongings missing. Denzel blames Jasper. The travelers quarrel. When they arrive among the Coast People, they discover that the sprites “borrowed” their belongings. Misunderstandings and bad feelings are repaired. At the Passage Circle, Doshmisi uses the herbal to heal those in need, Denzel works with the inventors on their projects (including a windmill), Maia discovers her talents as a drummer, and Sonjay learns more about Faracadar while skateboarding with new friends. When Jack warns that they must leave, the travelers set out for Whale Island to see Clover the Griot. They spend a harrowing night hiding from Sissrath at a safe house of the Underground Pathway. On the ferry to Whale Island they are attacked by a sea serpent.

Study Questions

Chapter 7:

1. Things are not always as they appear. Do you think Denzel had a right to get angry at Jasper? Do you think the Four had a right to blame Jasper for the robbery? If you were one of the Four, how would you have handled the situation?
2. Sonjay does not want to share in the bad feelings of his fellow travelers. What does he do to avoid being sucked into the argument? How does he prevent himself from having a bad day along with everyone else? Does his strategy work?

Chapter 8:

1. In what ways are the Goodacres changing during their adventure in Faracadar? What things do they each do in this chapter that they would not have done at Manzanita Ranch? How do they each increase their knowledge and skills?
2. At the end of the chapter, Sonjay takes charge and tells everyone what to do to get ready to leave the Passage Circle. Why do you think the others obey him without questioning, arguing, or complaining? What qualities does a person need to be a good leader? If someone tells you what to do, why do you choose to obey or not obey?

Chapter 9:

1. Doshmisi has been so busy at the clinic, that she has not had time to fix her hair or worry about her appearance. Denzel has been working with the battery makers and has forgotten to pay attention to how dirty his face and hands and shoes have gotten. It is important for people to pay attention to their appearance. But how much should we care about how we look? Is it important to be clean? Is it important to wear good clothes? How good do our clothes have to be? Are there times when other things are more important than looking good? Are there times when looking good is very important? Do you think that Denzel should wash his face before riding out of the Passage Circle? Do you think that Doshmisi should have taken time off from working at the clinic to get her hair done?

2. Doshmisi tries to explain to Jasper what happened to the rainforests. She tells him that people cut down the trees and sold the wood for money. Jasper can't understand why anyone would rather have money than trees. How would you explain to him why trees are cut down? Why do we cut down trees? Should there be limits on cutting trees? What value do trees have when they are cut down and what value do they have when they are left standing?

Related Activities

Chapter 7:

Can you remember a time when you jumped to conclusions about something and later found out you were wrong? Write a paragraph describing a real or imagined situation in which you made an assumption about a person's character or actions and later discovered that you were wrong. Describe 1) the way things seemed, 2) what you thought was true from what you observed, 3) the way things turned to be in reality and how you found this out, and 4) what you discovered from the experience.

Chapter 8:

When Doshmisi's wakes up on her first day in the Passage Circle, the author writes that "the morning fog tiptoed into the room on padded toes." Fog can't really tiptoe; in fact it doesn't even have feet. This description is a metaphor. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase normally associated with one kind of object or idea is placed on a completely different object or idea to suggest something alike between them. A metaphor makes us think about the relationships between things and points out similarities we might not otherwise realize. In doing this, the metaphor changes the way we view and understand both of these things. The morning fog is compared to a creature that might have padded toes. This makes us imagine the fog as something living that can creep and it makes us imagine tiptoeing as an activity that has some of the mysterious and hidden qualities associated with fog. It expands the way we think about fog and about tiptoeing. For a metaphor, you don't say that something was like something else, you turn it into something else. Try writing a metaphor. Choose an object or idea and describe it in a way that it is not usually described. Here are some examples of things you might describe using a metaphor: a train passing, your mother calling you to dinner, ocean waves, a smart idea, a peaceful afternoon. Here is another example of a metaphor: "the hot sun stared at us without blinking its one bright eye." [Teacher's note. You might use this discussion to explain what a simile is and the difference between a simile and a metaphor. A simple definition of a simile is a comparison of two things of a different kind, usually introduced with the words "like" or "as." To change the example from the story into a simile, you could write "the fog was like a fox tiptoeing into the room."]

Chapter 9:

The make-believe Underground Pathway in the story reminds us of the real Underground Railroad that American slaves used to flee the South before slavery was abolished. Imagine what it might have been like to hide under someone's barn for days or even weeks. Pretend that you are a fleeing slave staying in an underground room for

a week. You have candles for light and plenty of food and water. Someone checks on you every day to make sure you are OK, but you can't go outside. You can imagine that you are alone or that someone is with you. Perhaps you have a pet dog or bird with you. Write a paragraph describing your experience and the thoughts that go through your head while you are waiting to leave the underground room. Perhaps you would like to do some research about the Underground Railroad and find out more about what it was like for African Americans to stay at safe houses while fleeing slavery.

Vocabulary

Chapter 7:

Repel = to keep away

Permeate = to spread through

Vague = indefinite; unclear

Abstraction = an idea that is not concrete and well-defined

Emit = to give out; utter

Luminous = sending out light

Despondently = depressed and lacking hope

Cryptically = baffles the understanding

Chapter 8:

Gourd = the inedible fruit of a vine (similar to a squash) with a hard outside shell

Succulents = plants with fleshy stems that hold water, such as cacti

Terrace = an open porch or balcony

Transplant = to move a plant from one place where it is growing to another place

Emanate = to send out from; emit

Raffia = fiber from the threads of an African tree used in basket making

Elegant = graceful or refined in appearance, tasteful

Coy = flirtatiously; avoids giving a straight answer

Chapter 9:

Swatch = a sample strip (usually fabric)

Panoramic = unlimited view in all directions

Flanked = to have something on each side of

Cypress = a variety of evergreen tree

Subdued = less intense; less vibrant

Navigator = one who plans or directs the course of travel

Wistfully = filled with longing

Ecology = the interaction between living beings and their environment

CHAPTERS 10-12

Chapter Synopsis

Maia defeats the sea serpent by playing the ancient horn. Clover provides an explanation to the Goodacres about who they are and their connection to Faracadar. When the Passage Circle is burned to the ground by Sissrath, the Four and Jasper make a pact to seek revenge by assassinating Sissrath. Denzel obtains one of the deadly poison darts of the Special Forces. The travelers arrive at Big House City on market day. Sonjay is seized by a seedy merchant. With Doshmisi and Jasper hot on their heels, the merchant and Sonjay disappear into a nearby house.

Study Questions

Chapter 10:

1. The Goodacres did not know that they are part Faracadaran. There are many people who don't know where their family originally came from. For instance, people who are adopted may not know anything about their birth family. Many African American people who had ancestors who were slaves do not know where their ancestors came from or if all their ancestors were even from Africa. How far back can you trace your family? Why do people want to know about their ancestors? Is it important to you to know where your family came from? What do we learn from the history of our ancestors?
2. Do you think their father made a good decision when he left the Goodacres to confront Sissrath and save his wife's life? Sometimes people have to take a risk to make things better or to make things change. But there is no way to know how things will turn out. Sometimes a risk pays off and sometimes it doesn't. What things can people do to help them decide whether or not to take a risk? What can they do to improve their chances of success with a risk? What would you do if someone you cared about took a big risk for a good reason and it didn't work out? What would you say to that person?

Chapter 11:

1. Clover warns Sonjay, "Beware, for those who carry weapons are likely to have weapons used against them." What does she mean by this? Do you think a person who owns a gun is more likely or less likely to be shot than a person who doesn't own one and why? (Look up the statistics on this, you may be surprised.) Do you think the Four should introduce guns to Faracadar? Do you think regular citizens in your community should be able to have guns? Do you think everyone should have the right to own a gun? If not, who should be denied this right? In what ways have guns helped our society progress? In what ways have guns prevented our society from progressing?
2. How does revenge really work? There is an expression taken from the bible that says "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." What does this expression mean? A spiritual leader of India named Mahatma Gandhi said that if everyone followed the belief of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" then the whole world would be blind and toothless. What did he mean by that? What is the difference between revenge and justice? How might justice satisfy the need for revenge?

Chapter 12:

1. Music is very important to the Coast People. Maia knows that they need their music and their drummers to help them recover from the attack by Sissrath. Why do they need their music? How can music be healing? How can music be inspiring? Can you think of a time in your life when you heard music and it made an important difference to you? Has music ever changed you or helped you change your life? Do you have a special song or songs? Why is music so powerful?

2. Bayard Rustin keeps saying “Hyacinth is a fool.” Is it OK for him to say that? If Bayard was a person and not a bird, what do you think Sonjay could say to him to get him to stop saying that? If a friend of yours says something bad about someone else and you don’t think it’s OK for them to say that, what could you do or say to get them to stop? Are there instances when it might be OK to say something bad about someone else? How do you draw the line between instances when it’s OK and not OK?

Related Activities

Chapter 10:

Clover the Griot keeps the history of Faracadar. In some African tribes, the griot keeps the history by memorizing and retelling stories. The griot is critically important in cultures that do not write things down because there are no books in which to record history. These cultures are called “preliterate,” meaning they have no written language. These people remember their history through the griot’s stories. Imagine that you must remember the history of your family in one long story that is never written down. Make a list of words to remind you of the most important things you would want to remember for that story. Break out into groups of three and let each person in the group tell their story that includes the most important things about their family and their history. Rotate to a different group and tell the story a second time. Notice what you added the second time and what you forgot to include. How did your story change between the first time you told it and the second time? Did you remember to include all the items on your list?

Chapter 11:

Write a letter to your congressional representative outlining your suggestion for what the laws should be about who can have a gun and who can’t. Research the gun laws for your state, city, or town. If you think these laws should be changed, write a letter to your local newspaper outlining what you think the laws should be and why.

Chapter 12:

In this chapter, the Four have the opportunity to use the color change powder to put a color in their skin. We associate colors with moods, objects, and ideas. For instance, we associate anger with the color red (“seeing red”) and we associate the color green with jealousy (“green with envy”). Green is also the color of plants and living things and we think of it as the color of nature. If the people in your family could be bright colors (red, green, yellow, purple, orange, blue) like the people in Faracadar, what colors do you think each of them would be and why? If your friends could be bright colors, what colors do you think they would be and why? Have each person in the class write down what

color they would be and why on a piece of paper. Fold the papers up and put them into a hat. Pick the papers out one by one. Read the papers out loud and see if you can guess who wrote each paper.

Vocabulary

Chapter 10:

Bassoon = a low-pitched woodwind instrument

Unwieldy = hard to manage because of shape or size

Dislodge = to remove

Resolutely = determinedly

Chartreuse = light greenish yellow

Repel = to keep away; to push back by force

Inaudibly = unable to be heard

Indulgent = inclined to give in to the desires of someone else

Chapter 11:

Lethal = deadly

Idle = groundless or with no basis; doing nothing

Sonar = a system for locating objects with sound waves

Ecosystem = an ecological community and its environment working together as a unit

Algae = one-celled water plants without stems

Composure = calm self-control

Desolate = dismal, dreary

Vengeance = the act of causing harm to another as punishment for a wrong they have done

Chapter 12:

Translucent = admitting light in such a way that objects beyond cannot be clearly seen

Crude = not carefully made, raw

Tinge = a slight trace, such as color or flavor

Seclude = to keep apart from others

Einstein = Albert Einstein, a famous scientist and one of the most brilliant people to ever live. He is best known for discovering the Theory of Relativity as represented by the equation $E=MC^2$.

Superimpose = to place one thing on or over something else

Vendor = salesperson

Mesmerize = hypnotize

CHAPTERS 13-15

Chapter Synopsis

The travelers join forces with Crumpet in an assassination attempt that fails miserably. Crumpet turns into a rock and the travelers are captured by Sissrath. High Chief Hyacinth and his daughter Princess Honeydew help the prisoners escape and together they flee to the mountains, with Sissrath and Compost in hot pursuit. Forced by Sissrath's Special Forces to enter the mountain caves, the travelers must deal with the geebachings. Geebachings force people to laugh to death. But Maia figures out how to transform the geebachings into birds by playing the water organ. The travelers make it safely through the mountain.

Study Questions

Chapter 13:

1. At first Crumpet and his friends seem hostile but then it turns out they are on the same side as the Goodacres. Jasper, Doshmisi, and Sonjay do not trust Crumpet and his friends when they enter the basement. But Sonjay quickly changes his mind. What do you think makes Sonjay change his mind and trust these people? Can you remember a time when you met someone you didn't trust at first but then you later changed your opinion and wound up trusting them? How did they earn your trust? Sometimes our first impressions of people are very different from the way we feel about them when we get to know them. Can you think of a time when your first impression of someone was inaccurate? How do first impressions benefit us? How do they lead us astray?
2. If you had the chance to kill the man who murdered your mother would you do it? If killing is wrong, then why is it legal to send a murderer to the electric chair in the United States? Do you think it is OK or not OK for a murderer to be put to death by decision of a judge and jury? Are there any instances in which murder is acceptable? Who should get to decide if a person who has committed murder should be put to death or not?

Chapter 14:

1. When Sonjay throws the perfume jar, Sissrath says "You of the Heartfire have some spunk. Lucky for me that you didn't hold the dart or I might be dead now, eh?" He is implying that Sonjay is braver and has more fight in him than Denzel. Why do you think he wants to make Denzel feel inferior to his brother? What can Sissrath gain by doing this? Have you ever heard the saying "divide and conquer"? What do you think that means? How does that apply to Sissrath's attempt to make Denzel feel inferior to Sonjay?
2. What do you think gave High Chief Hyacinth the courage to rescue the Four and Jasper? What do you think has kept him from standing up to Sissrath all these years? Have you heard the saying "there is nothing to fear but fear itself"? What do you think that means? How does that apply to Hyacinth?

Chapter 15:

1. Hyacinth has a mouse phobia. A phobia is not exactly a fear of something. It is an illogical fear; in other words, it makes no sense. There is no reason for a grown man to be afraid of a tiny mouse. But just knowing that fact does not help Hyacinth because his fear is not logical. He can't explain why he has it, he just does. Some people cannot control themselves when they see mice and they scream, no matter what. Common phobias are fear of mice, spiders, snakes, flying on an airplane, enclosed spaces, heights, and large buildings. Some phobias are related to past experiences and others appear or disappear mysteriously. Do you have any phobias? Do you know other people who have phobias? How do you think people can overcome phobias? You might want to do some research to find out more about how phobias can be treated.
2. Have you ever been plagued with the giggles? Have you been somewhere, like at a funeral or serious occasion, where it was not appropriate to laugh but you couldn't help yourself? Laughter relieves tension and sometimes, in stressful situations, we cannot help ourselves and we laugh. There are many different types of humor. You may want to investigate the psychology of humor. Who are the funniest people in your class and what makes them funny? How can laughter be healing? How can laughter be harmful?

Related Activities

Chapter 13:

Write a description of a person you know who seemed one way when you first met them and turned out to be very different when you got to know them better. Compare your first impressions with all that you know about this person now.

[Teacher's Note: You might find it interesting to look at Johari's Window with your students as part of this discussion about knowing about people (and about ourselves). If you are unfamiliar with Johari's Window, simply google it on your computer for more information.]

Chapter 14:

Toad is willing to die to protect the royal family. Is there anything (or anyone) that you are willing to die for? Is there something that you believe in so strongly that you are willing to fight for it either physically or through other actions? Pretend that you have one minute on the TV to tell the world about a cause you believe in. Write what you will say to convince everyone else that your cause is important and to get them to agree with you about it and to join you if you must fight for it.

Chapter 15:

Laughter is very contagious and much harder to control than you might think. Divide into two teams and see who has more success making the other team laugh. Each person on the team must step forward in turn and allow the members of the opposite team to attempt to make him or her laugh. Teammates may touch the person resisting but they can't say anything. Only the team attempting to get the laugh can speak. The team attempting to get the laugh has 2 minutes (time it) to get the other team's member to either smile or show his or her teeth. The person resisting must keep their mouth closed and may not cover it. The teacher will judge if the person successfully resists (does not smile or show his/her teeth) or not. After each member of each team has a chance to

attempt to resist, count up how many people resisted and the team with the most people who did not laugh wins. Consider doing some research on what causes people to laugh.

Vocabulary

Chapter 13:

Coffer = strongbox

Flinch = wince, pull away from

Ample = large; generous; sufficient

Mystified = bewildered

Vulnerable = subject to injury or attack

Solidarity = unity arising from common purpose or interest

Rotund = round and plump

Scruples = moral principles that influence action

Chapter 14:

Elaborate = full of detail, intricate and complex

Plush = thick, luxurious fabric

Despicable = worthless, deserving of hate

Implicate = to involve in something; entwine

Embolden = to instill with courage

Emblazon = to carve or decorate with heraldic symbols or bright colors

Dejected = feeling gloomy

Malignant = evil and causing injury; a tumor that can cause death

Chapter 15:

Antidote = a remedy to counteract the effects of a poison

Impenetrable = cannot be pierced

Mortified = embarrassed, ashamed

Sheepish = meek, embarrassed at having made a mistake

Mirthful = gladness as shown by laughter

Delicacy = something rare and special (usually food)

Vaccine = a preparation administered to prevent disease

Phobic = related to an exaggerated, inexplicable, and usually illogical fear (phobia) of something

CHAPTERS 16-18

Chapter Synopsis

Hyacinth takes the travelers to the Wolf Circle, where they meet Amaranth, a strange and beautiful woman who worked at the Final Fortress and knows how to get inside. With Amaranth as their guide, the travelers enter the Final Fortress and rescue Cardamom. But Amaranth is a double agent who delivers them into the hands of Sissrath. After their first glimpse of the Staff of Shakabaz, the Four become Sissrath's prisoners as he forces them to march back to Big House City in chains. Jasper and the Four are rescued by sprites and hidden in Spriteland, where try as they might they cannot think of a way to defeat Sissrath. When she asks the trees for help, they send Doshmisi to Emerald Island to communicate with the whales. The whales speak in poetry, telling Doshmisi to defeat Sissrath with love and goodness. This makes no sense to her. Despairing of coming up with a successful plan of action, Doshmisi relays the peaceful message of the whales to the others when she returns to Spriteland. Sonjay suddenly has an idea that they should mobilize all the people and march in peace and nonviolence like Dr. King in the Civil Rights Movement. Sonjay remembers that Dr. King was influenced by Gandhi's concept of satyagraha, or truth force, which he explains to the others. They decide to mobilize the people in a nonviolent march on Big House City, to take back the Staff of Shakabaz and Faracadar from Sissrath.

Study Questions

Chapter 16:

1. Sonjay is very excited to find that the Mountain People cook meat; but it is very strange meat. He is more adventurous than his brother or sisters, who won't eat it. Do you think it's a good idea for Sonjay to eat all that strange food? Would you eat it? If you ate something and it tasted delicious, but then you found out it was bat eyes, dragon meat, or something called slime pig, would you keep eating it? Most of the people in Faracadar are vegetarians. People choose not to eat meat for many different reasons. What are those reasons? Do you think eating meat is a good idea? Bad idea? Some of both? Is anyone in your class vegetarian? What do vegetarians eat instead of meat?
2. At first, Sonjay doesn't like his long lost cousin Princess Honeydew as much as his sisters do. What is it about the princess that bothers Sonjay? Why do you think this is a problem for him? What does he discover about her that makes him change his mind? Why does this make a difference to him? Often people in families, like cousins, have many personality traits in common. This can make them get along better or it can make them get along worse. Do you have cousins with similar personality traits as yourself? How do you get along? Do you get along better or worse because you are so much alike?

Chapter 17:

1. Do you think it was a wise idea for Hyacinth to call the wolves to help him against the Special Forces? Hyacinth was reacting to the situation. He did the only thing he could think of to do at that moment. Later, in the dungeon, he regrets calling the wolves

because they were killed and he also regrets trusting Amaranth in the first place. He apologizes to the others. Sonjay tells him not to feel bad because he made “the best choices he could make at the time.” Think of a time when you did something that you regretted. How did you try to set things right? Think of a time when someone else did something to you that was wrong and then apologized for it or tried to make it up to you afterward. What is the value of an apology? In some cultures, if someone begs forgiveness of you then you are required to forgive them. Why is forgiveness important? How can it provide healing to both the person asking for forgiveness and the person granting forgiveness? What happens in the story when Sonjay forgives Hyacinth for his mistakes? What does it mean to Hyacinth?

[Teacher’s note.] You might choose to expand this discussion into a study of the concept of restitution. If your community has a victim/offender restitution program (VORP), consider bringing in a guest speaker from this program to discuss constructive ways in which wrongdoings are addressed and used as opportunities for growth and change for all involved.]

2. Doshmisi needs silver spark to make the recipe to heal Amaranth, but she has none and fears it will never again grow after the fields burned. You have probably heard about plants or animals that have become extinct. Many of our medicines come from plant substances. Native people throughout the world have learned how to use plants to cure illness. These plants are often called healing herbs. Do you think Sissrath would have acted differently if he realized that he was destroying the silver spark by having the Passage Circle burned? In the real world, can you think of any examples of important plants, such as healing herbs, that we are destroying? What can be done about this?

[Teacher’s note.] You might choose to use this unit as a springboard for a discussion of the value of the lost trees of the Amazon Rainforest or the old growth Redwoods of the Pacific Northwest. You might want to study the introduction of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into common agricultural practice, and the ramifications of this, which might include the adulteration of wild and variegated species (leading to extinction of certain plants). This would offer an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of GMOs.]

Chapter 18:

1. When Doshmisi hears the whales she despairs because she says they are speaking poetically and she doesn’t understand poetry. What is poetry? Why is it sometimes hard to understand? What use is poetry? How does it benefit people?

[Teacher’s note.] This discussion provides an opportunity to study poems and explore the power of poetry. Have students bring in poems that have meaning for them. Have students write poetry. The haiku is a simple poetic form that young writers particularly enjoy reading and writing. Remind students that songs, including rap and hip hop, are often poems. You might select a contemporary song with a similar theme to a classic poem and put the two side by side for students to study.]

2. The whales tell Doshmisi that violence will only create more violence and that she must find a way to “fight” without doing harm, using weapons, or engaging in violence. What ways can you think of to work for the defeat of an enemy without using violence? What alternatives are there to war? How can conflicts be resolved peacefully between people and between nations?

[Teacher's note. For thought-provoking materials and discussion about nonviolence, visit the Metta Center for Nonviolence Education founded by UC-Berkeley Professor Dr. Michael Nagler at www.mettacenter.org. Other educational resources on the topic of nonviolence can be found at the Educators for Nonviolence website: www.efnv.org. The Metta Center is designed for adults and the Educators for Nonviolence website has a wealth of information and resources for educators working with children of all ages. There are many conflict resolution programs in use in the schools, including programs where children train as peacekeepers and facilitate conflict resolution among peers. Your school may already have such a program in place. Peaceful conflict resolution is a central theme explored in the book and will raise many issues for young readers. You might wish to discuss nonviolent tactics for promoting change, such as use of the media, guerilla theater/art, music, diplomatic negotiation, boycotts, peaceful demonstration, and, of course, nonviolent civil disobedience. Acknowledging the suffering of "the other" is an important step in the process of peaceful conflict resolution. Please use events in the story as an opportunity to discuss the concept of nonviolence and peaceful solutions to conflict in more depth. See study question number one under Chapter 19 below.]

Related Activities

Chapter 16:

The people of the Wolf Circle have a special relationship to animals. They have a lot of pets. Hyacinth can even communicate with the wolves. Do you have an animal or pet that is special to you? If so, write a one-paragraph description of your animal or pet. Attach a photo or drawing of the pet to the paragraph. If you communicate with that pet in some way, describe how you do so. If you don't have a pet and you want one, then write about what you want. If you don't have a pet and you don't want one, write about someone else's pet and their relationship to it. Pets can make a very big difference in people's lives and are often given to elderly people or lonely people to cheer them up by providing companionship.

Chapter 17:

The Staff of Shakabaz is described as resembling the *kahilis*, or royal scepters, of Hawaii's ancestral kings and queens. The *kahilis* of Hawaii are dramatic and magnificent. The Bishop Museum in Honolulu has a remarkable collection of *kahilis*. Do some research into the *kahilis* and find out exactly what they looked like and how the tribal kings and queens of Hawaii used them. Divide into groups of 3 or 4 and build your own *kahili*.

Chapter 18:

[Teacher's note. Chapter 18 provides an opportunity to have students do further research into the life and beliefs of Mahatma Gandhi and how Gandhi's methods were used by Dr. King. Dr. King was very much influenced by Gandhi's use of nonviolent civil disobedience and Dr. King was a master at it. Students would benefit from studying the concept of satyagraha further and you might want to study the history of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in conjunction with this. The movie *Boycott* provides an

excellent and compelling presentation of the events surrounding the boycott (and Bayard Rustin is portrayed in this film). Although the concept of satyagraha is introduced in Chapter 18, it is demonstrated in Chapter 19 at the Battle of Truth. As you enter the conclusion of the book, consider extending this study of nonviolent protest, Gandhi, King, and the Civil Rights Movement throughout your reading of the final chapters. Resources cited above, such as the Metta Center and Educators for Nonviolence, can provide a wealth of materials and suggestions to expand your exploration of this topic.]

Vocabulary

Chapter 16:

Serene = calm, clear of storms

Guttural = sounds made deep in the throat

Tolerance = ability to endure or accept

Ally = one that is associated with another as a helper or supporter

Wary = careful, cunning in escaping danger

Cardamom = an East Indian herb in the ginger family with a pleasant scent

Reverent = filled with awe, worshipful

Sallow = grayish greenish yellow color

Chapter 17:

Kahili = the large scepter of the Hawaiian kings and queens. Made from wood with shells, feathers, and other ornaments attached, the *kahilis* stand 8 or 9 feet tall. Their size increases the perceived size of the king or queen carrying the *kahili*.

Incantation = use of spoken spells or charms for magic

Stanch = to check or stop the flow of something

Poultice = medicine spread on cloth and applied to cuts or sores

Incompetent = lacking the ability to do the job

Extricate = to free or remove from an entanglement or difficulty

Saffron = an orange plant used to flavor foods or dye fabric

Calibrate = to determine, correct, or mark the measures on a measurement instrument

Chapter 18:

Rack = in the expression “rack his brain” means to stretch or strain

Tumor = an abnormal mass of tissue

Abundant = great plenty, well-supplied

Oblivious = unaware, not paying mindful attention

Decipher = decode, to make out the meaning of something hard to figure out

Prototype = the original model used to make more of something

Disorient = confuse, lose a sense of time or place

Satyagraha = truth force; Gandhi’s method of making political and social change through nonviolent resistance

CHAPTERS 19-20

Chapter Synopsis

Denzel uses a portable crystal to communicate with Violet at the Dome and send a message to the people to come march on Big House City with the Four. People arrive from all over the land. Sonjay gives a rousing speech on the beach and the multitudes travel to Big House City. Joined by wolves, tigers, dogs, birds, and butterflies, the Four lead the people of Faracadar on a march with no weapons and no violence. Sissrath's Special Forces shoot the first line of marchers with poison darts, but more marchers keep coming. Sonjay, in a moment of blazing triumph, calls to the Staff of Shakabaz and it leaves Sissrath and comes to Sonjay's hand. The poison darts fly from the people and they are made whole. Sissrath and his minions flee. The land is returned to the leadership of High Chief Hyacinth, and his new advisor Cardamom the enchanter. The Goodacres return to Manzanita Ranch through Angel's Gate, transformed from their former selves into the Four. They are greeted by their aunt and uncles who marvel at the transformation. Sonjay claims that he heard his father's voice in the dungeons at the Final Fortress and he declares that next summer he intends to return and rescue his father.

Study Questions

Chapter 19:

1. Denzel leaves the armor vest behind in Spriteland. He says, "If one of us falls, we all fall. I don't see any point in wearing the vest now. It can't cover everyone." What does he mean by this? If you were Denzel, would you take the vest?
2. In the book, the people are able to successfully use nonviolent protest to remove Sissrath. Do you think it is possible to overthrow a powerful leader with nonviolent protest? Do you know of an instance when it was done before? Can you imagine what it would look like? Can you imagine what it would require? A lot of people could be killed. Would it be worth that? If you believe what the whales say in the book, that violence will make more violence and that bad energy will make more bad energy, then how do you fight a powerful leader who will use violence against you?

Chapter 20:

1. The Goodacres have become the Four. What are some of the things that contribute to their change? What kinds of things cause people to change? Can you think of a time in your life when something you experienced caused you to make a positive change in who you are or how you think? What has made you change your mind in the past? Think about something you would like to work on to change about yourself. How will you go about making that change? What can help you make that change?
2. If you could go with the Four to Faracadar, what would you like to do there? Go to Spriteland? Eat mannafruit? Visit the Crystal Communication Dome? See a geebacking? Talk to trees? Hear whales speaking? Heal people with the herbal? Play the drums? Build a windmill? What else?

Related Activities

Chapter 19:

[Teacher's note. See under Chapter 18 above. The study of satyagraha, Gandhi, King, the Civil Rights Movement, and nonviolent protest should be extended through this chapter.] Do some research of your own into historical instances when nonviolence was successfully used to make change. Choose one of these instances and describe it in two paragraphs. How could you use nonviolence in your daily life? Discuss what you see in your community that is not right and that bothers you. It could be something big or something small. Brainstorm nonviolent ways to protest. Make your own nonviolent protest. Work for change.

Chapter 20:

Choose one of the Four and imagine that you are that character and imagine that you are writing a diary. Write one page in the diary describing in detail either of the following:

- 1) One or more of your experiences in Faracadar.
- 2) What you will do to prepare yourself for your visit to Faracadar next year.

Vocabulary

Chapter 19:

Amplifier = a device that increases something such as sound

Transmission = message; the passage of something from one person to another

Petrified = paralyzed with fear, as if turned to stone

Portable = easily carried or moved

Subside = settle down, turn quiet

Reverberate = echo or reflect back

Manacle = handcuff

Unravel = disentangle (particularly threads)

Chapter 20:

Fowl = bird

Reveler = someone who is partying

Bashfully = shyly

Embed = to fix firmly in surrounding matter

Revert = to return to or go back to

Drab = dull, faded, lifeless

Pore = to read studiously or attentively

Destiny = fate; an inevitable course of events

Create a Landscape Art Activity

The collage art on the cover of *The Call to Shakabaz* was created by the author using a very simple technique. Students can create fantasy landscapes of their own using the same technique as described here.

Materials:

8-1/2 x 11 piece of cardboard (as found at the back of paper pads)
white copy paper
tissue paper in assorted colors (color variety packs available through craft stores)
Elmer's glue
paper cups
water
1/4" tip paint brushes
2" paint brushes
scissors
newspaper

Technique:

Lay newspaper on the table underneath the project to protect the table. Mix Elmer's glue with water in a paper cup @ 1 part glue to 6 parts water. Brush the glue water mixture onto the cardboard with a 2" paint brush and lay the white paper onto the cardboard to completely cover the cardboard. Tear and/or cut tissue paper into shapes and strips as desired and apply them in layers on the paper using the smaller (1/4" tip) paintbrush. Even after the collage dries, you can go back in to add more paper and change the picture.

If you scan the final picture into the computer, students who use Adobe Photoshop and other art programs will be able to lay additional graphics or words over the picture. Perhaps students would like to design their own book covers, building on their landscape. If you scan the landscapes into the computer, please email me a copy at amy@wozabooks.com because I would love to see what your students create!