



Parent/Teacher Manual

Parent-Teacher Supplemental Ideas

As the child increases in age, the following talking points work nicely into writing assignments for language arts or essay topics for the older students.

The prologue sets the story in NE Iowa, Alamakee County to be exact. The story could be assigned as reading and coordinated with map reading, location of latitude and longitude, the glaciations process and the effects from it.

A possible off-shoot of this use of latitude and longitude is “geocaching,” a family outdoor sporting activity in which the participants use a global positioning (GPS) receiver or other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called "geocaches" or "caches", anywhere in the world. A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook where the geocacher enters the date they found it. Hide and seek gone techie! If interest is shown in the activity, a good place to start is <http://www.geocaching.com/seek/default.aspx>

Reference is made to early Irish settlers which would make the reading supplemental to American History. It could also augment study of the American Indians. The Mound Builders left many “effigies” in the area—their cemeteries.

Talking Points:

- Choices and consequences
- Different kinds of “sorry”
- Character traits, i.e. selfishness, indifference, stubbornness, thoughtfulness, kindness, politeness or rudeness, wisdom, self-control
- Listening to others
- Respecting boundaries
- Bullying
- Learning the easy way versus the hard way

Guideline: *Before telling a child what he/she did wrong; first tell him/her what he/she did right.*

Choices and consequences is a very strong theme in the story. For children to be successful members of society they must learn that consequences always follow choices! Since the story is about animals there seems to be no defensive reactions to seeing that issue clearly. They can laugh and while they are laughing, the lesson lands. It is not a large step for children to make the application to themselves!

Discuss the choices and consequences of Sassy Pants decisions. Have your child talk about choices he/she has made. What different choices could have been made?

Talk about choices and consequences in nature: if you choose to lean too far over a bank, you fall in the ditch. If you go around a corner too fast, again, you go into the ditch or crash into the fence! If you leave a fish on the beach it will stink. If you go outside in the winter with no coat, you become cold. Put your hand on a hot stove, you are burned. These are natural consequences following choices made. Encourage your child to think about the consequences of the choice they are about to make.

Discuss what other ways Sassy Pants could have learned to respect boundaries and consider other's feelings. Ask them what they think would have been an easier way to learn this lesson!

Different Kinds of Sorry—Help your child remember an incident when he/she was sorry because of being caught rather than sorry because of consciously knowing he/she hurt someone. Remember how that felt. Then help them remember an incident when they were truly repentant, sorry because they caused someone pain. Remember how that felt. The latter is what we want to feel when we say, “Sorry, please forgive me.” Point out that Sassy Pants did not feel this kind of sorry in this story, but I think she will in the next one!

Character Traits—Several character traits are easily identified in the various characters in the story. As the child reacts to the different characters the conversation can quickly go to, did you like it when . . . , and how would you feel if someone did that to you? To, how did that work for him/her? Was it a good idea? And how would you want to be treated? Is that how you are going to treat others? What kind of consequence will follow?

Bullying/Name Calling—Sassy Pants became the barnyard bully. Discuss what motivated Sassy Pants bullying. (Getting even, wanting to return to the “Big House.”) Discuss the various characteristics of a bully, such as self-centeredness, lack of consideration, hurting other people because you are hurting inside yourself, making jokes at other people's expense, etc.

Discuss why bullies sometimes have a little group of “friends” around them. Bullies often intimidate others into following them. When allowed the safety and opportunity, they will choose to leave the bully's influence.

Learning the easy way rather than the hard way — again, a choice! The story makes it quite clear that Sassy Pants chose to learn the hard way. She was given ample opportunity to change her ways and much advice to do so—yet she continued in her headstrong direction! Sassy Pants ends with her soaking her tush and her throbbing snout in the mud wallow *and no one consoled her!*

Discuss a child's recent “hard learning” incident. Brainstorm possible ways that that learning could have come easier.

Creative Writing — Encourage children to try creative writing. Write about what they know and love: pets, a sport, a friend or beloved family member, their faith, an event that made a powerful impression. Writing with passion draws the reader into the story.

Someone said, “Don't tell your reader that it is raining; rather, make them feel rained upon!”

One way to write so the reader feels what the story is about is to make sure to include something that evokes the senses—try for at least three of the five senses per page. Talk about the wind blowing, how it pushes against your body and howls through the trees or the sound of rain hitting the window pane (sense of touch and sound), the smell of the rain and the fragrance of wet grass and flowers, how you see the trees bow and how you can taste its cold wetness on your tongue!

Children may use their very own copy of the book as a color book!

NEEDS AND TASKS of children aged 4 to 12:

The needs:

- They need to be weaned of being a baby—having all their needs anticipated and met *for them*
- They need help doing what they don't feel like doing
- Authentic help sorting feelings, imaginations and realities
- Feedback on guesses, attempts and failures
- Love they do not need to earn
- Be taught the family history
- Be taught the big picture of their lives

The developmental tasks:

- Learn to take care of self
- Learn to ask for what they need
- Learn self-expression
- Develop personal resources and talents
- Learn to make him/herself understandable to others
- Learn to do hard things
- Tame their cravings
- Learn what satisfies
- Learn to see him/herself through the “eyes of heaven”—see their potential

Excerpted from *The Complete Guide to Living With Men* by
E. James Wilder III, Shepherd's House Inc., Pasadena, CA, 2004,
pp. 56-90