

Pink and Say

K-3

Written and Illustrated by Patricia Polacco

Published by Philomel Books

Spoken Arts - 9468

Running Time - 29:30

Story Summary

This Civil War story was passed from great-grandfather to grandmother; to son, and finally to the author-artist herself, Patricia Polacco. It is the story of Sheldon Russell Curtis and Pinkus Aylee, two Union soldiers. Sheldon, who calls himself "Say", was wounded in a fierce battle, left for dead, and found by Pinkus (Pink) in a pasture in Georgia. Pinkus' skin was the color of polished mahogany, and he was flying Union colors like the wounded boy. Pink picked Say up out of the field and brought him to where the black soldier's mother, Moe Moe Bay, lived. She cared for both boys, but they were putting her in danger; two Union soldiers in Confederate territory. They had to get back to their outfits and were faced with a difficult decision. This poignant story is one of the shared humanity of peoples of this world.

Objectives

1. To develop an appreciation of acts of kindness and their impact upon the lives of others.
2. To develop an appreciation of oral histories.
3. To develop an understanding of how true friendships can be shared by people who seem to be very different from each other.

Before viewing the video

Tell the class that ***Pink and Say*** is a true story about two Union soldiers during the Civil War. It is a story that was told to the author, Patricia Polacco, by her father. It was told to him by his mother. It was told to her by her mother who heard it from her father, Sheldon Russell Curtis. This is a story about the author's family. We know about it because it has been retold for generations. Sheldon Russell Curtis was the little boy who called himself Say. It was his lucky day when, as a badly wounded soldier, he was found by Pinkus Aylee. As you watch this video, think about what Pink and his mother, Moe Moe Bay, did for Say. Think about children you know who are the same age as Pink and Say. How are their lives different? Be sure to look at the expressions on the characters' faces in the illustrations. Think about the story these expressions tell.

Questions to ask after viewing the video

1. How old was Say when he was injured in battle? Think of the children you know who are Say's age. Do you think they are ready to be soldiers?
2. Why was it important for Pink to get Say away from the field where he found him?
3. What do you think would have happened to Say if Pink had not found him?
4. When Say wakes up in Pink's house, where does he think he is?
5. Why is Pink's mother so happy to see him?
6. Why is it so dangerous for Pink and Say to remain in Moe Moe Bay's house?
7. How did Moe Moe Bay help Say in his recovery?
8. Why does Pink have Master Aylee's name although Pink was not his son?
9. Even though both boys were Union soldiers, one was able to carry a gun and one could not at first. Why was that so?
10. What was one important thing that Pink learned as a slave?
11. What important thing has Say done that he is able to share with Pink?
12. When Pink is making plans to return to the troops, Say becomes very upset. What does he have to tell Pink then?
13. What do you think of Moe Moe's act of bravery when the marauders come to the house?
14. How did the boys feel when the Confederate soldiers found them?
15. What did Pink want to do, one last time, before he and Say are separated?
16. How has Sheldon Russell Curtis kept Pinkus Aylee's memory alive?
17. How has Patricia Polacco, the author of this book, kept Pink and Say's story alive?

Activities

1. Ask the children to find out if there are any family stories that have been told to their parents. Encourage sharing oral histories with the class. Develop a frame of reference regarding timelines by discussing the different generations and the number of years that have gone by.
2. Develop a list of simple acts of kindness that may be directed towards family and friends. Encourage the children to write about an act of kindness they performed. Share experiences with the class.
3. Ask the children to discuss friendships they may have with individuals who are "different" from them. Develop a class list of what can be learned from different individuals.
4. Ask the children to write a story about the qualities they look for in a friend. Include qualities they possess that would make them good friends to others.
5. Select an illustration you especially like from ***Pink and Say***. Create your own dialog among the characters in the illustration.