

***The Giver* by Lois Lowry (Published by Laurel Leaf)**

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 8

Summary

In his Utopian society Jonas, a 12-year-old boy, is given a special assignment. He is to be the Receiver and acquire from the Giver all of his community's memories. Without memories, the people of the community do not experience pain, fear, or unhappiness. During the sessions with the Giver, however, Jonas realizes the imperfection of his community and the lies that support it. He finds himself making a choice between freedom of thought and individualism or the sameness and predetermined life of the community.

Connection to the Curriculum

Lois Lowry's depiction of Jonas's community shows the value of differences between people, freedom of choice, and the importance of memories. With the story being told through the eyes of Jonas, the reader discovers and faces (in a simplified form) issues that have historical connections to today's world. Lowry weaves together many of our world societies into one community. Students can examine characterization, point of view, and timely issues such as euthanasia and overpopulation.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.13- The student uses prior knowledge, content, and text type features to make, to revise, and to confirm predictions.

1.4.14- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.15- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.17- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints) in one or more appropriate-level texts.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of characters (e.g., their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and analyzes how major characters are developed (through their thoughts, words, speech patterns, actions) and how they change over time.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and analyzes connections between the setting and other story elements (e.g., character, plot).

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor elements of the plot (e.g., conflict, crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution, rising action, falling action, subplots, parallel episodes) and explains how these elements relate to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports with implicit/explicit information from the text.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

This futuristic novel deals with the topics of euthanasia, assisted suicide, and the death penalty (all referred to as "release") and the topic of surrogate mothers. It also mentions boys having "stirrings" (sexual feelings) and being required to take a pill to counter them. Lowry creates this extreme society to underscore her theme.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities