

# TEACHERS ACTIVITIES




## Theme:


With courage, we can face what frightens us.

## Topics For Discussion:


In the program, LeVar goes camping in the mountains alone. He talks about his fears—being alone, the darkness, the strange noises. Invite students to share an experience in which they were afraid. What advice does LeVar give about being afraid?

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Discuss with students some things that frightened them when they were younger that no longer scare them. How did they conquer their fears?

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Boy-Strength-of-Blue-Horses showed much courage in the story. Discuss what it means to be "courageous." Ask students for evidence from the story that the boy was courageous. What examples of courage have they experienced or heard about?

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Ask students how the boy in the story got his name. Was this a good name for him? Why?

## Curriculum Extension Activities:

Brainstorm a list of things that often scare people. Divide the list into things that are real and things that are imaginary. Have students make a watercolor painting of something they think is frightening. Display the paintings. Under each picture, put two labels, "Scary" and "Not Scary." Have students "sign in" under the label that describes their feelings. Discuss how people are not necessarily frightened by the same things.

Have students find out for whom or under what circumstances they were named. Share their findings in the classroom. Enlist the aid of the library media specialist in locating books or internet resources that provide meanings of names. Have students illustrate the meaning of their name without using words. Display the illustrations on a bulletin board and see if the students can guess the meanings and whose name is illustrated.



The boy in the story has a special relationship with his grandfather. Invite students to bring in pictures of their grandparents (with parent permission) to display. (Some students may wish to bring in an actual grandparent!) On a large sheet of paper, have students complete the sentence frame, "My \_\_\_\_\_ likes to \_\_\_\_\_." In the first blank, they write what they call their grandparent (e.g., nana, grandma, etc.). In the second blank, they write one thing this person especially enjoys doing. Have them illustrate the sentence. Bind the pages into a class Big Book and allow each student to share her/his page. Discuss how diverse the interests of grandparents are. (For students who have no grandparents, encourage them to think about another older relative or friend who is like a grandparent to them.)



Obtain a copy of the book, *Knots on a Counting Rope*. The text is set up in an ideal manner for Readers Theater. (Readers Theater involves oral interpretation through reading without memorization, props, or other materials often associated with presenting a play.) The boy's speaking part is flush with the margin, and the grandfather's part is indented. Because of its length, divide the story into sections. Have different students read the parts of the boy and the grandfather in each section.



Discuss the role of an interviewer and why it is important to ask the right questions to get a good story. In the program, Bree Walker was interviewed for a segment about her life, but viewers do not hear the questions that were asked. Revisit the Bree Walker segment as a whole. Then play it again in shorter sections, stopping the tape to brainstorm the questions the interviewer might have asked to elicit Bree's responses.

Because the boy in the story is blind, he uses other senses to make sense of his world. Have the students focus on their sense of hearing. In a second viewing of the program, ask them to close their eyes or sit with their backs to the television so they can't see what is happening. Instruct the students to listen for audio clues, such as the sounds of birds, insects, a crackling fire, wind, hoofbeats, singing, applause, and other sounds. Discuss the ways in which the experience was different this time from their initial viewing when they watched as well as listened.



Have students experiment to discover how well they can use their senses of hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Set up four stations, one for each of the senses, and place three or four different objects at appeal to that particular sense. Cover the stations so the students cannot see the objects ahead of time. Have students in small cooperative groups rotate through the stations. At the stations, students are blindfolded and they try to guess what each of the objects is by using their senses. Each group comes to an agreement and makes a note of each object, the station is covered again, and the group moves on to the next station. After all the groups have finished, reveal the objects and discuss their ideas in relation to the actual objects. (If possible, have an adult or upper grade student volunteer assist with each station.)



Illustrator Ted Rand is known for his ability to use light and shadow. Obtain a copy of the book and have students examine the illustrations, particularly the campfire scenes, to see how Ted Rand captured the feeling and mood of lighting the darkness. Discuss how a light source determines where the shadows fall. Ask students if they were to draw campfire scenes like those in the book, how would they figure out what should be lighted by the campfire. Compare the campfire scenes as they are depicted in the book with LeVar's campfire scene in the program.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

**I'M IN CHARGE OF CELEBRATIONS**

by Byrd Baylor, illus. by Peter Parnall (Scribners)

**SEE YOU TOMORROW, CHARLES**

by Miriam Cohen, illus. by Lillian Hoban (Greenwillow)

THROUGH GRANDPA'S EYES

by Patricia MacLachlan, illus. by Deborah Kogan Ray (HarperCollins)

THE GHOST-EYE TREE

by Bill Martin, Jr. & John Archambault, illus. by Ted Rand (Holt)

ANNIE AND THE OLD ONE

by Miska Miles, illus. by Peter Parnall (Little, Brown)

STEP INTO THE NIGHT

by Joanne Ryder, illus. by Dennis Nolan (Four Winds)

BRAVE IRENE

by William Steig (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

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## Description:



In this Native American tale, Boy-Strength-of-Blue-Horses and his grandfather reminisce about the boy's birth, his first horse, and his first horse race where he faces his greatest challenge—his blindness. In this segment, the emphasis is on courage and encouraging people to face the things that frighten them. LeVar faces a night alone in the wilderness and overcomes doubt, and we meet Bree Walker, a news anchor who has overcome her disability of deformed hands and feet.

### Social Studies Concepts:

- ◆ culture
- ◆ family
- ◆ change
- ◆ disabilities



## Classroom Activities:

### Culture

In the Native American culture, an importance is placed on a close bond between generations. Often several generations will share the same home. After reading the book, *Knots On A Counting Rope*, talk with your class about the relationship between the boy and his grandfather. Invite students to bring in a favorite family photo showing themselves with an older family member. Have them tell or write a short description about the person and the occasion captured in the photo. If students are unable to bring a photo, have them draw a memory.



### Family

Ask students to recall how the boy in the story got his name. Talk about what his name means. Ask if any students are named (first or middle name) after someone in their family. Are they like that person? Use a book of names for students to discover the origins and meaning of their names.

## Change

Brainstorm a list of changes that students have experienced (e.g. moving to a new home, the loss of a pet or friend, having a new babysitter, having new neighbors move in, trying a new skill, meeting a new friend, attending a new school, joining a new team, and so on). Discuss the fears and joys they had in making these changes. Then have students use the list to create a chart and work in pairs to poll others about how they would feel about each of these changes. Set up a chart such as the following:

### CHANGE

Cause joy

Cause fear

- learning to swim
- moving to a new home
- new bike
- new dentist
- using a computer for the first time
- first day of school
- skateboarding for the first time
- buying new clothes



## Disabilities

The boy in the story was visually impaired, so he relied on other senses to experience the world. In order for your students to better understand his experience, have pairs take turns being blindfolded while the other serves as a guide. Then have them trade roles. Afterwards, in small groups, have students discuss how they felt when they were without their sight and how it was to trust their sighted partner. What did they learn about being a guide? If possible, have someone who is visually impaired or has worked with visually impaired people to visit your class.

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