

Dory Story

by Jerry Pallotta

Talewinds (A Charlesbridge Imprint)

A Reading and Discussion Guide

Prepared by the Massachusetts Center for the Book

Massachusetts
Honor Book
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SUMMARY:

Excerpted from Kirkus Reviews, January 2000

Who is next in the ocean food chain? Pallotta has a surprising answer in this picture book glimpse of one curious boy.

Danny, fascinated by plankton, takes his dory and rows out into the ocean, where he sees shrimp eating those plankton, fish sand eels eating shrimp, mackerel eating fish sand eels, bluefish chasing mackerel, tuna after bluefish, and killer whales after tuna. When an enormous humpbacked whale arrives on the scene, Danny's dory tips over and he has to swim for a large rock or become--he worries--someone's lunch. Surreal acrylic illustrations in vivid blues and red extend the story of a small boy, a small boat, and a vast ocean, in which the laws of the food chain are paramount. That the boy has been bathtub-bound during this entire imaginative foray doesn't diminish the suspense, and the facts Pallotta presents are solidly researched. A charming fish tale about the one-the boy-that got away.

ACTIVITIES:

Inspired by the Vermont Center for the Book's family literacy and science experimentation program, "Mother Goose Asks 'Why?'"

Dory Story is highly suggestive for issues of "sinking and floating" and you can experiment with these principles as an extension activity.

1. For young readers (three to four years old), begin with a predicting exercise. Fill a tub with water (either a tub on the table or the evening bath), and have a bin of objects on hand. Work with children to predict what will sink and what will float and then test each prediction in the water.

2. Children up to the age of six or seven will enjoy problem solving around sinking and floating. How can we make “sinking things” float? Have on hand materials that illustrate this question. For example:
 - Use balls of clay that sink and then ask children to change the shape of the clay to make it float.
 - Ask children to make boats out of aluminum foil and then see how many objects (e.g., coins, washers) they can fit in their boats before the boats sink. They may want to make a variety of boats, from rafts to canoes, and compare which can hold the most and stay afloat.
 - With Styrofoam packing pellets and string, ask children to tie the pellets on to washers. Do they float? Sink? (A great way to extend the discussion would be to talk about life jackets: what part of our body floats in a lifejacket, what part sinks? why do we wear lifejackets when we are on the water?)

Summary: Using information found in the links below, discuss the scientific principles behind these three experiments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Excerpted from <http://www.charlesbridge.com>.
<http://www.charlesbridge.com/msp/catalog/contributor/detail.do?id=1132>

Jerry Pallotta is an award-winning author of children's alphabet books and imaginative fiction. His books combine interesting facts, detailed research, humor, and realistic illustrations that mesmerize children everywhere.

Jerry spent his teenage years in the fishing town of Scituate, Massachusetts, where he kept lobster traps, harvested seaweed, and rode on fishing draggers. He wanted to share the creatures of the seashore with his children but could not find an alphabet book that was fun and exciting. This inspired him to write his first book, *The Ocean Alphabet Book*, which presented oceanic creatures in a creative format.

When Jerry began writing, he was a full-time insurance salesman. He wrote, edited, and produced his first book out of his garage and sold 5,000 copies to the New England Aquarium, where it has become a bestseller. Jerry then devoted himself full-time to writing and making school and library appearances.

HELPFUL LINKS:

Explore the following websites for lesson plans related to the above activities:

Scholastic, Inc: <http://www.scholastic.com/magicschoolbus/games/teacher/floating/index.htm>

PBS Kids: <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/sci/flinker.html>

Science NetLinks: <http://www.sciencenetlinks.org/lessons.cfm?BenchmarkID=4&DocID=164>



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