

*TEACHERS' GUIDE**

LITTLE GOLD STAR / ESTRELLITA DE ORO

by Joe Hayes

illustrated by Gloria Osuna Perez and Lucia Angela Perez



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About the story:

Little Gold Star is a fantasy story with a Mexican twist. In this Cinderella variant, a young girl named Arcía convinces her father to marry their next-door neighbor, a woman named Margarita. At first Margarita is very nice to Arcía, but it doesn't take long for Arcía to realize that she has been deceived.

About the author:

Joe Hayes grew up in a small town in southern Arizona. His schoolmates and friends, many of whom were Mexican-American, taught him how to speak Spanish. As Joe got older, he began reading the work of folklorists and anthropologists and gathering the old stories from the region that he calls home—the Southwestern United States. When his own children were young, Joe enjoyed telling them stories. In fact, he enjoyed storytelling so much that he decided that this would be the way that he would earn a living. He decided to use both Spanish and English when telling his stories to children so that they could learn and love both languages, just like he did when he was a child.

With these as his roots, Joe has become one of America's premier storytellers, traveling around the country to schools, universities and

professional conferences to tell his stories. His bilingual Spanish-English tellings have earned him a distinctive place among America's storytellers.

But Joe is not only a storyteller—he's also the author of many books. Two of his books, *Watch Out for Clever Women!* / *¡Cuidado con las mujeres astutas!* and *Juan Verdades* have been on the Texas Bluebonnet Master List. Another book, *¡El Cucuy, A Bogeyman Cuento in Spanish and English*, is listed on the New Mexico Land of Enchantment Master list for 2004-2005 and won an IPPY award in 2002.

About the illustrators:

The work of the artist Gloria Osuna Perez is known for its folkloric richness and quiet dignity. In the spring of 1999, Gloria agreed to do the paintings for *Little Gold Star*. This wonderful cuento and her work were a perfect match. Gloria eagerly agreed to the project, but knew that she would have to take it one day at a time. She had been battling ovarian cancer for three years—she didn't want to sign a contract. She sketched out the fifteen scenes from the book and began the paintings. She was able to complete three paintings before her condition worsened.

Gloria's 26-year-old daughter Lucia, who is also an artist, came from Dallas to care for her mother. Gloria was weak and could not do any more work on the paintings. Lucia reported that, for Gloria, one of the most painful things about being bed-ridden was that she could not paint. About two weeks before she died, Gloria called up Cinco Puntos Press, the book's publishers, and told them that she thought Lucia could finish the paintings. While Lucia was taking care of her, Gloria talked to her about the colors she was using and what she wanted for each of the scenes she had sketched out. After her mother died, Lucia painted the twelve remaining scenes, always with her eye on the work her mom had begun, always remembering her mother's words. The result is truly remarkable, a tribute to the powerful relationship between a mother and her daughter.

Thematic unit possibilities:

Families, fairy tales, fantasy/reality

About this guide:

This guide uses a thematic approach to integrate the themes of family, fairy tales, and fantasy/reality. It is intended to be used primarily in grades kindergarten through 4th grade, although most activities can easily be modified to other grade levels. Some activities are more appropriate to

particular grades so use your professional judgment in the use and modification of the various activities.

Background knowledge:

Although many children are familiar with the Cinderella story, it is still a good idea to elicit background information. To begin, use a familiar Cinderella version. Please see the accompanying bibliography for information about some other versions.

Discuss what a fairy tale is. The American Heritage Dictionary defines a fairy tale as “a fanciful tale of legendary deeds and creatures, usually intended for children, or a fictitious, highly fanciful story or explanation.” You might want to explain to your students that marvelous and magical things happen to characters in fairy tales. A bird may be an enchanted prince. A princess might sleep for a hundred years. Cats and eagles might talk. Objects too can be enchanted—mirrors talk, pumpkins become carriages, and a lamp may be home to a genie.

With the students, put together a list of fairy tales that they have read or heard. Ask students if they are familiar with the story of Cinderella. If some students are familiar with Cinderella, have them retell the story as they remember it. You should remind students that fairy tales have been told throughout the generations and that they were primarily told orally (storytelling), so some versions are different from others. Over the course of this unit, the students will become familiar with a number of Cinderella versions. You can decide which stories to use. Some versions are more appropriate for the lower grades while some versions lend themselves to instruction for older students.

Activity One:

Before beginning the unit, prepare a horizontal graph/chart. You can use a long sheet of butcher paper to do this. In the first column, write the following: title, author, characters, setting, plot, problems, and solutions. Next draw columns to equal the number of Cinderella stories your class will read, so that each story will have its own column.

The next step is to read a familiar version of the Cinderella story. Stop periodically to ask predictive questions and recall questions. Afterwards, have the students complete the second column of the chart using this story as a template.

Activity Two:

Read *Little Gold Star*, stopping periodically to verbally compare and contrast the story with the familiar Cinderella story. Chart the story on the Cinderella chart with help from the students.

Using a Venn diagram, have students chart the differences and similarities between the two stories. For kinder and first grade students, do this with the whole group. For second graders and up, the students can do this activity either in small groups, pairs, or individually.

Activity Three:

The next activity is a prediction activity. In this activity, read to page 12 of *Little Gold Star*. At that point, stop and ask students to write or draw what will happen next, based on their knowledge of what has previously occurred and from what they know of a familiar Cinderella story. Have each student share his/her writing or illustrations with the whole group. All answers should be accepted. After this activity, finish reading the story.

Activity Four:

As time permits, read additional Cinderella stories and chart them. Display a blank world map. This may be done by taking a world map and making an overhead transparency. Tape a blank sheet of white butcher paper to the wall and project the image of the map onto the paper, then trace. As each Cinderella story is read and discussed, locate the place the story originated, such as Mexico or New Mexico for *Little Gold Star*. Color the location and label with the location's name and the name of the book. Kindergarten students will locate the countries with help from the instructor. Upper grade students can use an individual map that they will keep with corresponding information.

Activity Five:

Create an invitation to the Prince's party. A variety of materials and tools may be used such as poster boards, construction paper, and computers. Dictate the necessary information to kindergarten students, but have upper grade students illustrate and include information such as when, where, what, time. This would be a good time to discuss appropriate and necessary information for an invitation.

Activity Six:

Reread the story of *Little Gold Star*. Have the class create a web of the unkind things that Margarita and her daughters do to Arcía. Then have students write letters of advice to either:

1. Margarita on how she should treat Arcía
2. Arcía on how she should deal with her stepmother and her stepsisters.

Have younger students discuss this among themselves and then give answers to the whole group, which you can record for them. Have upper grade students work in groups, pairs, or individually to discuss and write.

Activity Seven:

Sequence the events of the story. This can be accomplished in several different ways. For kindergarten students, the whole class can organize the events. On sentence strips, write five to seven events that are key to the story. Make sure that the events are out of order. Read each strip and have the class decide what the correct order is. Display the strips in a visible place and read and reread through them several times. For first and second graders, put the students in small groups or pairs and have them read the strips and put the story in order. Ask students for additional events. Have upper grade students decide on the key events, which they will write on sentence strips making sure that they are out of order. Groups can then exchange the sentence strip events and put them in the proper order.

Alternative activities:

Have students write or dictate a new ending to the story.

Have students create a “wanted” poster of *Little Gold Star* as the Prince searches for her.

Have students compare and contrast types of families. This activity is particularly good for graphing number of family members.

Have students brainstorm and web the feelings that they think Arcía may be feeling during the story.

Have students write about one of the following:

1. Why the Prince would want to meet Arcía simply based on seeing the star on her forehead.
2. What their favorite part of the book was.
3. Why the father did not help Arcía.
4. Why Margarita was so mean to Arcía.

5. Of all the Cinderella stories they have read, which is his/her favorite and why.

Art Projects: Papel Picado

Make ‘papel picado,’ or paper cutouts. These are similar to snowflake cutouts.

Fold an 11 by 8 ½ piece of tissue paper like a fan. Have your students draw half-shapes on one side of the fold only. A heart is a good example: on one side of the fold, they would draw half a heart. Other good shapes are triangles, circles, or stars. Have them cut around the shapes through all the thicknesses of paper. When unfolded, the designs will form cut outs. The finished papel picados may be strung along a string to form a decorative border.

Alternate projects:

Have students trace and cut out star shapes and use each star to write one trait that describes Arcía.

Have students compare and contrast the illustrations between *Little Gold Star* and another Cinderella version. Have them write their opinions of the art and explain why they liked or didn’t like the art.

Have students draw the front of the book or a favorite scene from the book.

Information on other Cinderella versions:

Cinderella by K.Y. Craft

Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe

Rough-face Girl by Rafe Martin

Cendrillon: A Cajun Cinderella by Sheila Hebert Collins

Angkat: The Cambodian Cinderella by Jewell Reinhart Coburn

Yeh Shen: A Cinderella Story from China by Ai-Ling Louie

The Egyptian Cinderella by Shirley Climo

The Irish Cinderlad by Shirley Climo

Bubba the Cowboy Prince by Helen Ketteman

CindyEllen: A Wild Western Cinderella by Susan Lowell

A search of Amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com will provide other versions of the Cinderella story. Be sure to ask your school librarian as well as your local library for Cinderella books.