

Teaching Notes: AMIRA'S SUITCASE

Written by Vikki Conley

Illustrated by Nicky Johnston

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SYNOPSIS

It begins with a tiny seed growing inside a suitcase. With Amira's care, the tiny seed starts to sprout. Find out what happens when kindness flourishes... *Amira's Suitcase* is a gentle, thought-provoking tale about friendship and hope.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vikki has worked as a professional writer, with diverse communities in Africa, Asia and Australia, for over 20 years. She is an intrepid traveller, nature lover and creative all-rounder. Vikki writes and shares stories that celebrate the spirit of wonder, freedom and adventure that she wishes every child could enjoy. She is one of the fastest emerging children's authors, with seven picture books being released over four years. Recently Vikki's title, *Little Puggles Song*, became a 2020 CBCA Notable Book. Vikki is also the creator of the popular children's literature social media pages, *Courageous Pages*.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Nicky Johnston is a mum to four boys, an artist, a primary educator and a children's book author and illustrator. She is based in Melbourne and as well as teaching, she works from home writing and illustrating in her art studio.

EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

Amira's Suitcase is a gentle, thoughtful story which encourages children to think about the process of nurturing something and helping it to grow. It explores the key themes of friendship and inclusivity and demonstrates that kindness can flourish even in difficult circumstances.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before, during and after reading the book:

1. Introduce *Amira's Suitcase* to the children and ask them what they think the story might be about. Why is Amira sitting on a suitcase?
2. Where do they think Amira lives?
3. Why do they think Amira is looking for somewhere to hide?
4. Ask the children if they've ever grown anything from seed? Maybe cress? How did they help it grow? What do you need for a seed to grow?
5. Why do they think Amira calls the seed – her new friend?
6. What sort of person do they think Amira is?
7. Stop on page 13. Ask the children why they think Amira 'felt a bud of warmth flicker in her tummy'?
8. Ask the children if they've ever had vivid dreams, like Amira when she's picking a pear.
9. After reading the book, ask them what did they think of the story? Which was their favourite part and why?



SUPER SEEDS!

Grow your own cress (or alfalfa sprouts, chia seeds or carrot tops)

Grow your own cress from seed in a few days!

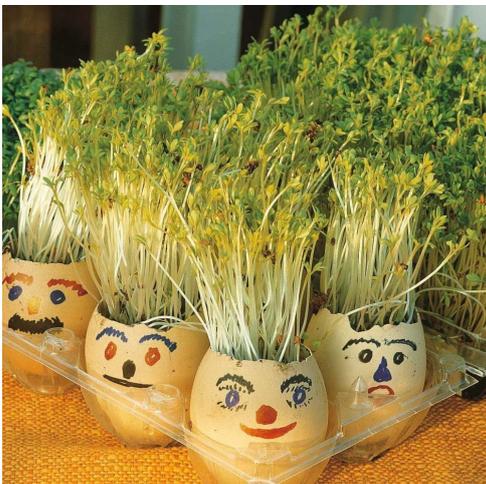
You will need:

- A yoghurt pot (if you don't have one, why don't you try a clean egg shell?)
- Cotton wool
- Kitchen roll
- Cress seeds (or other seeds)
- Water

Instructions:

1. Take the label off a yoghurt pot.
2. Put wet kitchen roll in the bottom and damp cotton wool on top.
3. Evenly spread some cress seeds on top of the cotton wool and press down gently.
4. Place the pot near some sunlight.
5. Watch the cress grow! This should happen after 5 to 7 days.

Remember to ask an adult to help you.



DRAWING ACTIVITY

If you planted a seed, what plant would it grow into?
Draw your own seedling, plant or tree. Be as creative as you like!



COLLAGE ACTIVITY

Instead of drawing, why not collect and use natural materials, such as leaves, twigs and flowers to design your own creation from your imaginary seed? Glue your items down in any pattern you like.



