



# Classroom Guide

Title: **The Patchwork Quilt**

Author: **Valerie Flourney**

Illustrator: **Jerry Pinkney**

**Theme:** Coming in all sizes, shapes, and colors, families are as varied as patchwork quilts with their own special brand of love.

**Program Summary:** Using scraps cut from the family's old clothing, a young girl learns the secret ingredient in her grandma's special quilt of memories. This episode leads LeVar to the Boston Children's Museum, where he discovers kids learning to make their own brightly colored patchwork quilts. Then he explores how three generations of an Italian-American family work together in their food store making some of the food (mozzarella cheese and meatballs) that are store specialties.

## Topics for Discussion:

Invite students to talk about projects they have worked on with members of their family. Discuss how working together not only helps them complete a project more quickly and efficiently but can also make a family more closely knit.

Discuss the meaning of this statement Grandma made in the story: "A quilt won't forget. It can tell your life story." How does it apply to the quilt Tanya's family made? Include in the discussion why the grandmother decided to make the quilt.

A quilt is often a family heirloom. Explain "heirloom" to the students. Discuss any heirlooms they might know about within their own families. Have them ask their parents about family heirlooms and invite them to share what they find out.

## Curriculum Extension Activities:

Talk with students about the reasons why a year (to make the quilt) seemed like a long time to Tanya, but not to her grandmother. Brainstorm with students a list of things that may take a year to complete. Obtain a copy of Tanya's Reunion, the sequel to The Patchwork Quilt, and continue the story of Tanya's family with the students. In this book, Tanya visits the old family farm and learns more about her family's history through her grandmother's stories of the past.

Invite a quilter into the classroom to do a demonstration. Have this person show the stages in the process, e.g., deciding on a pattern, selecting colors and fabric, cutting pieces, fitting them together and stitching, assembling quilt blocks into a larger piece, the use of the cotton batting, and the actual quilting.



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Make a paper quilt featuring students and their grandparents or other older relative. Cut construction paper squares (5 by 5 inches). Have students draw a picture of some activity they enjoy doing with their grandparents or other older relative on their individual squares. Also have them write a caption for the picture that describes the activity. Arrange the squares on a colored paper background, glue them in place, and display the finished “quilt” in the classroom.

Ask for donations of all sorts of scraps of fabric. Have students sort pieces of fabric according to color, texture of material, pattern or design in the cloth (e.g., stripes, plaid, flowered, etc.), and other categories they think of on their own. After classifying the fabric pieces, have students think of some colors, patterns, and shapes that might go well together. Invite someone who sews to show the students how they can stitch the pieces together into a “crazy quilt.” (Work with a size that can be made into a wall hanging for the classroom.) After the students finish their quilt top, have someone who knows how to make a simple quilt (such as a tie quilt) help them add the backing. Display the finished quilt.

Using leftover fabric from the previous activity, have students select a scrap that has a definite design or pattern. Glue the scrap on a piece of paper that is twice the size of the fabric. Have students use crayons to continue the pattern or design of the fabric on the paper.

## **Book Reviews:**

*The Two of Them* by Aliko

*Angel Child, Dragon Child* by Michella Maria Surat, illus. by Vo-Dinh Mai

*Being Adopted* by Maxine B. Rosenberg, photos by George Ancona

## **Supplementary Booklist:**

*The Josefina Story Quilt* by Eleanor Coerr, illus. by Bruce Degen

*Texas Star* by Barbara Hancock Cole, illus. by Barbara Minton

*Luka’s Quilt* by Georgia Guback

*Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson, illus. by James Ransome



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*The Log Cabin Quilt* by Ellen Howard, illus. by Ronald Himler

*The Quilt Story* by Tony Johnston, illus. by Tomie dePaola

*The Quilt* by Ann Jonas

*The Rag Coat* by Lauren Mills

*The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacco

*Selina and the Bear Paw Quilt* by Barbara Smucker, illus. by Janet Wilson

*Sewing Quilts* by Ann Turner, illus. by Thomas B. Allen

## **Related Themes:**

- families
- recycling

## **Related Reading Rainbow Programs:**

- Program #130 — The Carousel
- Program #121 — Always My Dad
- Program #126 — On the Day You Were Born
- Program #89 — Through Moon and Stars and Night Skies

**About the Author:** A graduate of William Smith College, Valerie Flourney devotes her time to writing and speaking to groups of children around the country. She is the author of several books for young people, including *Celie and the Harvest Fiddler*, which she co-authored with her identical twin Vanessa.

**About the Illustrator:** Born in Philadelphia to a family of six children, Jerry Pinkney was attracted to art at an early age. He started by mimicking the drawing of his older brothers, but with the encouragement of his mother and his teachers, he soon realized that art was the field he wanted to pursue. He has three Caldecott Honor Books and three Coretta Scott King Awards. He has illustrated books written by his wife, Gloria Jean, and is the father of award-winning illustrator, Brian Pinkney. In addition to *The Patchwork Quilt*, Jerry Pinkney is the illustrator of four Reading Rainbow review books: *Half a Moon and One Whole Star* by Crescent Dragonwagon, *Yagua Days* by Cruz Martel, *The Talking Eggs* by Robert D. San Souci, and *Turtle in July* by Marilyn Singer.