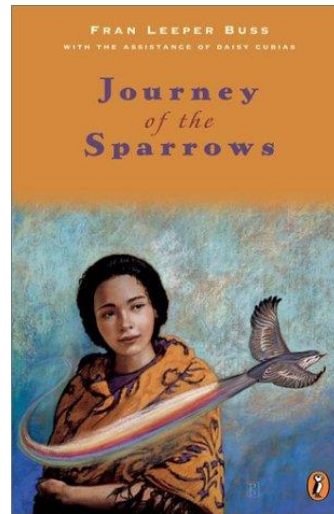


Journey of the Sparrows



ISBN-13	978-0-14-230209-5
ISBN-10	0-14-230209-0
Author	Fran Leeper Buss
Publisher	Puffin Books
Copyright	1991
Synopsis	Fifteen-year-old Maria escapes death by hunger and the Salvadoran Civil War. After a difficult journey through Mexico, she struggles to make a living in Illinois.
Themes	Social justice

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 1



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 4

"We'd been so poor at home. Just flowers and hunger. Four brothers and one sister died from worms and lack of food. Finally, Papa and a few others brought a nurse and a teacher into our village, and that's how I learned to read. I imagined my teacher, standing by the chickens in front of her little house. Her left hand was on her hip; her right hand was pulling back her long hair as she watched the sunset. But the red of the sunset began to spread outward, toward me, flowing as though bleeding, and I heard the clicks as the guns went into position, and I saw people, their mouths open, screaming."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

María, Tomás, Oscar, and Julia comforted each other during their journey inside a crate. Write a paragraph about the things they said to help each other overcome their pain and fears.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 2



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, pp. 17–18

“Oscar,” I said, “we made it, We’re here in the North where everyone gets so rich. We’ll have lots to eat, and we’ll send money so Mama and Teresa can join us.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

María was worried about her brother, Oscar. Write a paragraph about the relationship between the siblings, Julia, María, and Oscar, and how important it was that they took care of each other.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 3



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 25

“I looked out the kitchen window, was amazed at how high we were and saw that there were other buildings even higher. Lights blinked on from building to building, and I wondered how many people were hiding.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

María remarked that darkness reminded her of the crate. Sometimes, small signals, such as smell, noise, or light can trigger painful memories. Write a paragraph about the need of the three siblings, Julia, María, and Oscar to be close to people who have empathy and understand them and their fears.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 4



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 38

"I keep thinking about Papá saying I was going to save the family, Alicia," I said. "I don't know if I can do it." I cried, leaning against Alicia, my eyes so full of tears I couldn't see the lights.

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

María was happy to hear music that reminded her of home. Write a paragraph about the importance of having music, stories, pictures, or other artifacts that help ease immigrants' feelings of homesickness.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 5



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 47

"We're having a full-fledged American party," said Tomás. "Complete with candles."

Find out about traditional birthday customs in a country in Central America. How are these traditions same or different than birthday celebrations in the United States?

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

María and her siblings face food insecurity – lack of consistent access to a sufficient amount of food. Write a paragraph about the mix of joy and hunger that María and Oscar experienced on their fun day outdoors.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 6



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 60

"Oscar reached for the drawing and knelt on the floor, folding the picture in half and pressing it carefully with his hands. He folded it again and again into a little square and held it against his chest. I felt tears on my cheeks from missing Mama. From that time on, Oscar carried the drawing with him wherever he went, opening it up every so often, staring at it carefully, and folding it back up."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Flying a kite was one of the most fun days Oscar had since he arrived at the United States. Write a paragraph about the importance of this day to Oscar.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 7



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 67

"Tonight we get paid," she reminded me, "and you'll feel better. Don't give up, María. You're young. Your brother and sister need you."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Today you have read about an employer who has violated workers' rights in several respects. The women received low pay, worked many hours a week, and did not receive their weekly paycheck. Write a paragraph and the lack of ability of illegal immigrants to negotiate better working conditions.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 8



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 80

"Not everyone here agrees with Immigration. Or back the Guardias. Some of us are trying to change things. To make it legal for people like you."

Note: In 1981 and 1982, thousands of demonstrators in the United States demanded to change United States policy toward El Salvador. The United States has provided [military aid](#) to El Salvador to assist the government during the Civil War.

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Write 1–2 paragraphs about the power of civilians to support people in poverty and immigrants in distress. What kinds of support can people and organizations provide? Refer to Father Jonathan's help to María as one of your examples.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 9



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 87

"Well, you know how the stars move across the sky at night." Tomás nodded again. "See, I always thought I had a special star, ever since I was little. And when our neighbor played his *pita* each night, my star would move right where I could see it through my crack. Then it'd move away. But it always came back the next night."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Write a paragraph about the positive power of hope. María's hard work and initiatives were driven by her hope for a better future. What is hope and why is it important?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 10



Analyze the key paragraph. Use as much detail as you can.

Key Paragraph, p. 96

"María," she said, "you'll learn that the goodness, the goodness you had before, it can't ever really go away. It's all inside of you. Your family, your home, your land, before the killings began. You can keep those things living inside. Like my son and family live in me. And the grass and the sky. I feel them every day. They're still part of me, and it'll be that way for you."

Instructions: Doña Elena wanted María to know that she does not have to go back home to have the values, wisdom, and strength that she learned earlier in life. Why did Doña Elena want María to understand that?

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Write a paragraph about the importance of controlling our thoughts. Doña Elena instructed María to get her sister focused on prayer rather than on her dead husband and her fears. Why is it important to manage our thoughts to reduce stress?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 11



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 100

"You don't realize how good you are? You don't know how proud of you I am?" she said. "You don't know how lovely you're becoming? How happy I'd be if Ramona looked like you?"

Answer: Why did María have a low self-image? Why were her sister's words so important?

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Write a paragraph about the relationship among the key characters in the book, *Journey of the Sparrows*. Despite their age, the teenagers help their families and friends. Include at least two examples.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 12



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, pp. 111–112

"Turn to the wise ones. Don't be talking to stiff old boards. And don't be running off in no fool's direction. You young ones can be dumb, dumb as shadows in the wind."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Write a paragraph about María's temptation to give up and accept the fate of her family compared to her willingness to take on a risky journey to save her sister. What made María change her mind?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 13



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 122

"You think there's hope?" I asked.

She smiled. "yes, at least some hope," she answered."

What did the human rights advocates hope to achieve? What risk are they taking and why do they think the cause is worth the risk?

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Connect this chapter to the unit's theme: Kindness Requires Empathy. Both family, friends, and strangers feel empathy towards refugees like María. Discuss how empathy leads to kindness and social support.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 14



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 127

"None of this is your fault, María, And God wouldn't punish you. You've all suffered because of the killings. Because you have to be secret up here. Because people are so poor where you live. Don't you see?"

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Write a paragraph about María's sense of responsibility towards her family. Explore how the kindness and encouragement of other people, such as Ana Aragón, give María the courage and strength to keep fighting for her family's survival.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 15



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 140

"I swept up little Teresa, holding her out in front of me, her surprised face above mine, "Mamá's alive! Mamá's alive!" I shouted. "Safe. Alive. Like Oscar and you. She escaped again."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme. Use as much detail as you can.

Consider the poverty and hunger that María sees in Monterrey. Write a paragraph about immigration driven by a shortage of food.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Journey of the Sparrows, Day 16



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 154

"I cried for Estela, Gilberto, and Juan and because I finally knew. My saving Teresa wouldn't bring Papa back or always keep Oscar strong. It would have nothing to do with determining when we'd be together with Mama."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Write a conclusion paragraph summarizing what you have learned about the reasons for illegal immigration from the book, *Journey of the Sparrows*.