

42 Miles: Discussion Guide and Project Ideas

Source: Wild Geese Guides (blog), 2011, Tracie Vaughn Zimmer

<http://wildgeeseguides.blogspot.com/2010/01/42-miles.html> (accessed 7/25/11)

Pre-reading: What do you think the title means? Where would you be in 42 Miles from your own house?

Discussion guide:

1. How has JoEllen's life suddenly changed this year? What's the most change in a year you ever faced? What do you think is the hardest thing about change?
2. How is JoEllen like both of her parents and also like neither? How about you?
3. Describe JoEllen's friends and cousins. Who do you think knows her best? What friends "fit" best for you? Describe your ideal best friend.
4. How does JoEllen feel about having her life so divided? Do you think her life is like a hexagon or not? Can a kid be equally divided?
5. Compare and contrast JoEllen's two lives. Which would you prefer? Why? Which one of JoEllen's parents do you think you'd get along with best? Why?
6. Why does JoEllen feel like a traveling exhibit?
7. What does the title mean? Do you ever transform between places? When? Do we all show different sides of ourselves to various people?
8. Where is Aunt Mimi's Attic? What does JoEllen do there? Would you like to work there? What is your favorite place to shop for treasures?
9. What are JoEllen's favorite and not-so-favorite things to do with her parents? What are yours?
10. Which illustration is your favorite? Why? What do the illustrations add to the text?

Projects:

Language Arts:

Experiment with free verse poetry! Try your hand at a poem inspired by “Changes” or “Best Friends” be sure to end this poem with a description of yourself.

Art:

Create your own scrapbook inspired illustrations to accompany your own free verse poems (see above). After you’ve arranged all your found objects make a black and white copy of it and see if you prefer it in its original color or in the copied version. On the back discuss your process.

Math/Logical:

Create a map of your location and expand it to a 42 mile diameter. Make a list of all the interesting locations you might like to explore within the circle.

Health:

Hayden’s brother, Russell, was killed by drunk driver. Research the statistics in your area on drunk driving and create a public service campaign with posters, powerpoints or websites that inform the community about this topic.

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