

## **Story Study: Last Stop on Market Street**

### Key themes and ideas:

*Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña (author) and Christian Robinson (illustrator) follows young C.J. and his grandmother as they take the bus across a busy, bustling city to visit a soup kitchen after church. On the way, C.J. sees many people and things in the city, and asks his Nana questions: Why they don't own a car like his friend Colby? Why doesn't he have an iPod like the boys on the bus? How come they always have to get off in the dirty part of town? Each question is met with an encouraging answer from Nana, who helps C.J. see the beauty—and fun—in their routine and the world around them. C.J. even gets the chance to be transported and inspired through beautiful music. The story uses wonder and vibrant pictures to travel smoothly through different social and economic circumstances, and shows how someone's attitude can shape their experiences. Reading and discussion the story will help all of us grapple with issues such as **diversity, perspective** and **the impact we can each make in our community**.

### Order of Events:

- 1) Read the story
- 2) Discussion Questions & Topics
- 3) **LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:** Musical Masterpieces
- 4) **LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:** Chasing Rainbows
- 5) Information Sheet – Light & Rainbows
- 6) **LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:** Understanding Blindness
- 7) **LEARNING ACTIVITY 4:** Butterfly Symmetry
- 8) **LEARNING ACTIVITY 5:** Graffiti

### Read the Story

**Before the session:** Read through the book on your own time. Then, read it again, out loud. There are a few pages with lots of words—practice reading these, so when you are reading in front of your child/children, you can read it smoothly while still showing the pictures to your child/children.

**In the session:** Hold up the book for your child/children to see. Read the title and author(s). Ask your child/children what they think the story will be about, based on the title and the cover. Then, read the story all the way through.

Once finished with the first reading, ask your child/children what questions they have, or if there are parts of the story they struggled to understand. Clarify these issues, if there are any. Then, read the story again, this time pausing to discuss certain pages and sections, using the Discussion Questions below (especially the section on **metaphors**, below).

### Discussion Questions & Topics

- Why does CJ have to wait for a bus while his friend Colby takes a car? How does this scene help illustrate the economic situation of CJ's family?
- Early in the book, there are three sentences that form **metaphors**, which means a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it normally wouldn't apply. This is often done to make books or other writing more poetic. The three metaphors are:
  - "The outside air smelled like freedom."
    - What do you think this means? Can you describe the smell of freedom?
    - Think about what is going on in the book just before this is said (CJ is leaving church). How does that affect the metaphor's meaning?
  - "Don't you see the big [tree] drinking through a straw?"
    - What does this mean? Do trees literally drink through straws?
    - What might Nana be referring to when she says "straw?" Why would she call it that?" Study the picture for clues.
  - "We got a bus that breathes fire."
    - What does this mean? Look at the picture. Is the bus breathing fire?
    - Why might Nana have said this to CJ? How does it change CJ's attitude towards the bus?
  - What do all three of these metaphors tell us about the characters in the book? How do they tend to see the world? Why might they see it this way?
    - **WE THINK:** Nana chooses to see the world in a positive light. She doesn't just see things as they literally appear, but instead spins them into things that don't make her or CJ sad about their situation. They show her natural creativity, but also that she has to make up metaphors in order to stay happy in her world.
- Who is sitting in the bus with CJ and his Nana? Create a list of the other passengers. How are these people similar? How are they different? Are they rich? Poor? Old? Young? Etc.?
- Do you think it is important to be surrounded by different types of people? What are the possible benefits of that? Can you think of any possible negative effects?
- Why do you think CJ's Nana makes sure he greets everybody on the bus? How does she suggest he view the other people in the bus, such as the blind man? What attitude does she want him to have towards them?
  - **WE THINK:** She wants him to see them all as human, no matter how they look or dress. She wants him to respect people and value their differences and diversity.
- How does the guitar player's music affect CJ? What actually happens to him? Does he actually leave the bus, or not?
  - Have you ever had an experience like this? Have you ever heard or seen a piece of art that felt like it took you away? Why does closing your eyes help you to feel music?
- When they arrive at the end of Markey Street, CJ complains that it is dirty. In response, Nana says "Sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt, CJ, you're a better witness for what's beautiful."

- What does she mean by this? What does it mean to be a “better witness”?
- Do you agree with her? Have you ever been surrounded by dirtiness? If so, did it make you appreciate beautiful things more, or did you react differently?
- Is it sometimes difficult to see beautiful things when we are surrounded by ugly ones? Does that mean that beautiful things are not around, or that we are not seeing them?
- Is there anything dangerous about this way of thinking? What might it lead to?
- How does their working at the soup kitchen illustrate CJ’s and his family’s relationship with the community? What sort of role do they play?
- Over the course of one afternoon, CJ goes from seeing his wealthier friend in a nice car to seeing homeless people in a soup kitchen. How do you think CJ sees these people at the end of the day? How do you think he feels about Colby? How do you think he feels about the people in the soup kitchen? Are they his friends?
- How do you think Colby sees CJ?
- How do you think the people in line at the soup kitchen see CJ and his nana?
- Do you think CJ, or Nana, feels pity for anyone in this story? If so, who?
- Have you ever felt pity? Where does it come from? And what, if anything, does pity accomplish?
- Why do you think Nana takes CJ to the soup kitchen in the first place? What do you think is the desired outcome of bringing her grandson to this place might be?
  - Does she do it for herself? Does CJ do it for himself? Or do they do it for the people they are serving food to? Or both?
  - Try to think of both positive and negative reasons that might be involved with wanting to volunteer at a soup kitchen.

### LEARNING ACTIVITY 1: Musical Masterpieces

#### Supplies:

- Paper
- Art supplies (can be colouring-in materials, pencils, paints or all of the above)
- Small speaker / MP3 player

#### Instructions:

*This is an art activity designed to familiarize your child/children with their own emotions and imaginations. It can either be done as a stand-alone session, or repeated multiple times as a warm up at the beginning of different sessions in which you discuss the book.*

#### **Before the session:**

1. Read through the activity to get an understanding of how it will work. Then, choose a number of songs or pieces of music to use during the activity.
2. When deciding on songs, first make sure they are **appropriate for the age and experience of your child/children** (consider language & subject matter). Choose a variety of songs, some that

your child/children know and love and others that you think your child/children have never heard before so that their reactions will be original. Finally, make sure the songs you choose represent **more than one genre or mood**—the larger the variety of music, the better the activity will be for your child/children.

### In the session:

1. Have your children take a look at the image below. It is the page of *Last Stop on Market Street* where CJ is transported by the music. Hold up the picture for your child/children to study closely and read the words aloud:



*“and in the darkness the rhythm lifted CJ out of the bus, out of the busy city... He saw the sunset colours swirling over crashing waves. Saw a family of hawks slicing through the sky. Saw the old woman’s butterflies dancing free in the light of the moon. CJ’s chest grew full and he was lost in the sound and the sound gave him the feeling of magic.”*

2. Have a short discussion about whether or not CJ *actually* left the bus and the city, and what is going on with the magic feeling described [the music moved CJ emotionally, so he *felt* like he left the bus/city, in his imagination]. Explain to your child/children they will now get a chance to experience that same feeling of magic.
3. Before distributing any material, ask your child/children to spread out around the room, find a comfortable place to sit, and close their eyes. They should not be too close together, so that they do not distract one another.
4. Explain that you will play them some music, and their job is simply **to listen to it and allow their imagination to carry them wherever it may**. Ensure them that there are no wrong answers—each person’s imagination is different, and will produce a different reaction to the music. Some may imagine a different place, some may imagine a certain feeling, some a certain person, etc.
5. **Play a song** you chose in Step 1 through your speaker.
6. When the song is finished, ask your child/children to open their eyes.
7. **Start a short discussion**, asking: *What did you see? What did you imagine? Were you transported? If so, where?*
8. Allow your child/children to share their reaction with the group and ask any questions you think will help the rest of the group get more comfortable with the experience of exploring imagination & emotion.
9. If some children seem shy or uncomfortable with the activity, encourage them to keep trying.
10. For a second time, **ask them to close their eyes and listen**. Re-play the same song.
11. While your child/children listen a second time, quietly walk around distributing paper and art supplies to each child.

12. When the song finishes a second time, have your child/children open their eyes and stare at their blank paper. They will now have a chance to create a real piece of art that reflects whatever feeling or imaginings they got from the song.
13. As they start to draw or paint, **re-play the song**. This will help them to recreate the feeling they saw with their eyes closed. Play the song 2-5 more times (adjust number depending on length of song and time available) until your child/children have finished their artwork.
14. **IMPORTANT:** Encourage your child/children **NOT to look at other children's artwork as they draw/paint**. Again, there is no "right" or "correct" answer in this activity, so there is no use copying someone else's work. The goal of the activity is to produce original reactions in each and every child.
15. Give your child/children an opportunity to **present their artwork** after each song. They should talk about what feelings the song produced in them, where they imagined themselves while listening, and how they chose to represent that in their artwork. Let other children ask questions and use the presentation as inspiration for their own original ideas.
16. **Repeat the activity with as many songs as you wish**. If you plan to discuss *Last Stop on Market Street* over more than one session, consider repeating this activity with a new song for each day.
17. As they repeat the steps, your child/children should become more comfortable, and their artwork should improve in originality. However, as you repeat the activity, **make sure you are changing the style of music** (some happy songs, some sad, some with singing, some with just instruments, etc.), so that your child/children are encouraged to explore different areas of their imagination each time.

## LEARNING ACTIVITY 2: Chasing Rainbows

### Supplies:

- |                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| - Plain paper (white) | - Torch (can be cell phone)     |
| - Water               | - <b>OPTIONAL:</b> CDs          |
| - Glass cup or jar    | - <b>OPTIONAL:</b> Small mirror |
| - Scissors            | - <b>OPTIONAL:</b> Glass prism  |
| - Tape                |                                 |

### Instructions:

#### **Before the session:**

1. Practice the demonstration below, to ensure you can competently create a rainbow in front of your child/children. It may take some practice to get right.
2. Read through the Rainbows Information Sheet (included in this document), and make sure you understand all of the concepts discussed. If something is unclear, look it up online or in a book. You will need a solid understanding of rainbows in order to help the children themselves understand.

**During the session:**

1. Go to the page of *Last Stop on Market Street* where CJ and his Nana see a rainbow in the sky. Give your child/children time to study it, pointing out the rainbow. Begin with a simple discussion about rainbows to see what your child/children already know. Use these questions:
  - What colours are in the rainbow (use book if necessary)? What order are they in?
  - Have you ever seen a rainbow? If so, where?
  - What is a rainbow made of?
  - How are rainbows formed?

These questions, especially the last two, will likely stump most children. Tell them that is OK. This activity will give them the answer to those questions, as well as teach them more about rainbows.



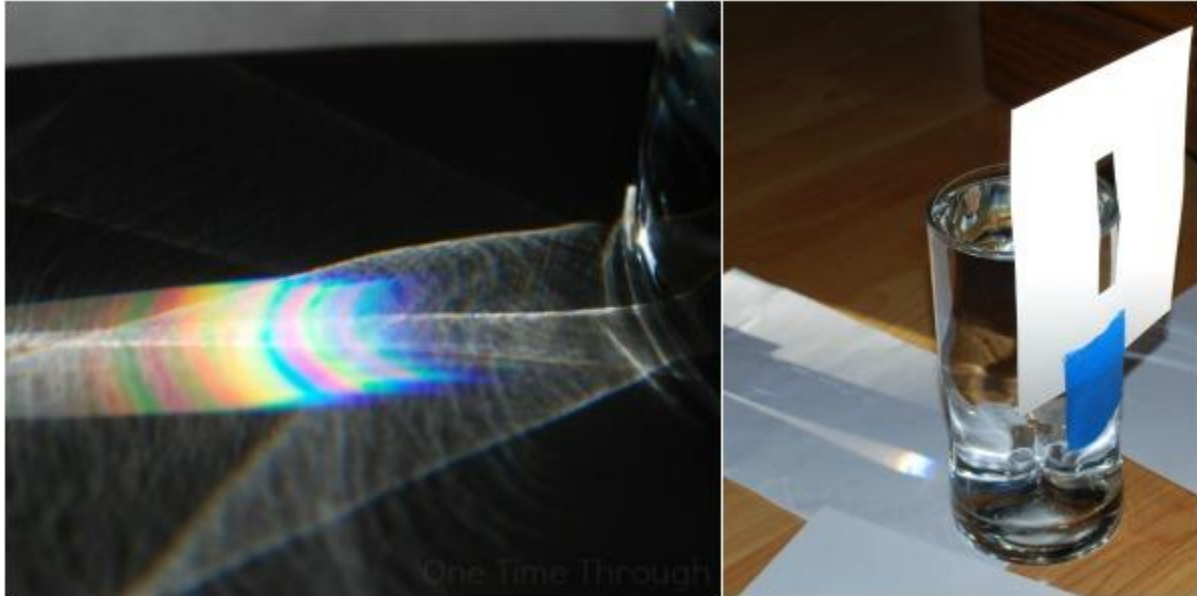
2. Give a demonstration of how to create a rainbow. If you have a **CD**, a **small mirror**, or a **glass prism**, your demonstration can consist of simply placing that object in a ray of sunlight or in the light of your torch, and directing the light coming off of the surface onto a white piece of paper underneath to make the rainbow more visible. However, if you do not have any of these things, use the demonstration below:

**Making a Rainbow (Glass + Water):**

- i. **Fill a glass jar or cup to the top with water** (be careful not to spill). Note, the glass must be smooth (not broken or textured) for best results.
- ii. Take a small piece of paper, and use scissors to **cut a slit** into it. The slit should be about 3 to 5 mm wide.
- iii. Tape the paper to the glass jar so that the slit sits just at the height of the water.
- iv. Set the glass down onto a blank piece of white paper.
- v. Take your torch and shine it so that its **light passes first through the paper slit**, then **onto the surface of the water**. You can also use a beam of sunlight if there are windows nearby (or if possible go outside).
- vi. Look at the bottom of the glass, where it meets the paper. You should see some colours in the light.



- vii. Experiment moving the torch up and down, closer and further away, etc. until you find the best spot to see your rainbow. If you are using sunlight, move the glass/paper contraption itself to find the best spot.

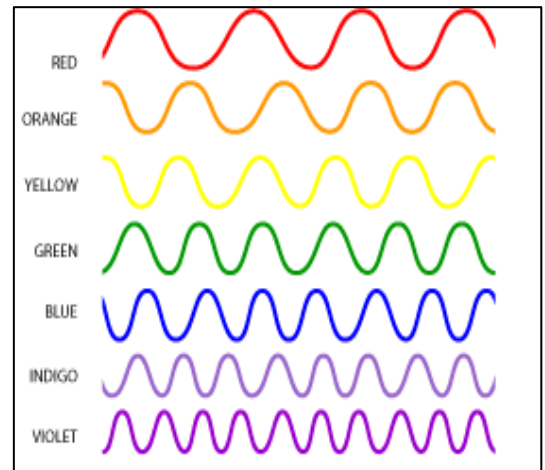


However you choose to create your rainbow, encourage your child/children to gather around and watch closely. Encourage them to ask questions. Additionally, one at a time, allow them to put their hand on the paper so that the rainbow reflects onto their skin. This will connect your child/children with the concept.

3. Now that your child/children have seen a rainbow being formed, ask them again if they can explain 1) What a rainbow is made of or 2) How a rainbow is formed. Allow them to guess, if they wish.
4. Then, give them an explanation of **light**, **waves**, **refraction** and **rainbows** appropriate for their age and level of science education. You can use the **Information Sheet** in this packet, or come up with your own, simplified explanation based on it. Either way, use the pictures attached to help your child/children understand the concept.

## Information Sheet – Light & Rainbows

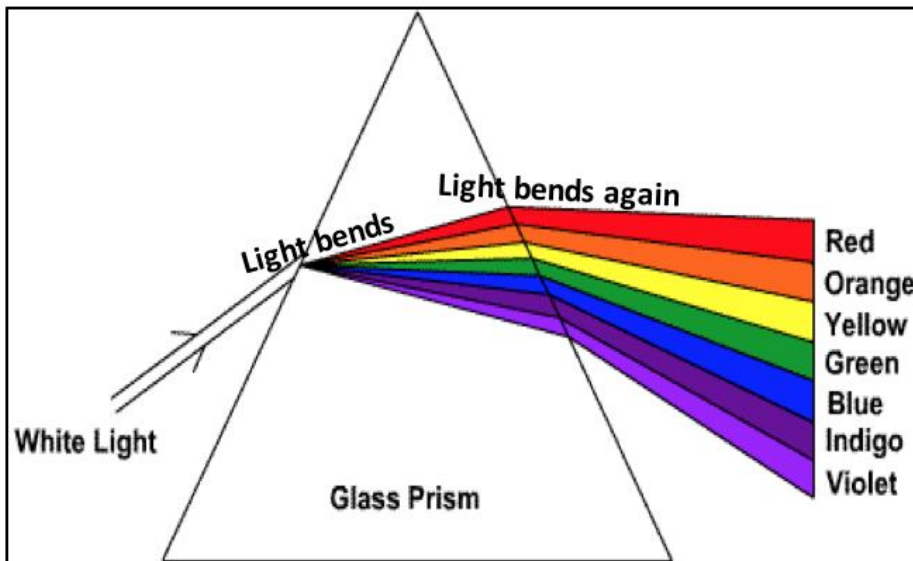
**LIGHT** is a form of energy. It starts at a source (the sun, a torch, a cell phone, etc.) and then travels. Light can travel through many materials, and it travels in the shape of **waves**. Most of the light we see is called **white light**, and we sense it when it travels from its source to our eyes. White light doesn't look colourful, but it is actually made up of every colour in the rainbow. The picture to the right shows the different colours waves that make up white light.



*So how do we go from white light to seeing all the colours of the rainbow?*

The answer is called **REFRACTION**. Simply put, refraction is what happens any time light passes from one material to another: from air into glass, water into plastic, etc. **Refraction causes light to change speed**, which causes it to **bend**. An easy way to observe this is through a glass block known as a **PRISM**.

When light passes from the air into the prism, it slows down, and when it leaves the glass, it speeds up again. Unless light hits the prism straight on, it bends, because one side of the wave slows down before the other, like ocean waves around a rock at the beach. The same thing happens when the light leaves the prism—it bends again. The **different colour waves all bend at different speeds**, so by the time white light passes through a prism, it has **spread out into its full rainbow of colours**.



This effect can be reproduced with any material that allows light to travel, from windows to drinking glasses. It can also be created using water—

a **RAINBOW** in the sky is actually just sunlight refracting through raindrops in the clouds!



### LEARNING ACTIVITY 3: Understanding Blindness

#### Supplies:

- Blind folds (can be bandana, tea towels, spare shirts, jumpers, etc.)
- Long sticks / canes
- Assorted small snacks

#### Instructions:

*The goal of this activity is for your child/children to **develop a new perspective on blindness and a respect for people who live their lives despite suffering from visual impairment.***

1. Go to the page of *Last Stop on Market Street* when “a man climbed aboard with a spotted dog.” Point out the man in the sunglasses to your child/children. Ask them: What do you know about this man? Use the words and the pictures to describe him as he appears.
2. The man is **blind**. That means he cannot see. As the book says, he “watches” the world with his ears, his nose, and his other non-visual senses. This activity will allow learners to better understand what blindness is, how it happens, and how it affects the people who are affected by it.
3. Ask: Have you ever met a blind person? Can you imagine what it would be like to be blind? Explain that this activity will help your child/children understand blindness, how it works, and how people who suffer from blindness live their lives.
4. Start by using a short **discussion** to help your child/children **understand the man on the bus**. Ask your child/children the following questions, giving them a chance to imagine different possible answers before supplying the answer provided:
  - Why do you think he is wearing sunglasses?
    - o **WE THINK:** Most blind people wear thick sunglasses for two reasons: to **protect their eyes** from burning in the sun (they cannot see the sun, so they might not know when it is hitting them directly), and also as a way **to notify other people that they are visually impaired.**
  - Why is he holding a stick?
    - o **WE THINK:** Some blind people use canes or sticks to act as their eyes while they walk. They tap the stick on the ground in front of them to “see.” When their stick hits something, they know not to step there. It also helps them to navigate around corners, step up onto kerbs, getting into cars or busses, etc.
    - **OPTIONAL:** Search for ‘Meet Blind Skateboarder Dan Mancina’ on YouTube for an excellent example of how well a blind person can



“see” using just a cane, and what strategies can be used to continue following your passion, even when eyesight is lost.

- Why does he have a dog with him?
  - o **WE THINK:** This is called a Seeing Eye Dog. The dog has been specially trained to guide the blind man through the world. These dogs walk on a very short leash, leading the blind person around. Part of their training is communicating with their human owner, so the dog knows where to go, what speed to move at, and how to navigate through traffic.
  
- 5. After covering the surface details of the blind man, steer the conversation towards the **effects blindness has on the way you go through the world:**
  - How might blindness affect the man’s ability to get on the bus? How would he know where the bus is, when it arrives, or where the door is?
  - What do you think the man’s day was like before he got on the bus?  
**As a group, imagine a step-by-step day in the life of this man.** How did he get dressed? How did he eat or shop for food? How did he get to the bus stop?
    - o Steer your child/children towards thinking through and understanding how many things in their everyday life would be made more difficult if they were blind. Yet, this man is smiling on the bus like everyone else— he doesn’t let his blindness hold him back.
  - If you see someone with glasses, a cane, and/or a seeing eye dog, how do you think you will treat them?
  - How would your life be changed if you, too, were blind?
  
- 6. Now, your child/children will get the chance to answer the final question by **experiencing being blind.** For the activities below, put your child/children into pairs or groups of three, depending on the number of materials available. You can have your child/children go through all the tasks below, or choose a small number.
  - a. **TRUST WALKS:** One child wears the blindfold. The other child acts as a guide, using their voice to help their blind partner to navigate from one space to another space. Then, your children swap places, and the other child guides their partner back to the original space. Make sure that the guide is also spotting for the child (or grown up) who is blindfolded.
  - b. **CANE WALKS:** Repeat the same procedure as the trust walks above, only this time the blind child uses a stick/cane to navigate. Their partner’s job is to make sure they do not hurt themselves or collide with anything (not to help them navigate).
  - c. **GETTING READY:** Have your child/children untie and remove their shoes. Then, put the blindfold on. Spin around two or three times. Try to find, put on, and re-tie their shoes.
  - d. **SNACK TIME:** Blindfold one child in each group, and have them sit at a table. On the table, place small piles of two or three different kinds of snacks (chips, small

sweets, crackers, etc.). The blind child must then use their senses of touch and smell to guess what each snack is, and try to eat it without spilling.

- e. **EAR TEST:** Have a blind child sit in the centre of a room and focus on the sounds around them. Have their partner walk around, making as little noise as possible. When they stop walking, the blind child should do their best to point to where they think their partner stopped. Give each child two or three attempts, then have partners swap places.
7. When you've completed your activities, use the questions below to have a discussion about them:
    - What was difficult about walking around blindfolded? Describe how it felt.
    - Which was easier, using the cane or having another child lead you?
      - o Which do you think people who are born blind prefer? Remember, some blind people would never have known what it is like to see with their eyes, and would have practiced with the cane/guide every day of their life. How might life be different for people who are born blind compared with people who lost their vision later in life?
    - How does it feel to trust someone else when you are blind? Is it easy?
      - o How would it feel to trust a dog to guide you? What might the challenges of that be? What might the benefits of that sort of trust be?
    - Were there any tasks that were not as difficult to perform blind as you imagined? What about feeding yourself, or tying your shoe? How important is vision to these sort of tasks? What task was the most difficult?
    - Which of your non-visual senses proved most helpful during these activities? Smell, touch, hearing, or something else?
      - o Scientists have proven that, when one of your senses gets taken away, your other senses get stronger. Did you experience anything like that?
    - After doing these activities, how do you feel about actual blind people, for whom these tasks are everyday occurrences? Do you feel respect for them? Do you feel pity? Think about your reaction and how it might affect your ability to treat a blind person in the real world with dignity.
    - How do you think a real blind person would react to your group doing these activities? Do you think it would make them happy? Or upset? Or something else? Think about how you behaved, and what message that might send to the blind community (even if you do not know any blind people personally).
  8. Before your child/children leave, read them the following list (you may pick and choose specific facts to list if some are too complicated for your child/children to understand). It was provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), and will help them get a big-picture understanding of blindness across the world.

### **5 FACTS ABOUT BLINDNESS AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

- **Fact 1:** Worldwide, 285 million people are visually impaired due to various causes; 39 million of them are blind. That means, about 1 out of every 200 people are blind.

- **Fact 2:** 121 million are visually impaired in ways that can be fixed. Almost all of them could have normal vision restored with eyeglasses, contact lenses or surgery.
- **Fact 3:** 90% of visually impaired people live in low- and middle-income countries.
- **Fact 4:** 51% of all blindness is due to age-related cataract, the leading cause of blindness.
- **Fact 5:** Around 1.4 million children under age 15 are blind. Yet approximately half of all childhood blindness can be avoided by treating diseases early and by correcting abnormalities at birth such as cataract and glaucoma.

**Ask your child/children:** Do any of these facts surprise you? Why or why not? Do you think any of these facts will affect how you see the world, and the blind people in it?

Pick a few facts that are most relevant to your child/children (#5 for young children, #3 for children in low-income areas, etc.), and talk about what they mean in your specific context.

#### LEARNING ACTIVITY 4: Butterfly Symmetry

##### Supplies:

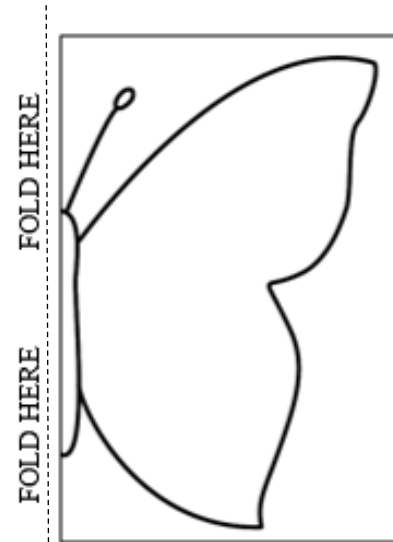
- Paper
- Scissors
- Colouring-in material (pencils, crayons, markers, etc.)

##### Instructions:

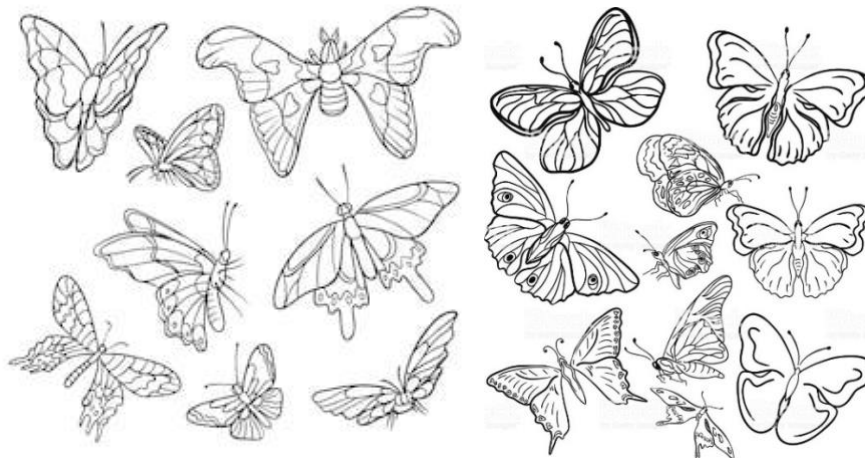
1. Go to the page in *Last Stop on Market Street* where a woman on the bus is holding a jar of butterflies. Ask your child/children: What is a butterfly? Have they ever seen a butterfly?
2. Lead a short discussion about butterflies, then tell your child/children they will get a chance to create a butterfly craft.
3. Distribute paper, pencils, and scissors. As you do, explain that this activity will rely on **symmetry**. Ask your child/children if any of them can define **symmetry**, or what it means to be **symmetrical**. Older children might be able to answer these questions, but you may have to help younger children with the concept.
4. **Symmetry** is what happens when something is made up of two identical halves, so if you were to fold it along the **line of symmetry**, the two shapes would line up perfectly. If your child/children are still struggling to understand, the activity will do a good job of exemplifying the concept.
5. When your child/children have their materials, go to the front of the room and get your own piece of paper, and perform a demonstration while the child/children follow your lead.



6. **Fold your paper in half** along the longest edge. Then, starting from the fold, take a pencil and **draw out one wing of a butterfly** (you can also draw a small body, as an option). Encourage your child/children to come up with their own shapes, but feel free to show the **Sample Butterfly Shapes** below for inspiration.
7. **IMPORTANT:** your butterfly shape **MUST** start and end along the fold of your paper. This will produce the symmetry. (See example, right)
8. Once you have your outline, use scissors to cut out the wing. If you've done this correctly, you should be able to un-fold your paper, and bring your butterfly to life!
9. If need be, use the butterfly you have just created to re-explain symmetry. Fold and unfold it along the centre line. The full butterfly is symmetrical because the two sides match up perfectly.
10. Once all children have successfully cut out their butterflies, give them some time to colour-in their wings, and design them any way they wish.
11. When all of your butterflies are cut and coloured hang them up in a prominent place to remind your child/children about the concept of symmetry. Challenge your child/children to try to find anything else in nature that is symmetrical? Give them a few minutes to walk around the garden or gaze out the window to try to see things that are symmetrical. Encourage them to find example to share their findings.



**Sample Butterfly Shapes:**





### Activity 5 – Graffiti Explained

Graffiti has a long and proud history. The subculture surrounding graffiti has existed for several decades, and it's still going strong. The graffiti artists (or "writers" as they prefer to call themselves) are predominantly passionate, skilled, community-oriented, and socially conscious in ways that profoundly contradict the way they've been portrayed as common criminals and vandals.

Graffiti, if we define it as any type of writing on the wall, goes back at least to ancient Rome. But the style of urban graffiti that most people have seen and know about, the kind that uses spray cans, came from Philadelphia in the late 1960s, and was born on the subway trains. By the 1970's it had made its way to New York City. Taki 183, who lived on 183rd street in Washington Heights, worked as a messenger who traveled all throughout the city. While he did so, he would use a marker and write his name wherever he went, at subway stations and also the insides and outsides on subway cars. Eventually, he became known all throughout the city as this mysterious figure. In 1971, he was interviewed for an article by the New York Times. Kids all over New York, realizing the fame and notoriety that could be gained from "tagging" their names on subway cars (that traveled all over the city, naturally) began to emulate Taki 183. The goal was to "get up" (using the slang of the day), to have one's name in as many places as possible, and as kids competed against each other to get famous, the amount of graffiti on trains exploded.



For **tagging** on the insides of trains, permanent markers worked, but using spray cans of paint quickly became popular as well, especially for tagging on the outside of trains. Graffiti became so much more than simple tagging, however. Graffiti writers, in addition to getting their name around as much as possible, would try to outdo each other in terms of style. At first, writers would try to make their tags (or signatures) more stylish than anyone else's. Later on, they would add more colours, special effects, and they'd make their name bigger. Spray cans allowed large pieces of graffiti to be created fairly quickly which was important because writers didn't want to get caught by the police or people working for the MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority). As you will see in the Graffiti Styles section of this website, graffiti really evolved into a complex art form with its own techniques and vocabulary. From simple tags on the insides of trains to throw-ups to masterpieces that spanned multiple subway cars, the art and science of graffiti grew in leaps and bounds.

- Look at the Graffiti on the walls of the city
- What is Graffiti?
- Why do people write on public spaces or carve their names into trees
- If you had a sign board to leave a message, what would your message be?



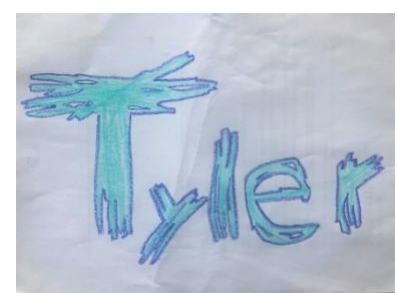


### Supplies:

- Paper
- Colouring materials

### Instructions:

1. Distribute paper and colouring materials to your child/children
2. Ask them to design their own tag using their name or a symbol
3. If your children are younger, you might like to provide them with more guidance for this activity (see images and instruction steps below).
  - a. Ask them to scribble their name in crayon or light coloured marker
  - b. Outline the border of the scribbles carefully with a darker colour



c. This

produces a unique signature for the child, which is exactly what a tag is!

4. Once they have designed their tag, ask them to explain why they chose to depict their name in this specific way?
5. Ask your child/children:
  - a. Whether they think it is okay to spray or paint on property that does not belong to them? Why or why not?
  - b. Ask them how they would feel if someone were to come along and sprayed their tag onto your child/children's property?
  - c. What does writing your name on something mean?

- d. What does ownership mean? How does ownership change?
- e. What is art? Are there different types of art? Who decides?

---

*Thanda is a non profit organisation based in rural Mtwalume, KwaZulu Natal South Africa. Our curriculum is made up of activities that we have developed over 12 years. The ideas and inspiration for our activities come from is a wonderful combination of educators, books, websites, YouTubers, and other places and people on the internet. We are very grateful for all of them. Where we use ideas or activities directly from a source, we always endeavour to give credit to the creator. We do not endeavour to profit from these story studies, we only wish to add value to the lives of people we may have the opportunity of crossing paths with.*

---

Thanda is a non-profit Organisation based in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa  
[www.thanda.org](http://www.thanda.org) | [info@thanda.org](mailto:info@thanda.org) |

