Study Guide for
Child of the Flower-Song People

Dear Teachers,
Welcome to the study guide for Gloria Amescua's book, *Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughter of the Nahua*. This is the true story of a woman who saved the stories of her ancestors, language, and culture through teaching. The illustrations by Duncan Tonatiuh do not disappoint as he extends this valuable story by referencing the paintings of Diego Rivera and sculpture by José María Urbina. As always with high quality picture books, both words and art contribute to this remarkable story.

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop taught us about the power of literature in her 1990 article, "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors": https://www.readingrockets.org/sites/default/files/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf. Literature can serve as a reflection of our lives, a sliding glass door that allows us to walk into the world the author created or, as she noted, "When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror." In other words, literature is powerful for both children and adults. Gloria Amescua and Duncan Tonatiuh have gifted us with one such piece of literature for children. To learn more about Bishop's metaphor of literature as windows, mirrors, and doors, watch this TedTalk with author Grace Lin: http://mirrorswindowsdoors.org/wp/ted-talk-by-grace-lin/?unapproved=27882&moderation-hash=d84f7a8dc91bb5782057067d50ab2216#comment-27882.

With this study guide you are invited into the world of Luz Jiménez, a woman who loved and honored her people in a time when others were trying to extinguish her culture.

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Central Texas Writing Project, Co-Director

Common Core Curriculum Standards Covered in this Guide

Grade 3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8
Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Grade 4
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7
Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.8
Recall relevant information from experiences or gather

relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Grade 5
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7
Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.8
Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

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ISBN 978-1-4197-4020-6 · Abrams Books for Young Readers
Additional resources at gloriaamescua.com.

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CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

BEFORE READING ACTIVITY #1

Post the word "culture" on a screen or chart in the room. Have students brainstorm what they think that word means. If students struggle, try positing a simple definition of the word as well.

Post students' answers for all to see. Your chart may look like this:

CULTURE:	Sayings:	Traditions & Celebrations:
The values, beliefs, language, and practices that people share in common. What is the culture of your family, friends, and community? Does your family have special sayings, stories, or celebrations?	**Perk up!** **Pipe down!** **Piece of cake!** **Two heads are better than one.** **De tal palo, tal astilla. (Like father, like son.)** **Más vale prevenir que lamentar. (Better safe than sorry.)** **Quien tiene un amigo tiene un tesoro. (Whoever has a friend has a treasure.)**	Speaking Spanis Celebrating Hanukkah Having a Quinceañera

Ask students how they would feel if someone told them that they could not speak Spanish (or another family language) or celebrate Hanukkah or have a Quinceañera? (Borrow student ideas from the chart above.)

Explain that this has happened in history. Certain groups of people were forbidden to practice their beliefs or hold valued celebrations. Explain that the book we are going to read today will focus on this problem.

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BEFORE READING ACTIVITY #2

Place the following words on cards or on the screen. Place students in pairs or small groups and ask them to group the words into categories. One category might be "jobs" another might be "we don't know." Students may come up with any categories they wish. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers. Using large sticky notes for the words makes them easy to move into different groups. If students struggle too much with this activity, the teacher may wish to make categories borrowed from the definition of culture above. (For example, PRACTICES, LANGUAGES, BELIEFS.)

native people	colonization	artists
courage	Flower-song people	Nahua
old stories	sorrow	survival
right and proper	punishment	Nahuatl
Mexican Revolution	destruction	teaching
pride	posing for artists (model)	jobs
Mexico	powerless	struggle
powerful	Spanish	painters & sculptors

Tell students that most of these words are in the book we will read today. Explain that students will have a chance to come back to their categories and change where they placed their words or even come up with new categories after we read.

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BEFORE READING ACTIVITY #3

Discuss heroes and heroines as well as the word courage.

Share the definition of courage with the students: *Bravery; the ability to do something that frightens one; the ability to face difficulty without fear*

Ask students:

- What do you think it means to have courage?
- What do you think it means to be a hero or heroine?
- Do you know someone who is courageous?

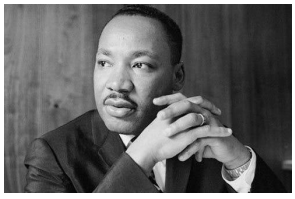
Show photos of heroes and heroines, including a photo of Luz. Ask why these individuals might have courage and if their courage made a difference in their lives and our society as a whole.



Sonya Sotomayor is the first Latina Supreme Court justice.



Cesar Chavez was a well-known labor leader and Latino American civil rights activists. He relied on nonviolent methods to improve the lives of migrant American farmworkers.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the American civil rights movement. King believed all people were equal and advanced civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience,



Luz Jimenez was an indigenous Mexican model and Nahuat language storyteller. As a young woman, she witnessed the Mexican Revolution. In the 1930s she served as a linguistic informant to document the Nahuatl language and culture.



Ruby Nell Bridges Hall is an American civil rights activist. She was the first African-American child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana during the New Orleans school desegregation crisis on November 14, 1960.

Explain that the book we will read today is about a woman who had the courage to make a difference.

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DURING READING

- Pause and wait for responses from students.
- Allow comments and questions as you read.
- Open with poem or quote about heroes and heroines
- Have students list all the people they know who are heroes/heroines (famous and personal)

AFTER READING

Have students turn and talk with their neighbor. They might speak about:

- their favorite part of the story;
- why they think Luz had courage;
- why it is important to preserve our unique cultures.

Ask students to listen to the following poem about one girl's culture/background:

MUTT

When you see me
Do you see
The color of Africa?
Do you see the rhythm of Cuba?
Do you see
The strength of the Cherokee?
Do you see
The empire of China?
Do you see
The tropics of the Caribbean?
If not, look closer.

Zarinah James, 16, New York

Excerpted from *Quiet Storm: Voices of Young Black Poets* edited by Lydia Omolola Okutoro

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AFTER READING (continued)

Show students a poem you composed using a similar frame. It might look like this:

Cajun Girl

When you see me
Do you hear
the sound of French?
Do you smell
the gumbo simmering on the back burner?
Do you know
the strength of the grandmothers and grandfathers who farmed the land?
Do you feel
the hot Louisiana sun?
Do you see
the love?
If not, look closer.

Sharon O'Neal, 70, Austin

Inspired by the poem "Mutt" by Zarinah James, 16

Have students join you in writing a similar poem about Luz Jiménez. Make certain students know they can change words to reflect their own understandings of Luz's story.

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LUZ JIMÉNEZ: Child of the Flower-Song People

When you see me
Do you see
the_____?
Do you feel
the_____?
Do you hear
the _____?
Do you taste
the_____?
Do you smell
the_____?
Do you know
the_____?
If not, look closer.

By Ms. _____'s class, 2021

Inspired by the poem "Mutt" by Zarinah James.

AFTER READING (continued)

Conclude by having students write their own poems about Luz Jiménez or a poem about themselves. They may use this format/frame or create a new one. Ask students to share their work if time permits. Post student work in the room for all to see.

Close with this quote from Maya Angelou on courage:

> *Having courage does not mean that we are unafraid. Having courage and showing courage mean we face our fears. We are able to say, 'I have fallen and I will get up.'*

SUPPLEMENTAL READING

- Bridges, R. & Lundell, Margo (1999). *Through My Eyes.* Scholastic Press.
- Krull, K. (2003). *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* (Y. Morales, Illus.). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers.
- Rappaport, D. (2001). *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* (B. Collier, Illus.). Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.
- Sotomayor, S. (2018). *Turning Pages: My Life Story* (L. Delacre, Illus.) Philomel Books.

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