

Teacher's Notes



Windy Hollow Books



Little Francie feels capable and confident in the water, so when she watches her bigger cousins diving like gannets from the diving boards at the local pool, she wants to do it too. But can she be a gannet if she cannot even dive?

Author and Illustrator's Notes

My stories often start with an emotion — I think of a time when I felt like that and go from there. I really wanted to tap into joy for this story so thought of a time as a child when I had felt a real kind of freedom and joy — and for me it was in the water. Even though as a child I wasn't very athletic and couldn't do handstands or cartwheels like lots of my friends, in the water I felt capable and graceful and free. I remember spending long summer hours in the pool pretending to be a dolphin or a mermaid and I always wished I could dive like a gannet.

It was important to me that Francie's character had a bigger body shape. It's slowly getting better, but I still think there is a lack of representation of diverse body types in children's books. I hope Like a Gannet helps all kids feel like they can try anything and be the hero in a story. With courage, all kids can face their fears and strive for things out of their reach, learning along the way to work with their limitations and do it their own way. Just like Francie. And just like gannets whose short legs and webbed feet make them slow, clumsy waddlers on land, but who transform into Queens of the Sea when they dive.

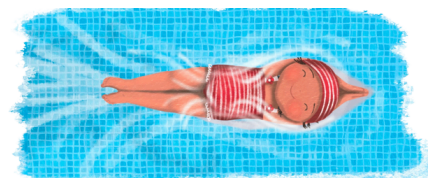
Kirsten Ealand

As soon as I read the manuscript for Like A Gannet I fell in love with the story of little Francie. A story of trying new things and overcoming your fears with the help of friends.

I grew up in a country town, far from the beach with a public swimming pool. I remember the joy of swimming on a hot summers day and trying to find the courage to try new things and experiment in the water at the public pool. With the support of friends and family to help you have the best day in the sunshine.

I loved choosing a limited summer colour palette to create the illustrations with a splash of watercolour. A gorgeous story of overcoming your fears with a little encouragement from friends.

Deb Hudson





Activities

Preschool activities

Personal Growth:

Like a Gannet tells the story of little Francie going off the diving board at her local pool for the first time. She goes through many different emotions throughout the story. Ask children how Francie is feeling on each spread. How can they tell?

Ask students to remember a time when they did something for the first time? How did they feel? Have students draw a picture of themselves doing this first experience and showing their emotions.

Movement: Have children move like the birds mentioned in the book, eg dip/ tuck/ waddle like a duck, glide like a swan and cut through the water like a cormorant. Show pictures or get the children to choose other animals they could move like.

Eg flap like a bat, gallop like a horse, jump like a kangaroo, crawl like a crab, stomp like an elephant, stretch like a cat, slide like a seal.

Sequencing: Print out or draw simple pictures representing the sequence of events in the book. Have the children put the pictures in order to retell the story visually. This could also be done using Francie's emotions.



Opposites: There are lots of opposites in *Like a Gannet*. As you read ask children to listen and look for opposites such as high/ low diving boards, big/ little kids, climbing up/ down the ladder, holding/ letting go hands, morning/evening (see endpapers) and Francie feeling happy/ sad. Talk to children about opposites and brainstorm other examples.

Play the Opposites Game: Ask the children to do the opposite. For example, if you reach up, the children reach down. Here are a few opposites to try:

- Reach high to the sky and low to the ground
- Take a big step and a little step
- Clap your hands loudly and quietly
- Run fast, then slow (toddler's pace)
- Happy face, sad face
- Fill a cup with water, empty cup
- Open lid, close lid
- Sit down, stand up
- Turn to the right and then left

Music:

Words can have music in them and picture book authors try hard to have a nice sounding rhythm to the words when they are read aloud. Reread spread 8 where Francie walks over and climbs the low diving board. Substitute clap for step in the first two lines and get the children to repeat the pattern.

1.A Clap. Just one. CLAP (1)

2.Then two, three, four. CLAP, CLAP, CLAP (3)

Add it all together and get the children to repeat the pattern after you.

ONE PAUSE TWO, THREE, FOUR

CLAP PAUSE CLAP, CLAP, CLAP

Try some more simple rhythms, then add complexity. Try fun variations by using different body parts to make the sounds (stomping feet, slapping thighs) or introducing props like musical instruments or clapping sticks.



Primary school activities

CURRICULUM LINKS

Australian Curriculum Outcomes - Foundation - Year 2

• English • PDHPE • Science • Art

THEMES

- First experiences
- Emotions
- Swimming/ Diving
- Water birds, especially gannets

STUDY NOTES

PREREADING

Read the title and look at the cover. What do students think the story might be about? Have students heard of a gannet?

Read the blurb. Discuss the birds mentioned in the blurb (duck, swan, cormorant, gannet). Have the students heard of them?

Words you may like to pre-teach: fledgling, flock, squawk

PDHPE

Like a Gannet tells the story of little Francie going off the diving board at her local pool for the first time. She goes through many different emotions throughout the story.

On a second read-through ask children how Francie is feeling on the different spreads. How can they tell?

Ask students to remember a time when they did something for the first time? How did they feel? In groups brainstorm other first/ new experiences (eg first day of school, dentist trip, visit to the zoo, day at the beach, stay overnight at grandparents, rollerskating etc). It could be things they have done or would like to do. How did/ might they feel doing that new thing? How do/ might their feelings change after they have done it many times?

Have students draw a picture of themselves doing a first experience and showing their emotions — using colour, body language, facial expression etc.

ENGLISH

The author has used the following language devices in Like a Gannet:

Alliteration

Have students identify some alliteration on the first spread (dip/ dabble/ duck; cut/ cormorant). In pairs have them think of alliteration for some other animals.

Simile

The author has used a simile for the title Like a Gannet, comparing the main character Francie with a wild gannet, and there are lots more examples of similes throughout the text.

Have students find other examples of similes throughout Like a Gannet.

Writing

Ask students to write a personal narrative based on a first experience they have had/ or would like to try. Remind students to include how they felt and what they saw, heard, smelt & tasted. Try adding some alliteration.

Like a ...

Francie wanted to dive like a gannet. Ask students to imagine they could be like an animal. What animal would they choose and why?





Primary school activities

VISUAL ARTS

Design a mural similar to the one at the pool in *Like a Gannet*.

As a class examine both endpapers. Discuss how the illustrator uses the mural in the story to bring the gannet into the illustrations

Allow students to design a mural. They could use the animal that they would like to be like from the writing section above. Where might it be located?

SCIENCE

Gannets are spectacular high-speed divers and expert fishers. They dive into schools of small fish from heights of up to 30m. While in the dive they fold their wings back, taking the shape of a spear, before hitting the water at high speeds of up to 100km per hour.

Watch a video of gannets diving (e.g. Earth Touch TV - Gannets: Nature's dive-bombers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nT6B87M22sg>)

Have students investigate what special adaptations gannets have that protect them when they do their high-speed dives.



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