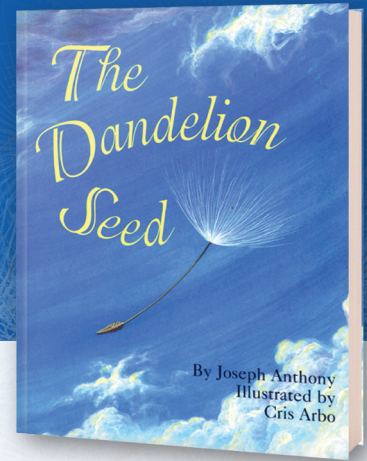


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR THE DANDELION SEED

By JOSEPH ANTHONY Pictures by CRIS ARBO



Discussion & Activity Guide for Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4
Prepared by We Love Children's Books

ABOUT THE BOOK

In *The Dandelion Seed*, kids learn the life cycle of a plant, but this dandelion seed is special. Readers follow a beautiful story of life's journey—a journey that brings change and growth. A journey of a tiny dandelion seed who was afraid to let go.

A dandelion can teach much about seeds and seasons and cycles—and the big world that a wind-blown seed can travel—but it also can make us appreciate the challenges it must overcome. This gorgeous book is at once simple and profound. You may be surprised and pleased by the questions and observations of your children after reading this together.

*Winner of the 1998 Publisher's Marketing Association
Benjamin Franklin Silver Award for Children's Picture Books*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

JOSEPH PATRICK ANTHONY was born the tenth of eleven children. His family loved the mountains, so exploring with his brothers and sisters nurtured an innate love for adventure and an appreciation for the natural world. He traveled with the Navy as a trumpet player, worked in a natural food store, as a corrections officer, a massage therapist, and a construction supervisor, experiences which have all served to deepen his self-understanding and perspective on the human condition. Joseph's cosmological work, "Our Multi-Tiered Universe," grew out of a desire to help move the planet to a clean energy future. His website is JosephPatrickAnthony.com.

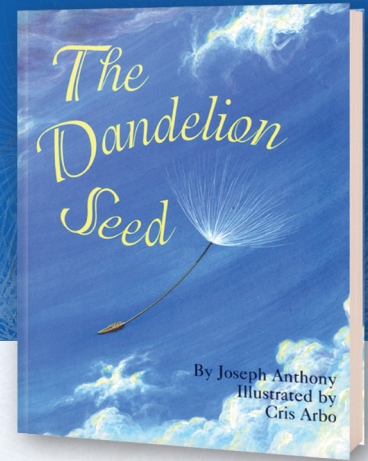
CRIS ARBO's art is known for intense detail and is inspired by her love and respect for nature. Her art has appeared in books, magazines, calendars, cards, murals, and in animated feature films, TV shows, and commercials. She has illustrated six nature awareness children's books for Dawn Publications and is also a frequent presenter at schools and conferences. Cris has four daughters and lives in Buckingham, Virginia with her husband, author Joseph Anthony and their youngest daughter, Alina. Many of Cris's favorite hours are spent in the garden.



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PRE-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

What do students know about dandelions? What time of year do they grow? What color are their flowers? How do people feel about dandelions? Have students ever blown dandelion seeds off the stem and made a wish?

This book is about a dandelion seed, and how it grows. Review the life cycle of the dandelion with students beforehand so they will better understand the story.

This book isn't just about a seed growing into a plant. It also has a message about learning the importance of change and growth. Have students ever been scared to try something new? What happened?

VOCABULARY

As you read the book, have students raise their hands when they hear a word that they do not know, or any phrases that are new. As a class, derive the meaning from context, using a dictionary as necessary. How do the words and phrases the author uses build a mood and help convey the message of the story?

POST-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

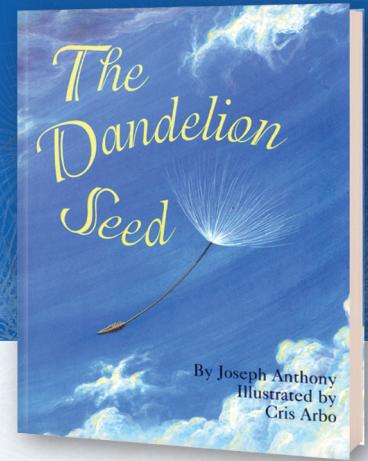
MOVING PICTURES

In this picture book, the tiny dandelion seed starts in a garden. It is carried by the wind, floating past houses, through a city, and along a shoreline before winding up in a field by a farm. As a class, look closely at the illustrations in the first half of the book. Where has the seed traveled in each picture? How can students tell—the illustrations, the text, or both? What clues on each page show where the seed came from and where it is going?



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GROWING BIGGER

Once the dandelion seed takes root, the book shows it growing bigger and bigger until it blossoms into a flower. As it grows, the scenery around it changes and the pictures show more and more of its surroundings until the reader can see the landscape where the dandelion has grown. What changes from one picture to another? What stays the same? How does the perspective of the drawing change from illustration to illustration?

DANDELION'S CHANGING EMOTIONS

At the beginning of the book, we meet the last Dandelion Seed still clinging to the plant. Eventually, the wind blows so hard the Seed can't hold on and is carried away. Why did the Seed hang on so tightly? By the end of the book, Dandelion Seed has a new view of things. What does the Dandelion say to the last seed still hanging on at the end of the story? Break students into groups and have them find examples in the book of how Dandelion was helped by the wind, rain and sun. Come together and discuss these experiences and how they changed Dandelion's feelings.

FROM SEED TO PLANT

Break students into pairs and have them go through the book. What are the steps in its life cycle? How is it part of the web of life, feeding itself and feeding other animals? Do students understand the role of this plant in the world better when it is told as a story, rather than as a factual or scientific text? Come together as a class to share their insights.

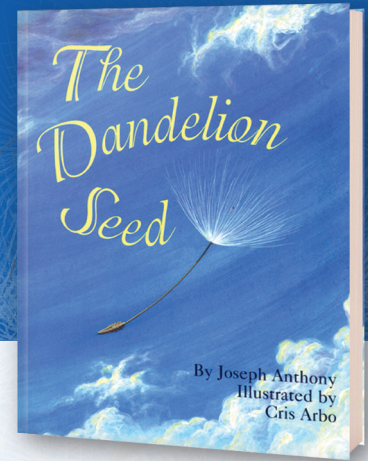
HOW FAR CAN A DANDELION FLY?

While this book is told as a story, it is also full of facts about the dandelion. For example, this story shows the Dandelion Seed traveling a far distance from a garden, through a city and over water to a farm. Come together as a class to conduct a brief research project about dandelion seeds, how far they can travel and the science behind their ability to fly so far.



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RETELL THE STORY

Break students into pairs and have them retell *The Dandelion Seed* to each other. How does the story begin and how does it end? What is the dandelion seed like at the beginning of the story? How does it change? What are the “big ideas” or “themes” in this story? What have students learned about change and risk-taking from the Dandelion Seed? After they have discussed with each other, come together as a class and have students share their thoughts.

TWO-PART HARMONY

Picture books combine the power of words and illustrations to tell a story in a compelling way. Break the class into groups and have each group examine a spread from the book. What do the words communicate? What do the pictures show? How do these work together to tell the story to the reader? Have each group present their findings to the class and share their conclusions.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU SEE?

While the Dandelion Seed is the center of this story, it is part of an entire ecosystem. Break students into groups and have them make a list of all the other plants, animals, and insects they can identify in the illustrations.

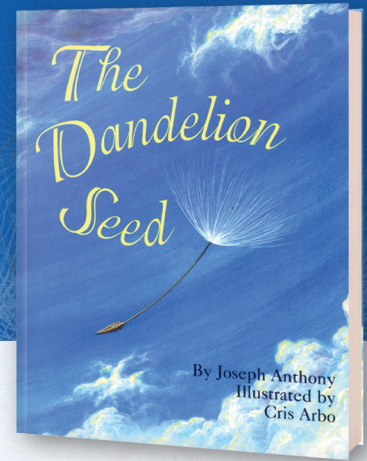
THE SEED GOES ON

The Dandelion Seed flies very far and sees many things before it lands in its new home. Have students use their imaginations to illustrate a new scene of the Dandelion Seed's journey that the book doesn't depict. Is it an “action” scene, like when the Seed is almost hit by a car? Or is it a scene showing natural beauty, like the seed silhouetted against the moon at night? Where does their scene take place? How does this part of its journey help contribute to the dandelion seed's change and growth? Create a gallery of student images to decorate the class.



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THE VERSATILE DANDELION

Some people don't like dandelions—especially in their yards! But there are lots of people who use this so-called weed every day. Break students into groups and, working with an adult as needed, do a brief research project to find out the ways people use this plant. For example, dandelions appear in recipes to make salads, teas, and more. Some people compost them to feed the rest of their gardens. They are also used in craft projects, woven into jewelry—and sometimes even used to predict the future! What interesting dandelion facts, uses, and lore did students discover? Come together as a class and have everyone share what they have found.

DEDICATED

Read the dedication. What do students think it means? What does it tell the reader about the themes in this book and what the author and illustrator are trying to say to the reader?

