

Faraway Home

Book by Jane Kurtz

Unit study by Gwen Wise

Printables by Ami

Language Arts

Metaphors and similes compare things. Jane Kurtz uses very colorful phrases that help the reader to imagine the sights in Father's childhood home.

"She sees a pink cloud of flamingos rippling up from a dark blue lake, wrinkling the pale cloth of the evening sky."

"When evening comes, soft as a curtain closing."

"sunsets were bright borders on the cloth of the evening sky. The moon and the stars burned holes in the cloth to light the night."

Explain that the difference between a metaphor and simile is the word like or as in a simile.

Go outside at dusk and notice the sunset, the clouds, any birds or water, the trees. Think of this scene as a piece of cloth. Repeat the above phrases to the children. Now imagine together what type of cloth your scene is made of. Make a word bank. You might have words like pale, worn, bright, wrinkled (yes you can copy the words you like from the author), velvety, smooth, etc. From a magazine cut letters and glue your words together on colorful cardstock or paper. Save these for a collage.

The next day, write your own similes or metaphors. Type these and arrange in your own book of the "Evening Sky." If you'd like, use watercolor paper and paint a simple background for your pages with a wash (see Art lessons). Paint the page with water and apply the paint to the paper letting it flow around in the water and mingle with 2 or 3 colors.

Copywork

When I close my eyes and think about the descriptions of the valley and the mountains in Ethiopia, I think of the Garden of Eden. This is why I picked this

Scripture verse to copy: Genesis 1: 31-- "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day."

Geography and Social Studies

Africa: Ethiopia

Desta's classmate tells her that Africa is hot and dry. Father remembers a different Africa, one with "cool nights," "muddy pools," and a "thick cloud of fog." Teach children that the continent of Africa is diverse. It is made up of many land features, cultures, tribes, languages and histories. A mountainous area called the Ethiopian Plateau dominates Ethiopia. Through the center of this mountain, from northeast to southwest, runs the Great Rift Valley. Here, two sections of the Earth's crust, called tectonic plates, meet, and you'll find volcanoes, gorges and lakes there. In the southwest there is a lowland at the base of the mountains but it is sparsely populated. Addis Ababa is the capital. Another Jane Kurtz book about a boy who lives there is *Only a Pigeon*.

Landforms

Define these words found in Faraway Home:

Mountain

Waterfall

Rivers

Lakes

Immigration and History

Make a Venn diagram showing the similarities and differences between Father's and Desta's childhoods. Compare and contrast your childhood and your child's own life, even if you are both from the same place.

African Cooking and Culture

Check out *Cooking the East African Way* by Bertha Vining Montgomery and Constance Nabwire from the library. There are only a couple of Ethiopian recipes

but there is a good description of East African cooking as well as the feasts when special foods are prepared.

The staple food of Ethiopia is *Injera*, a flat bread made of *teff*. Teff is a small grain that can't be found in the United States. Any Injera recipe you try will use a substitution for teff, so it will not be exactly like the Injera found in Ethiopia but still similar.

The Ethiopian national dish is called *wat*. It is a hot spicy stew accompanied by Injera. There are many varieties of wat, e.g. chicken, beef, lamb, vegetables, lentils, and ground split peas stewed with hot spice called *berbere*.

Bunna (coffee) is a popular beverage. In a traditional "coffee ceremony," the coffee is first roasted, then ground and placed in a Jebena (coffee pot) with boiling water. When ready it is served to people in little cups, up to three times per ceremony.

In Ethiopia, Orthodox Christians fast from meat and dairy products (i.e. egg, butter, milk, and cheese) on Wednesdays and Fridays except the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost, the Fast of the Prophets, the fast of Nineveh, Lent, the Fast of the Apostles and the fast of the Holy Virgin Mary. During these times vegetarian meals such as lentils, ground split peas, grains, fruit, varieties of vegetable stew accompanied by injera are eaten.

If you want to try Injera topped with stew for dinner here is a recipe. Remember to use the bread as your plate and fork and eat it as you go!

Injera Bread

Combine:

1 cup Buckwheat Pancake Mix

1 cup BISCUIT MIX

1 EGG

Add: 1 Tbs. OIL

1 1/2-2 cups WATER to obtain an easy pouring consistency. Bring a 10-inch skillet or a handled griddle pan to medium heat uniformly over the flame. Do not let the pan get too hot. Spread 1/2 tsp. OIL over the pan with a brush. Fill a measuring cup

(with spout) or a large cream pitcher with batter. Pour the mixture on the hot pan or griddle in a thin stream starting from the outside and going in circles to the center from left to right. As soon as it bubbles uniformly all over remove from heat. Pancakes should be 9 inches in diameter. Place the pan in an oven at 325° for about 1 minute until the top is dry but not brown. Arrange the five pancakes overlapping each other so as to completely cover a fifteen-inch tray, thus forming the Injera "tablecloth."

This unleavened bread of Ethiopia is really a huge pancake made by the women in special large pans with heavy covers. The Tef batter is saved from an earlier baking and added to the new batter to give it a sourdough quality. It is poured at a thin consistency and baked covered so that the bottom of the pancake does not brown. The top should be full of air holes before the pancake is covered. The heavy cover steams the pancake so that when it is finished it looks like a huge thin rubber sponge. Since Tef is not available here, we had to find simulate Injera. The combination of buckwheat flour mix and biscuit mix seems to produce the closest substitute. Making it is easy, but getting the Injera texture takes a bit of experimentation; it is important to cook the pancake at just the right temperature.

Human Relationships: Emotions

Jane Kurtz wrote *Faraway Home* as a way of expressing her homesickness for Ethiopia. [You can read about it at her website.](#)

Fear: a feeling of anxiety caused by the presence of imminence of danger or an emotion felt about the unknown

Worry: to feel uneasy or concerned about something; be troubled.

Discuss these emotions. Talk about how Desta felt relieved and safe after she learned more about where her father was going. Sometimes when we have a fear, learning more from our parents and talking things over with them is how God comforts and calms us.

Math

Faraway Home begins in the afternoon, then the story is set in the evening, the following morning, afternoon and finally nighttime. There are 24 hours in each day. Discuss evening, dusk, night, morning, afternoon. Talk about what times these are.

You could make a few pie charts, dividing the day by 2, 3, and 4. Color each section according to whether it is morning, noon or night.

Nature and Science

African Animals: Animals that live in the valley include Hyenas, Flamingoes and Hippopotamuses. Learn more about each of these animals.

Here are some great books about Hyenas and Flamingoes:

Hyenas by Kevin Holmes

Pinduli by Janell Cannon.

Hungry Hyena by Mwenye Hadithi

Flamingos by Don Patton (this one has some great photos)

*Do a search at the library for videos about these animals.

Night Sky: The Ethiopian night sky illustration in Faraway Home shows the actual location of the stars. Compare your night sky to the one in the picture and see how it is different from the night sky at your house.

Art

Medium- Watercolor: E. B. Lewis has painted some stunning and realistic watercolors for this book. Experiment with watercolors, using them wet and then dry (with no water on the paper). I think the colors of the sunset might be fun for children to try. They might also want to try a pink flamingo. Some children are afraid to try drawing. Let them try what they're comfortable with even if they only want to paint a wash across the page.

Watercolor Wash:

idea adapted from www.make-stuff.com

Supplies:

Crayola crayons

Water color paper

Water color paints

Water color brushes

Cup of Water

Tell your student to draw a picture with crayon. Dip your brush in water and lightly wet the paper. Then paint over it with watercolors. The paint should be very watery, not too thick. This will create a nice "wash" effect. The paint will fill in everywhere except where the crayon is.

Variations:

Use a white crayon for your picture or design. Since it's harder to see white crayon on white paper, try tracing your design/picture lightly with pencil first.

Lay your paper flat on a textured surface such as a tree, sidewalk, brick wall, etc.

Rub the crayon over the paper for a texture "rubbing". Then use the watercolor wash.

Take your washes and the similes you put together from magazine letters and make a collage. Make your base out of poster board. Cut or tear your washes and use other materials as you wish. If you decide to make scenery place your watercolor pieces and other materials and then use magazine pictures of African animals and land features. Ms. Kurtz gives many images of cloth and softness so you might want to try incorporating cloth into your artwork. Place your similes around the edges, at the bottom or angled across the middle.

Color mixing: A tint is a color with white mixed in. A shade is a color with black mixed in. Take a paper plate and some acrylic or poster paints and put a few dots of a sunset color around the edges. Put black and white in the middle. Use Q-tips, paintbrushes, etc. see how many tints and shades you can make. Even then you will not have anywhere close to the amount of colors found in a real sunset!

Materials and information may be used for your own personal and school use.

Material may not be used for resale or shared electronically.

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Land Forms Flap Book

Cut on solid lines. Fold on dotted. Record definitions under the flaps.

mountain



waterfall



lake



river



Similes and Metaphors

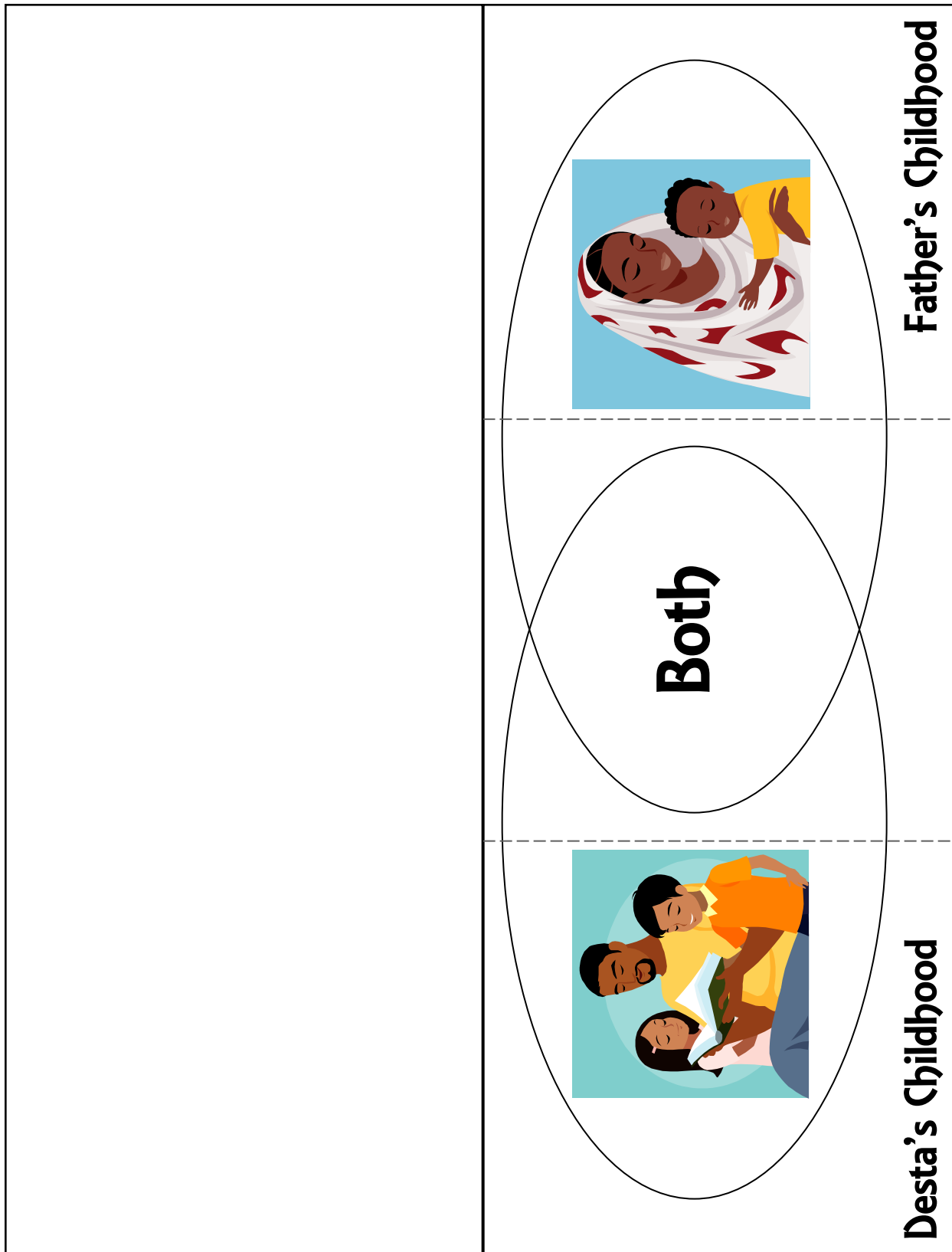
Similes and Metaphors



Directions: Stack pages together with cover on top and staple at the top of the book.

[illegible]

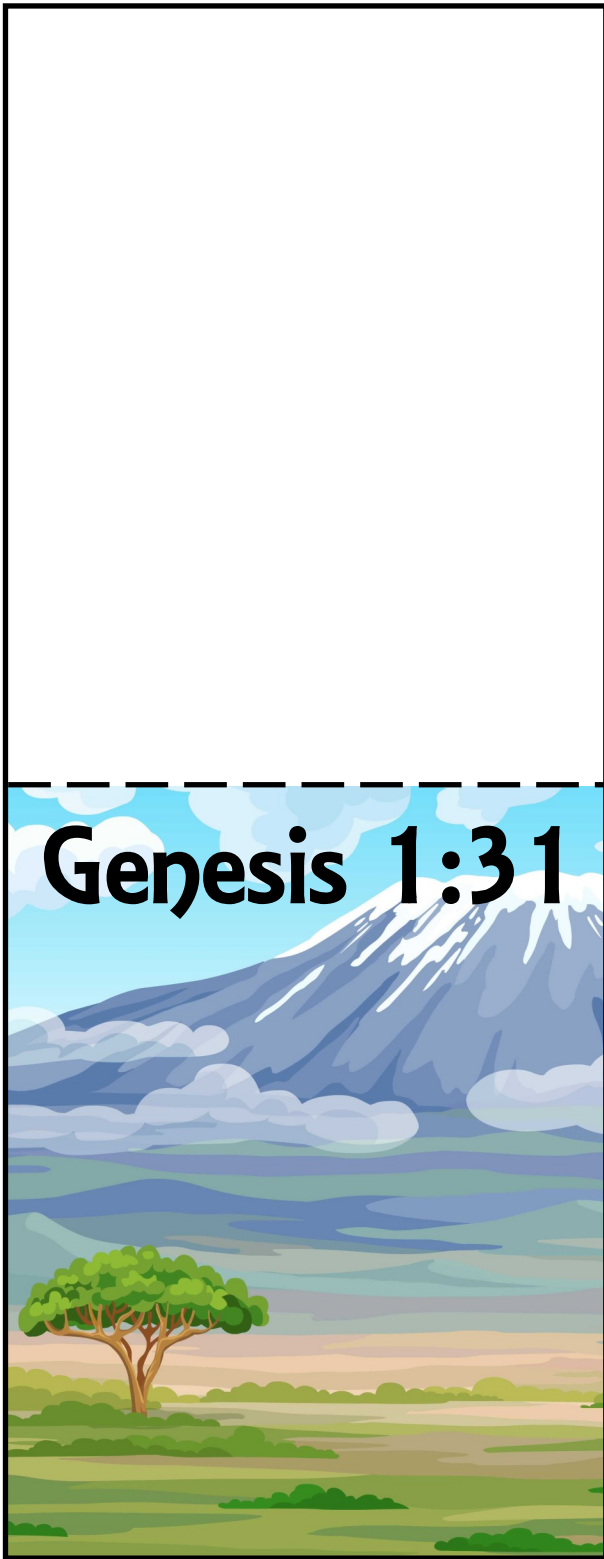
Cut out book as one piece. Fold in half on the black line. Cut on the dotted lines to form three flaps.



Cut out top portion as one piece. Cut out long rectangle with an exacto knife. Cut out bottom portion as one piece. Cut on blue lines. Roll up bottom portion and stick them through the rectangle on the top portion.

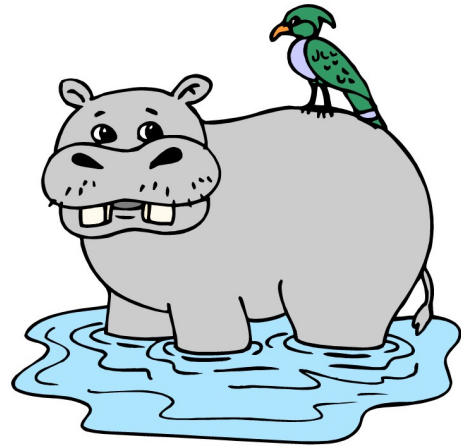
Hyena Facts





Cut book out as one piece. Fold in half.
Write Genesis 1:31 inside the book.

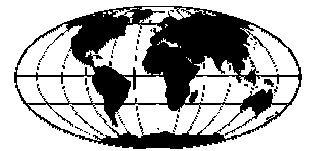
Hippo Facts



Cut book out.
Fold on lines (matchbook style).

Is
Ethiopia?

Where
in
the
World. . .



What continent is Ethiopia on?

Find Ethiopia on the map and color it in.

Cut out shutter book and map on solid lines.
Fold shutter book on dotted lines so that words
are on cover. Glue map into book under shutters.