

Simple Literature No. 83: Curriculum for
The Drinking Gourd

by S. Seifert

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How to Use This Curriculum

- 1.** Have students read the assigned sections for 20 to 30 minutes each day.
- 2.** When students have finished the assigned sections, ask the **Comprehension Questions**. A study guide worksheet is available for practice, but an oral discussion is appropriate for this age group.
- 3.** When you have finished discussing the comprehension questions, have students **Write a Paragraph**. Students should write in complete sentences, spell words correctly, capitalize the first letter of every sentence, and place a period at the end of each sentence.
- 4.** Although these guidelines work for this age group, remember that your students are individuals. Therefore, adjust the curriculum to your students' abilities and personalities.

Did you find something confusing, or are you excited about the curricula? You can contact us through <http://home.rmi.net/~seifert/id51.html>.

Although the number of e-mails received does not allow me to respond personally, every e-mail is read and appreciated.

If you want to view an alphabetical list of titles that have free comprehension questions, go to <http://home.rmi.net/~seifert/id50.html>.

S. Seifert

Curriculum for *The Drinking Gourd* by F.N. Monjo

OVERVIEW

1. Have students read the following sections: guides while they are reading the book.
 - Day one – Chapters 1 and 2
 - Day two – Chapters 3 and 4
 - Day three – Chapters 5 and 6
 - Day four – Write a paragraph
 2. When students have finished reading the assigned sections, ask the comprehension questions (study guide questions). If you assigned the written study guides, students may read their answers from them.
 3. Prompt students to write a paragraph.
- Study guides for this book are available. If you assign them, let students complete the study

SUMMARY of Chapters 1 and 2:

Tommy Fuller is in the gallery with the other children at church, and his parents and Grandmother Dudley are below him in the main part of the church with the other adults. He ties an apple core to fishing line and throws it out the church window. A goose bites it and makes a lot of noise as does the rest of the flock. The noise stops the service. Reverend Morse asks Tommy's father to parent his son. Mr. Fuller takes Tommy out of church and tells his son to go home and wait in his room. As Tommy walks home, he thinks about the spanking he will get.

At home, Tommy gives each horse an apple and sees a wagon full of hay. He goes up to the hayloft to jump on the hay in the wagon and hears the cry of a baby. He finds a family of slaves that his father has hidden in their hayloft. The family wants to go to Canada. They have used the stars in the sky, the big dipper, which looks like a drinking gourd, for direction. The front of the gourd points to the North star, which points the way to Canada. When Mr. Fuller returns home, Thomas helps him hitch up the horses to take the family on the next leg of their journey.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS for Chapters 1 and 2:

1. What did Tommy do at church? Tommy sat in the church's gallery by an open window. He tied an apple core to fishing line and threw it out of the window. A goose bit into the core and tried to fly, but the fishing line held the goose in place. That goose and its flock made a lot of noise, which disrupted the church service. Reverend Morse asked Mr. Fuller to take care of the problem and his son.
2. Tommy fed the horses. He heard a sound. Who was in the barn? Tommy found a family of runaway slaves from the Carolinas hiding in his family's hayloft. There was Big Jeff, Little Jeff, Vinnie, and Baby Pearl.
3. What had his father done? Mr. Fuller had hidden a family of runaway slaves in the hayloft of the barn. When Mr. Fuller returned from church, he asked Tommy to help him hitch up the horses because the runaway family had to be moved. If they stayed in one place too long, the law might catch them and send them back to the people who supposedly owned them.

SUMMARY for Chapters 3 and 4:

Tommy and his father drive the hay wagon toward the river with Big Jeff's family hidden in the hay. Big Jeff's family is headed to Canada through the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad is made up of a group of individuals who hide runaway slaves and help them get to their next contact point. The Fuller barn is one of those stops. Mr. Fuller asks Jeff to promise not to tell anyone about Big Jeff and his family. When they reach the river, Tommy's father leaves to find the boat the family will use for the next stage of

their trip. Four men on horses come up to Tommy, who is with the hay wagon. They want to search Tommy's wagon. The marshal recognizes Tommy as being Deacon Fuller's son and being in trouble for his antics at church. He thinks Tommy is running away because he does not want a spanking. The men laugh but they tell him to go home and take his punishment.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS for Chapters 3 and 4:

1. What was the Underground Railroad? The Underground Railroad was a secret group of people who helped runaway slaves travel north to Canada. People in it hid and helped others reach their destination. The people who helped were likened to conductors and the slaves were the passengers.

2. Tommy and his father drove the hay wagon. Why did his father leave it? Tommy's father left the hay wagon to find the boat that Big Jeff's

family would use for the next stage of their trip.

3. Tommy saved Big Jeff. He saved Big Jeff's family. How did he do it? When the marshal and his men asked to search the hay wagon, Tommy confessed to being a runaway. They recognized Tommy as Deacon Fuller's son and didn't think that someone in as much trouble as he was would hide runaway slaves. Tommy did lie by saying that the slaves weren't in the wagon. Discuss how he could have saved Big Jeff's family without lying.

SUMMARY of Chapters 5 and 6:

Everyone is relieved that the marshal and his men left. Mr. Fuller tells Tommy to drive the wagon back to the farm by himself. Mr. Fuller rows Big Jeff's family across the river in the boat. By the time Tommy arrives home, only his mother is awake. He tells her what happened. Then he waits in his room for his father to get home. When his father arrives, he speaks with Tommy about how they both had broken the law that day. His father emphasizes that it is important to keep the laws of the land, but that he cannot keep that law. He wants that law to change and all slaves to be free. Jeff and Vinnie are people, not someone's property. That is why Tommy's father refuses to keep the law. Tommy agrees with him.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS for Chapters 5 and 6:

1. What did Mr. Fuller do? What did Tommy do? Mr. Fuller rowed Big Jeff and his family across the river. Tommy drove the family's hay wagon home.

2. What did Tommy do when he arrived home? Tommy told his mother what had happened. Then he went to his room and waited for his father to return. If there is time, compare how this waiting for his father was different than his waiting for his father after church.

3. Why didn't Mr. Fuller keep the law? Mr. Fuller obeyed all his country's laws except the one that said he had to return runaway slaves to their masters. He saw slaves—Big Jeff, Vinnie, Little Jeff, and Baby Pearl—as people, not someone's property. Therefore, in good conscience, he had to protect them, even if it meant not keeping the law. If there is time, compare the difference between Tommy breaking a rule at church and his breaking the law to save Big Jeff's family—the risks, consequences, and results.

WRITE A PARAGRAPH

Have students relate one aspect of *The Drinking Gourd* to their own lives by writing a paragraph: People are important, no matter their race, culture, or nationality. Mr. Fuller and Tommy risked their lives to treat Big Jeff, Vinnie, and their kids in the same way the Fullers would want to be treated by others. Think about the people you know. What can you do to treat one person you know better and show him or her that he or she is important to you and valuable as a human being? Write about the difficulties you may have doing this and what you hope will happen as a result of your actions.

Name _____ Date _____

Study Guide for Chapters 1 and 2
The Drinking Gourd by F.N. Monjo

Instructions: Write your answers in the spaces below.

1. What did Tommy do at church?

2. Tommy fed the horses. He heard a sound. Who was in the barn?

3. What had his father done?

Name _____ Date _____

Study Guide for Chapters 3 and 4
The Drinking Gourd by F.N. Monjo

Instructions: Write your answers in the spaces below.

1. What was the Underground Railroad?

2. Tommy and his father drove the hay wagon. Why did his father leave it?

3. Tommy saved Big Jeff. He saved Big Jeff's family. How did he do it?

Name _____ Date _____

Study Guide for Chapters 5 and 6
The Drinking Gourd by F.N. Monjo

Instructions: Write your answers in the spaces below.

1. What did Mr. Fuller do? What did Tommy do?

2. What did Tommy do when he arrived home?

3. Why didn't Mr. Fuller keep the law?