

Teaching Guide

Prepared by

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ABOUT THE BOOK

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Age: 8+ | Grade 3+

Kailash Satyarthi has fought injustice his whole life. As a young boy, he raised money for poor children so they could attend school. As a teen, he fought caste discrimination by sharing a meal with "untouchables." As an adult, he has fought against child labor, rescuing over a hundred thousand children. In 2014, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize alongside Malala Yousafzai. This inspiring picture book shows that anyone can strive for change and make a difference.

Themes

Social justice & Activism | Prejudice & Discrimination | Child labor & Social issues

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Srividhya Venkat is the author of several picture books, including *Girls on Wheels* (RISE: A Feminist Project 2024) and *Dancing in Thatha's Footsteps* (South Asia Book Award 2022). Having grown up in India and lived across three countries, she loves stories that are unique, yet universal. Srividhya longs for a world where everyone will be like the hummingbird in *Seeker of Truth* (Starred Review from School Library Journal), doing their bit to make a difference. When not reading or writing, she loves to listen to music, tinker with new recipes, and explore the world outside her window. She currently resides in the Chicago area with her family. Learn more about her at www.srividhyavenkat.com

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Danica da Silva Pereira is an illustrator born and bred in the tropical state of Goa, India, and currently based in the historical town of Cambridge, UK. After completing her BA in Fine Arts, she worked as a graphic designer and illustrator. Danica has recently graduated with an MA in Children's Book Illustration from Cambridge School of Art, UK. Her work is influenced by documentaries, and she is passionate about representing diversity and advocating for environmental causes. See more of her work at danicadasilvapereira.com. Originally from Bombay, she was born again in New York City, when she moved to pursue an MFA in Design from the School of Visual Arts. Growing up, she's always loved children's books, (devouring a book a day), but never quite knew it could be 'real job'. She lives in NYC with her husband, their kids and Chewbacca, the dog who (like Ferdinand) loves to smell flowers.

READING COMPREHENSION

BEFORE READING

Use the cover to develop background knowledge by posing questions such as:

- What do you think is the meaning of the title “Seeker of Truth”?
- What do you think is the meaning of “child labor”?
- Do you think this book is fiction or nonfiction?
- What do you think Kailash Satyarthi did in his fight to end child labor?
- Do you think child labor exists today?
- Can you think of someone else you know who fought to end a problem?

Set a purpose for reading

- Who is Kailash Satyarthi?
- Why did he fight against child labor?
- Did he face obstacles along the way?
- How has he made an impact in the world?
- While reading *Seeker of Truth*, encourage students to take notes using the suggested table format below. Pause before each page turn to add notes to the columns. This table can also be worked on as a class.

WHAT WE LEARNED	QUESTIONS WE HAVE	ANSWERS WE FOUND

VOCABULARY:

Seeker of Truth contains several words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students.

Some of these could be reviewed with the students based on their prior knowledge:

Caste system - (*see back matter for detailed note*) a social hierarchy where a person's social class is decided by birth and is often hereditary.

Exploitation - treating someone unfairly to benefit from their work

Illuminating - making something visible or clear

Inspiration - the process of being encouraged to do something

Labor - work that involves physical effort

Mines - digging the earth to get minerals or coal

Non-negotiable - something that cannot be changed by discussion

Persistent - continuing to do something despite problems

Poverty - not having enough money to afford basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, and education

Prosperity - being successful, having sufficient money

Quarries - large, deep pits from which stone or other materials are removed

Quest - long search for something

Shackles - chains or fetters that restrict free movement

Shunned - to deliberately avoid or ignore someone or something

Slavery - owning a person as property and making them work

Untouchable - a person belonging to the lowest social class of traditional Hindu social hierarchy.

Violence - using physical force to hurt or damage someone or something

Vision - having an idea or future image of something or someone

AFTER READING

Use these questions to further students' comprehension:

- What was the story Kailash heard when he was little?
- What was so special about the hummingbird?
- What did Kailash see on his way to school?
- Who is a cobbler? Why was the cobbler's son not going to school?
- How did Kailash help other children who could not go to school?
- Who were the "untouchables" and why were they mistreated?
- Why is it important for everyone to get respect?
- Why did Kailash invite leaders for a meal cooked by the "untouchables"?
- Why was he not allowed inside his house after he ate the meal cooked by the "untouchables"?
- When he grew up, why did Kailash quit his job as a teacher?
- Why did Kailash change his last name?
- At first, what did he do to help others? Why?
- Who came knocking on Kailash's door? Why?
- Why did Kailash want to do more than just write about Waasal Khan's daughter?
- Who tried to stop Kailash from rescuing children who were forced to work?
- How did Kailash help the rescued children?
- How was Kailash similar to the hummingbird?
- How was Kailash's life's work recognized?
- What did Kailash say when he won the award?

ACTIVITIES

English Language Learners (ELL)

- ELL students are paired up with strong English readers to read the story together. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
- Each student writes three questions about the story. Then students are paired up to discuss the answers to those questions.
- Students can work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or main events.
- Students write a short summary or opinion about what they have read.
- Students give a short talk on Kailash Satyarthi and why his work is important.
- Students draw a dream or goal of their own and why it's important to them.
- Students give a short talk about what they think Kailash's message is.
- Review vocabulary (content-specific and academic words) with students based on their prior knowledge. Have them make predictions about word meanings, look up words and definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence using the word.

Social and Emotional Learning:

It is important for students to be aware of their emotions and regulate them for healthy development. Apart from developing an understanding of their own feelings, socio-emotional learning helps them to develop empathy for others and to build and maintain

relationships. Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book:

- What prompted Kailash to do something to help other children who were not going to school?
- Why was Kailash trying to help those who were called “untouchables”? Why was his family and community angry when he ate a meal cooked by the “untouchables”?
- What do you think it must be like when you do something that you think is right, but those around you disagree with your actions? Has this ever happened to you and how did you handle it? If this were to happen to you, how would you handle it?
- How did Kailash overcome the obstacles on his path to help others?
- Select an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, frustration, hope, and so on. Draw or act out what that emotion looks like in *Seeker of Truth*.

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Study biographies of other inspiring figures. Ask students to compare the writing styles of the authors. Why do they think the authors chose to write their respective biographies?
- Using what students learn from the biography study, have them select a person of color and write their own biography about the person.
- Ask students to make a list of five questions they would ask Kailash Satyarthi. (this could be a class discussion).
- Kailash started a magazine called *Sangharsh Jaari Rahega* (or The Struggle Shall Continue) to share stories about the struggles of underprivileged people. How does writing such stories help? Ask students to write down their observations

about a school activity or event. Then have them write a short article or draw a picture about what they witnessed.

Social Studies

- Create protest signs with students – have them add their own cause or goal to the signs. What are they passionate about that they could include on their signs?
- Write a letter to Kailash, thanking him for making a difference in the lives of thousands of people. Include what you thought was inspirational in the story. Give an example of how you plan to make a difference for others in your school or community.
- Divide the class into small groups and have them research other activists today – have them identify their causes and why they chose them? What are their accomplishments? What is their current work? How did they raise awareness about their causes? Students can share about the activist they studied and their findings with the class.
- Interview someone in your community who you think makes a positive impact in the lives of others and then write a report about your findings. What are this person’s contributions and how have they impacted the community at large? What innovative methods did the person use to help others? Share any other interesting, relevant information.
- Kailash organized the Global March Against Child Labor in 1998 which eventually led to the passing of international laws against child labor. Why do protest marches happen and how do they help the cause? Ask students to research other protest marches in history, and to compare their similarities and differences.

Arts

- Ask students to make a list of questions to ask the illustrator.

- Ask students to create collage illustrations that represent causes they are passionate about.
- Ask students to select an illustration from *Seeker of Truth* and reflect on it. What stood out to them? How did it make them feel? What did it make them think about?

School-Home Connection

- Ask students to create portraits of people who are their personal role models – through drawing, collage, or photographs. Ask them to describe what actions and qualities they admire in people. How do the people inspire them?
- Ask students to interview a parent, guardian, or an adult mentor about their experiences fighting for something or going through a hardship. How did the person react and handle situation and cope with obstacles. What advice does the person have for someone trying to take up a cause and stand up for justice today?

Reading Non-Fiction

Go back to the table (p.3) filled out earlier.

- Discuss the Questions column.
- Were any questions answered as the story went along? If so, ask students to find the answer within the text.
- Record the answers in the Answers column.
- For all remaining questions that are unanswered, assign research (through books or the internet) on specific questions, and record answers in the table when done.
- After the answers have been shared with the class, engage in a discussion on research practices –
 - What was most difficult about finding answers?
 - Was it easier to find answers in a book or on the Internet?
 - Which source is more reliable – the Internet or a printed book? Why?
 - How can you determine whether to trust a source?
 - What tips would you give someone who is about to do research?
- Explore the structure of the text – is it chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution?
- Why did the author adopt this structure and how does it compare with other biographies you've read?
- Read the Back Matter of *Seeker of Truth*.
 - Make a note of what information mentioned in the back matter was included in the story and what was not.
 - Why do you think the author chose to include certain information and leave out the other information to the back matter?
 - Choose three facts from the back matter that was not included in the story and explain why you think each was excluded.

HIGHER LEVEL THINKING

- What is the significance of the title: *Seeker of Truth*?
- Why do children need to play, laugh, and learn?
- Why did Kailash help rescue children who were forced to work?
- What kind of support did Kailash get in his fight to end child labor?
- What are some qualities you would use to describe Kailash? How would you explain his life and mission?
- How did Kailash show courage and perseverance? Why do you think he continued to fight for what he believed in, despite the risks?
- Were you reminded of other books while reading *Seeker of Truth*? Why did you make those connections?
- Did you make connections between *Seeker of Truth* and what you have seen in the news? Why?
- How has *Seeker of Truth* made an impact on your understanding of child labor and children's rights? Why does child labor need to end? Why is it important for children to go to school?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- What do you think is the author's message to readers?
- Why do you think the author chose to begin with the hummingbird story and used the repetitive refrain - "Little by little, drop by drop." throughout the book?
- What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Kailash's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you? Have you fought for anything you believed in? How would you stand up for yourself if you feel like you've been unfairly treated? How would you stand up for others if you see them being unfairly treated?
- Over time, Kailash garnered support in his battle against child labor. Why is support essential? Think about the people in your life who have given

you their support. How have they helped you overcome problems and challenges?

- Is there a change you would like to see in your school or community?
How can you be an advocate for that change?

COMPARISON: Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi

Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi were co-winners of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize "for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education."

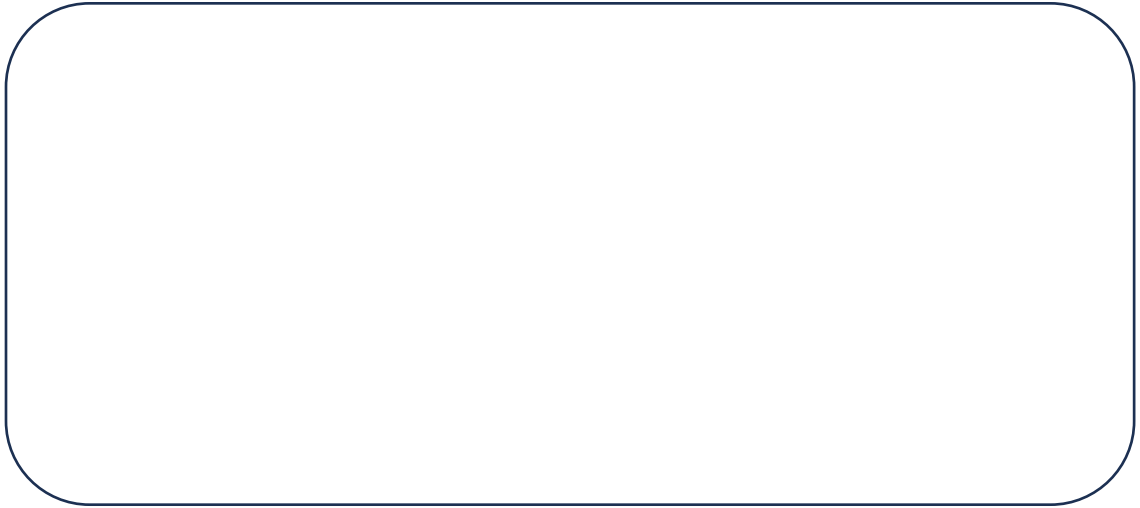
- Research or read a picture book about Malala Yousafzai.
- Compare the stories of Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai. How were they similar? How were they different?
- Discuss findings in the classroom.

BE A CHANGEMAKER

Kailash thinks it's unfair that some children are forced to work and cannot go to school.

What is something you've seen or experienced that you think is unfair?

Write or draw about it.



Kailash took action to help children and families in need.

How can you help make change happen?

Write or draw about it.



RESEARCH TEMPLATE - Notes about Subject of Biography

Name of Subject:

**Photo
or
Draw a picture**

Life-changing event(s)

Interesting Facts

Impact of Subject's Work

Accomplishments