

Thematic Unit: *Baby* by Patricia MacLachlan
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♥ **Introduction of the unit to the class**

As an introduction of the unit, I will remind the students that poetry is used to create beautiful and powerful impressions. I will review poetry from a previous lesson. I will read the poem, *What is a baby?* by Dianna Wilder. I will then bring in a real life baby all bundled up in a basket. (I will have the mother of the baby present in the classroom to take care of her while I am conducting the rest of the lesson.) I will ask the class, “Does anyone here have a baby brother, sister, or cousin”? “Do you know someone that has a baby”? I would then continue to explain that a baby is an enormous responsibility. I will talk about sacrifices that people must make in order to care for another human being, and that babies are totally dependant on their caregivers. We will discuss that baby’s need food, shelter, clothing, and love. We will also discuss memories and feelings that people acquire from being a part of a family.

♥ **Identification and summary of the focus book**

The focus book for this unit plan is *Baby* by Patricia MacLachlan:

MacLachlan, P. (1993). *Baby*. New York: Dell.

An abandoned baby girl (Sophie) is left on twelve-year-old Larkin’s doorstep with a note from the mother stating that her baby needs the care of a compassionate family and that she will return one day for her. With the recent death of Larkin’s baby brother, Larkin and her caring family take on the

responsibility of caring for this child with guarded hearts; none wanting to become attached because of the anticipated pain from the loss of yet another human being. Larkin and her parents have not talked about their grief from the loss of their baby; but eventually allow themselves to open their hearts and love baby Sophie. The family slowly opens up and learns to communicate their feelings of grief through words, poetry, dancing, and most of all family experiences. Larkin and her family learn that losing someone is a difficult and lengthy journey. They learn to heal, accept, and resolve their loss in order to move on and live a healthy, happy life with each other.

♥ **At least 15 related books, including novels, fiction picture books, and informational/bibliography.**

CODES:

♣ **Informational**

♦ **Novel**

♠ **Picture book**

• **Biography**

♣ Breman, J. (2002). *Marine Geography: GIS for the oceans and seas*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press.

• Clymer, W. (1973). *Robert Frost, a bibliography*. NY: R. West Publishing.

♠ Cunha, F. (2006). *My very own lighthouse*. Tunbridge, Wells Kent TN4 8HT: WingedChariot Press.

♠ Dillon, D. & Dillon, L. (2002). *Rap a tap tap*. NY: Blue Sky Press.

• Ebisch, W. (1968). *Shakespeare bibliography*. North Stratford, NH: Ayer Co

Publishing.

- ♠ Frasier, D. (1998). *Out of the ocean book: A picture with treasure bag and ocean journal*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- ♣ Gray, A. (1998). *The souls of your feet: A tap dance guide book for rhythm explorers*. Austin, TX: Grand Weaver's Publishing.
- ♠ Gryte, M. (1988). *No new baby: For siblings who have a brother or sister die before birth*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corporation.
- ♦ MacLachlan, P. (1985). *Sarah, plain and tall*. NY: HarperTrophy.
- ♦ MacLachlan, P. (1997). *Skylark*. NY: HarperTrophy.
- ♦ MacLachlan, P. (2005). *More perfect than the moon*. NY: HarperTrophy.
- ♣ MacPherson, K. (2006). *Landscape painting inside and out: Capture the vitality of outdoor painting in your studio with oils*. Cincinnati, OH: North Light Books.
- ♠ Mitchell, G. (1992). *Strawberry Drums*. London NW1 3BH: Hodder Wayland Publishing group.
- ♣ Paulson, D. (2005). *Shorebirds of North America: The photographic guide*. NJ: Princeton University Press.
- ♠ Yolen, J. (1999). *Bird watch: A book of poetry*. NY: Putnam.

♥ **At least five related poems.**

The Silent Sea

" Shades of green and aqua blue
The sea painted a thousand hues
Beneath thundering ocean wave

Out of the reach of mariners graves
A living testimony swims in majesty
once the rulers of the sea
A whale song rings from beneath the ocean
A song of praise and true devotion
To the God of creation and of the sea
A sea being robbed by cruel thieves
The whale song drifts silently away
The hands of man have silenced their praise
As God looks down in his majesty
As tears trickle down on the silent sea. "

By: Debi Fields

Retrieved from: http://www.poetseers.org/poem_of_the_day_archive/poems-sea

A Baby's Cry Among the Ruin

by Ellen Dubois

Sometimes the world we live in is uncertain
in a moment what's known can slip away.
And we feel as we walk among the ruin
our hope dwindle as we greet the coming day.
Faces full of tears, such pain and desperation
you can almost feel it blowing in the air.
Clouds billowing, a cold and sad reminder
of what stood, but is no longer there.
Hands out reaching to soothe the broken hearted
we can't see beyond the tears for the lost souls.
Terror's wrath forever etched inside our hearts now
we question if we ever will feel whole.
And then I heard a baby's cry among the ruin
as I thought about that tiny, gentle life
my heart told me that we could not let this wee one
grow up in a world of terror, fear and strife.
So we must gather round the waterfall of our tears
and hold each other's hearts within our own.
The children of tomorrow must feel safe here
for there still is no place dearer than our home.
In this great country they will never walk alone.
We will dig our way through acts of pure destruction
eyes full of tears but heads held high with pride.
And though tomorrow seems like it will take forever
the sun will rise on this great country, freedom shines.

When I lay my weary head upon my pillow
and pray to God to help us as we grieve.
I have to know within my heart that we'll recover
if I don't, what are the young ones to believe?
And then I heard a baby's cry among the ruin
as I thought about that tiny, gentle life
my heart told me that we could not let this wee one
grow up in a world of terror, fear and strife.
So we must gather round the waterfall of our tears
and hold each other's hearts within our own.
The children of tomorrow must feel safe here
for there still is no place dearer than our home.
In this great country they will never walk alone.

Retrieved from: <http://www.grieflossrecovery.com/grief-poems/dubois03.html>

What is a Baby?

A baby is someone to hold in your arms
and someone so cute and full of charm.
Someone to plan the future for;
it's someone to love and adore.

It's someone to call your very own
who'll turn your house into a home.
Instead of two they'll be three--
and that makes a family!

Someone to keep you up at night
and someone who will sometimes fight.
Someone who'll get sick and cry
but for that someone you would die.

What is a baby?

A baby's full of wiggles and life,
but will sometime cause lots of strife.
Your life will be changed forever
but it's by far life's greatest endeavor.

Frazzeled nerves that come undone,
it's a lot of work and not just fun.
But it's a bond that's like no other,
the strongest love between child and mother!

So as I watch you become a mother,
I may offer advice but promise not to hover.
A girl or boy it doesn't matter

for soon little feet will "pitter patter."

What is a baby?
All of this and more.
A bundle of joy to
love and adore!!

By Dianna Wilder

Retrieved from: <http://www.babysite.org/babysite/sidene/poems6.htm>

my silver Dancing shoes

The one regret I ever had in my life is that
I never put on a pair of tap-dancing shoes.
Oh how glorious that would have been;
silver dancing shoes with a leather buckle.
The first tap would have been the scariest,
knowing how awkward it always was for me to dance.
Maybe that is why I was afraid to try some on.
But after that I would have surely ventured a second tap.

The third picks me up by my ankles --
floating, sliding, dancing.
Right toe gives a staccato tap,
left heel down and holds me for a moment.
Click them together as I lift off again --
spinning, twisting, turning.
Four successive quarter notes,
a soft pause as I slowly descend again.

Once I had a dream that I was walking down a cobbled stone road.
And there was a man with a basket.
He was sitting quietly on the side of the road.
"What have you got inside of your basket, old man," I said.
"Only a pair of silver dancing shoes with a leather buckle," he said.
"Oh. That is rather neat," I said.
And in my dream I sat down next to him,
and we started wiping the dirt off of my feet.

By Charles Fry

Retrieved From: http://poems.frogcircus.org/frere/1996_11_12

Never Alone
by Rodney Belcher

I feel you in the morning
When at first I awake
Your thought is with me
With each decision I make

You'd been around forever
Since the first breath I took
Now I have to go on alone
But for love, I need not look

Cause by what you bestowed
In our short time together
Will last in my heart
Forever and ever

Although you've left
And now walk above
I'm never alone
I'm wrapped in your love

Enjoy now your long waited reward
Feel peace that your love continues on
What was taught to me, will be taught to mine
Cause you live on in me even after you've gone

Retrieved From: <http://www.netpoets.com/poems/death/1564001.htm>

♥ **Five Related Websites**

1. <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/ocean/>
2. <http://www.poetry.org/>
3. <http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/192>
4. <http://www.greglasley.net/shobirix.html>
5. http://www.healthyplace.com/Communities/depression/related/loss_grief.asp
6. <http://www.pbs.org/legendarylighthouses/>
7. <http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/crazyforyou/igotrhythm.htm>
8. <http://www.tapdance.org/>
9. <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=horseshoe+crabs>
10. <http://www.naic.edu/~gibson/pleiades/>

♥ **Presentation of Bibliographical Information (Above)**

♥ **Presentation of the word wall**

1. accordion
2. black bellied plover
3. breakwater
4. cavalry
5. Chickory
6. cormorant
7. crooned
8. cumulus
9. driftwood
10. dune
11. herring gull
12. hibernation
13. horseshoe crab
14. Juniper
15. kale
16. mahogany
17. mauve
18. meadowsweet
19. Pleiades
20. poinsettia
21. Provencal
22. redundancy
23. ringbill
24. sanderling
25. sandpiper
26. sarcasm
27. scaloppini
28. sea urchin
29. Shakespeare
30. slicker
31. soft shoe
32. sonnet
33. wistfully

♥ **Use of word wall:**

* The Students will write a reflection of a scene from the focus book in their journals using at least six words from the word wall.

* The students will write a poem using at least five words from the word wall

* The students will categorize the words from the word wall in a new way.

♥ **One Lesson Plan Using UPJ Format:**

(Attached) There are many references to music in this children's chapter book. I would have the students talk about music, sound, and then they will construct their own instrument to play their own music.

♥ **Related activities:**

After teaching the students about buoyancy for a science lesson, I would have the children create a sea shell collage as an art lesson. I could also have them create a mosaic out of beach glass as well.

For a math lesson, I could do measurement and have the students find out how far New England is from their hometown.

For a Language Arts lesson, I could have the students talk about their feelings with love and grief. I could assess for proper usage and grammar.

For a performing arts lesson, I could read the poem about tap dancing, and then I would teach the students how to tap dance.

For a science lesson, we could explore all of the different kinds of shorebirds, and we could get on a real time web site to actually view shorebirds in their nesting area.

For a life science activity, I could talk to the students about how fragile a human life is and how one must take good care of a baby. I will give them unfertilized chicken eggs for them to carry around, making sure that they do not drop it!

♥ **Inclusion of all six Language Arts:**

Reading: The focus book, the supplemental books, the poems, the websites

Writing: The word wall activities, the journal reflections, the poetry writing

Speaking: I would have a discussion on grief and losing a family member, I will have a discussion on family and love. I will have the students read their poems out loud if they chose to do so. I will also have the students act out a part of the book as a performing arts lesson. I will have the children sing “amazing grace”.

Viewing: I would have the students watch a video online about shorebirds. I will have the students view a National Geographic DVD about shorebirds. I would also have the students watch a tap dancing performance at a local performing arts center.

Visually Representing: I would have the students perform a tap dance. I would also have the students design color changing leaves, beach glass mosaics, and sea shell collages. I will also have the students make a landscape painting.

The students will also do a readers theater form a scene from the focus book.