

FAMILIES CHANGE. LOVE GROWS.



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION

About the Book

Love Like Sky takes readers on an endearing journey with G-baby and her “blended-up” family. G-baby lives with her little sister (Peaches), older stepsister (Tangie), mama, and stepfather (Frank) in the suburbs. Her parents’ divorce leaves G-baby missing Atlanta; her best friend, Nikki; and time with her father. G-baby attempts to gain acceptance from her new older sister, Tangie, but only receives rejection. Suddenly, her younger sister, Peaches, becomes very sick, which puts everyone in the family to the ultimate test. G-baby must find her inner strength, while each member of the family explores ways to communicate, forgive, love, and express their feelings.

Common Core Alignment

The book *Love Like Sky* provides a great opportunity to apply various comprehension skills related to the plot, theme, and character development. This discussion guide includes suggestions aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Reading: Literature and Speaking and Listening. Each question in this guide includes a reference for the Common Core strand, domain, and standard that is addressed. To support instruction or obtain additional information, visit the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) website www.corestandards.org.

Instructional note: During each of the activities, please encourage students to support their claims with evidence from the text and illustrations. Providing young learners with the opportunity to answer text-dependent questions is critical to success with Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Discussion Questions

Before Reading

- 1 What does it mean to be part of a family? Describe your family. Who are the members? What are the things that make your family unique and/or special? Traditions? People?
- 2 What is a “blended family”? What are the benefits and challenges of being part of a “blended family”? Can you think of ways your own family has changed over time (e.g., births, divorce, deaths, moves)? How did the changes make you feel? Why?

During Reading

- 1 Who are the members of G-baby’s family? How does each character embrace or struggle with being part of a “blended family”? Use story evidence to support your response. How is G-baby’s family similar to or different from yours? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, 6.1*)
- 2 G-baby is the narrator of the story; as you read, think about her perspective. What is her opinion of her family members and friends? How does her opinion influence the way characters or events are described? How might the book change if another character was the narrator? Use examples to support your response. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.6, 6.6*)
- 3 On page 3, Peaches says, “Do you think Tangie don’t like us ‘cause her real sister’s in heaven?” How does G-baby respond to the question? What does G-baby think about Tangie? Based upon the interactions, does Tangie dislike her new sisters? Why or why not? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.2, 6.2*)
- 4 When G-baby talks about love with Peaches, she explains, “It’s like sky . . .” (p. 21) What does this actually mean? Why is this phrase important to understanding the central message or theme of the book? Use evidence in your response. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, 6.1*)

- 5 What is your definition of “sisterhood”? What does it mean to be a “loving” or “good” sister? Is G-baby a good big sister? Why or why not? Is Tangie a good big sister? Why or why not? How does the relationship between G-baby, Peaches, and Tangie change throughout the chapters in the story? What events lead to the relationship changes? Use examples in your responses. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.5.5*)
- 6 Think about the chapter titled “Cause I’m Her Big Sister.” How does this chapter change the dynamic between Tangie and G-baby? How does the chapter contribute to the development of the story’s plot? Use story details in your answer. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.6.5*)
- 7 Morgan is mentioned often in the text through references from other characters. What happened to Morgan? How did it impact her family? Why is Morgan an important character? What can the reader learn about sisters from Tangie’s account of Morgan? Provide textual evidence. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, 6.1*)
- 8 Throughout the book Tangie talks about protesting and Roderick Thomas. She says, “Something’s gotta be done. The unfair cops can’t win. For every case that makes the news, hundreds like Roderick’s don’t.” (p. 235) What does it mean to be “unfair”? Think about current events; why are unfair police a concern? How should people respond when they believe that something is unjust? Why? (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.5.4*)
- 9 Kevin understands the challenges of sick family members. What difficulties does Kevin face with his mom? How does he deal with the issues? How do other characters in the book respond to family health struggles (e.g., Alzheimer’s, meningitis, asthma)? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, 6.1*)
- 10 When G-baby is worried about Peaches, Tangie says, “You’re praying and thinking about her every day, right, Georgie?” to which the nurse responds “That’s the best medicine.” (p. 108) Do you agree? In what other ways does G-baby want to help her sister? How can we help loved ones when they aren’t feeling well?

- 11 Mama once told G-baby that a best friend is “a relative that you make for yourself.” (p. 160) Do you agree? Why or why not? What makes the friendship between Nikki and G-baby special? How are the girls similar? How are they different? What types of tensions occur between them? Use examples. What types of issues arise in your friendships? How do you resolve those issues? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.3*)

- 12 Nikki believes that Lucinda is not a bully and frequently argues on her behalf. On page 145, she says, “I ain’t never heard of Lucinda taking anybody’s lunch money, or beating up nobody.” In what other ways can someone bully? Describe types of bullying. Based on Lucinda’s actions, is she a bully? Why or why not? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, 6.1*)

- 13 Peaches worries, “everybody was getting along ’cause I was sick. And that it wouldn’t stay that way.” (p. 294) How does G-baby respond during the conversation? Should G-baby share her concern? Why or why not? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, 6.1*)

After Reading

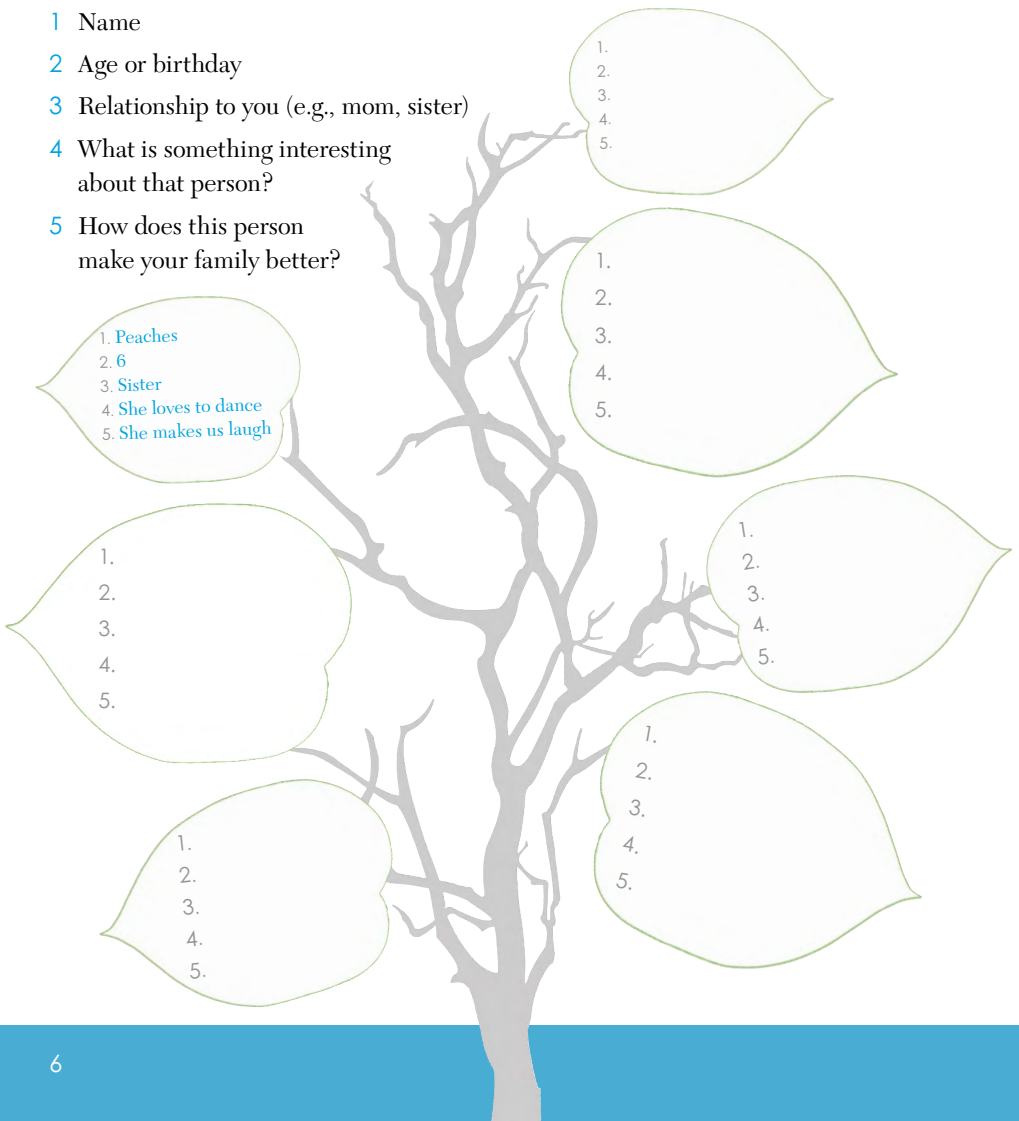
- 1 Think about the story. What are the specific challenges between Mama, Frank, Daddy, Millicent, Grandma Sugar, and Tangie? How do they help one another in times of difficulty? How did the events in each chapter bring the family members together? Provide textual evidence. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.5.5, 6.5*)

- 2 A theme is an important message or lesson that the reader can learn from reading a book. There are many themes in *Love Like Sky*. Based on the events, what is the most important theme from the story? Why? Which details from the story support the theme? (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.2, 6.2*)

Reproducible Family Activity

Create a tree of the people who you consider your family. Think about the different types of families highlighted in *Love Like Sky* as you construct your tree. You can include biological, blended, or even community family members. Be sure to provide the information outlined in items #1–5 about each person. When you finish, share your family tree and orally explain the importance of each person using specific details, clear speech, eye contact, and appropriate voice volume. (*Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: RL.5.4, 6.4*)

- 1 Name
- 2 Age or birthday
- 3 Relationship to you (e.g., mom, sister)
- 4 What is something interesting about that person?
- 5 How does this person make your family better?



About the Author

Leslie C. Youngblood received an MFA from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. A former assistant professor of creative writing at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, she has lectured at Mississippi State University, UNC Greensboro, and the University of Ghana at Legon.



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She's been awarded a host of writing honors, including a 2014 Yaddo's Elizabeth Ames Residency, the Lorian Hemingway Short Story Prize, a Hurston/Wright Fellowship, and the Room of Her Own Foundation's 2009 Orlando Short Story Prize. In 2010 she won the Go On Girl! Book Club Aspiring Writer Award. Born in Bogalusa, Louisiana, and raised in Rochester, she's fortunate to have a family of natural storytellers and a circle of supportive family and friends. *Love Like Sky* is her debut novel.



This guide was written by Dawn Jacobs Martin, PhD, who is an assistant clinical professor at University of Maryland, College Park. She works to improve the academic outcomes for students with disabilities through teacher development, instructional design, and research in the areas of response to intervention, social support, and parent involvement.

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Love Like Sky

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