

Family Paideia Seminar Plan

Text: **The Bike** by Gary Soto

Ideas, Values: Justice, Will, Truth, Punishment, Rules

Pre-Seminar Content

Big Ideas Chat:

When is the last time that you felt a rule was unnecessary, and you didn’t want to comply? Take a moment to think about how you felt and what you did. (Parents, if you are comfortable, share an anecdote from your experience.) Share with the group what you were thinking and what you did.

1st Read:

Read aloud the text while family and/or friends listen.

Vocabulary:

Check to see if there are any words that need to be talked about before the discussion begins. Listeners or readers can use context clues to help figure out possible definitions or use a dictionary or device to get a formal definition. Make sure to include: *scuttled, drenched, flitted, devious, curlers, tore, machinery, lather, gnashed, rupping*.

2nd Read:

Have another participant in the discussion to read the text aloud. Then talk about what the rider feels and thinks as the story moves along.

Pre-Seminar Process:

* Share why you are having the discussion.

(Sample script from our classroom Paideia Seminars: Modify to fit your household.)

*“A Paideia seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open ended questions.”*

*“The main purpose of seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the textual ideas and values, of ourselves, and of each other.”*

* Describe what you want to accomplish.
* Set a Family Goal.
* To balance the talk time
* To refer to the text
* To ask a question
* To speak out of uncertainty
* To build on others’ comments

Seminar Questions:

* Opening (Identify main ideas from the text):
  + What would be a better title for this story? Have younger kids share first if they feel comfortable and advance by age. (Don’t share your why until after everyone has had a chance to answer.)
  + Why did you pick that title? (Anyone can share)
* Core (Analyze textual details):
  + Do you think that the bike rider learned a lesson? (Did this happen before the mom’s punishment or after?) (Anyone can share)
  + How might the story have been different if the bike rider didn’t ride onto Sarah Street?
  + Why would the bike rider ask another child to ride over their leg?
  + Why do you think the mom would tell a story to the child about pointing at rainbows or dogs biting bike riders?
  + When in the story is there a change from the bike rider being daring to the bike rider being foolish? (reference the text)

* Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas):
  + If you could share this story with anyone who would it be? Why?

Post-Seminar Process:

*“Ask each person what they liked most about the discussion.”*

* Have the family do a quick check of the discussion goal.

Post Seminar Content:

* Transition to Writing:

Review and discuss key ideas that you heard, said and thought during the family seminar.

* Brainstorm:

Talk as a family about why we choose to not always listen to our parents?

How might you find a responsible way to advocate to a parent or teacher to have more freedom while doing something you enjoy? Make a list of pros and cons around if the added freedom is allowed.

* Writing:

Write a persuasive note to a parent or teacher sharing why you want this additional freedom at home or in class. Make sure to share ideas from your pros and cons list.

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

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\*Text is attached if open sourced.

\*Text is cited if it needs to be procured.

<https://www.ncps-k12.org/cms/lib8/CT01903077/Centricity/Domain/638/Short%20Story%20-%20The%20Bike.pdf>

The Bike by Gary Soto

My first bike got me nowhere, through the shadow I cast as I pedaled raced along my side. The leaves of bird-filled trees stirred a warm breeze and litter scuttled out of the way. Our orange cats looked on from the fence, their tails up like antennas. I opened my mouth, and wind tickled the back of my throat. When I squinted, I could see past the end of the block. My hair flicked like black fire, and I thought I was pretty cool riding up and down the block, age five, in my brother's hand-me-down shirt.

Going up and down the block was one thing, but taking the first curve, out of sight of Mom and the house, was another. I was scared of riding on Sarah Street. Mom said hungry dogs lived on that street, and red anger lived in their eyes. Their throats were hard with extra bones from biting kids on bikes, she said.

But I took the corner anyway, I didn't believe Mom. Once she had said that pointing at rainbows caused freckles, and after a rain had moved in and drenched the streets, after the sparrows flitted onto the lawn, a rainbow washed over the junkyard and reached the dark barrels of Coleman pickle. I stood at the window, looking out, amazed and devious, with the devilish horns of my butch haircut standing up. From behind the window, I let my finger slowly uncurl like a bean plant rising from earth. I uncurled it, then curled it back and made a fist. I should remember this day, I told myself.

I pedaled my squeaky bike around the curve onto Sarah Street, but returned immediately. I braked and looked back at where I had gone. My face was hot, my hair sweaty, but nothing scary seemed to happen. The street had looked like our street: parked cars, tall trees, a sprinkler hissing on a lawn, and an old woman bending over her garden. I started again, and again I rode the curve, my eyes open as wide as they could go. After a few circle eights I returned to our street. There ain't no dogs, I told myself. I began to think that maybe this was like one of those false rainbow warnings.

I turned my bike around and rode a few times in front of our house, just in case Mom was looking for me. I called out, "Hi Mom. I haven't gone anywhere." I saw her face in the window, curlers piled high, and she waved a dish towel at me. I waved back, and when she disappeared, I again tore my bike around the curve onto Sarah Street. I was free. The wind flicked my hair and cooled my ears. I did figure eights, rode up the curbs and onto lawns, bumped into trees, and rode over a garden hose a hundred times because I liked the way the water sprang up from the sprinkler after the pressure of my tires. I stopped when I saw a kid my age come down a porch. His machinery for getting around was a tricycle. Big baby, I thought, and said, "You can run over my leg with your trike if you want." I laid down on the sidewalk, and the kid, with fingers in his mouth, said, "OK."

He backed up and slowly, like a tank, advanced. I folded my arms behind my head and watched a jay swoop by with what looked like a cracker in its beak, when the tire climbed over my ankle and sparks of pain cut through my skin. I sat up quickly, my eyes flinging tears like a sprinkler.

The boy asked, "Did it hurt?" "No," I said, almost crying.

The kid could see that it did. He could see my face strain to hold back a sob, two tears dropping like dimes into the dust. He pedaled away on his bucket of bolts and tossed it on his front lawn. He looked back before climbing the stairs and disappeared into the house.

I pulled up my pants leg. My ankle was purple, large and hot, and the skin was flaked like wood shavings. I patted spit onto it and laid back down. I cried because no one was around, the tears stirring up a lather on my dirty face. I rose to my feet and walked around, trying to make the ankle feel better. I got on my bicycle and pedaled mostly with the good leg. The few tears still on my eyelashes evaporated as I rode. I realized I would live. I did nothing fancy on the way home, no figure eights, no wiggling of the handlebars, no hands in my pockets, no closed eye moments.

Then the sudden bark of a dog scared me, and my pants leg fed into the chain, the bike coming to an immediate stop. I tugged at the cuff, gnashed and oil-black, until rupping sounds made me quit trying. I fell to the ground, bike and all, and let the tears lather my face again. I then dragged the bike home with the pants leg in the chain. There was nothing to do except lie in the dirt because Mom saw me round the corner from Sarah Street. I lay down when she came out with the belt, and I didn't blame the dog or that stupid rainbow.