

GLASS JARS

Teaching Guide



How beautiful is life under the sea...azure
and carefree....

But it's not like that every day.

At the end of an unfortunate day with an unexpected accident,

The fish found themselves in glass jars.

Moreover, they asked for it themselves to be safe.

Living in glass jars in vast seas...

So what kind of life awaits them?

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*The dreams of fish are endless like the ocean,
Freedom is their most prized possession*



Özge Bahar Sunar

Özge Bahar Sunar, a full-time author and former teacher, has had her books translated into over ten languages since her 2017 debut. Her picture book *Dancing with the Rain* won an Award of Excellence (2019) and was featured in the IBBY Collection. *My Grandma's Photos* was selected for Goodreads 2022. She lives in Antalya with her children and loves creating stories while hiking.



Öznur Sönmez

Öznur Sönmez, born in Ankara, graduated from Hacettepe University in Graphic Design and began her career in Istanbul advertising agencies. She pursued a master's in Design at Has University. After illustrating over 10 children's books, she started her own business for more freedom. Today, she creates children's book illustrations and works as a freelance art director.

Before you read:

1. Reading the title, what do you think the story is going to be about?

Pointers for discussion:

- You can discuss whether animals can actually live in glass jars. What might life be like if people lived in glass houses like this?
- You can ask the children why anyone would want to live inside glass jars.
- You can ask the children if they know any other such stories, books, movies where characters live in odd kinds of houses. You can also prompt them to think whether these houses might represent something more in the story.

2. What do you think about the book cover?

Pointers for discussion:

- You can talk about the design and what the children think of it. Looking at the colour palette, font, artwork, do they think it is going to be a fun story or sad story or adventurous story?
- You can ask them what they think about the glass jar pictured on the cover. Does it look like a cozy place to live in?

3. What do you think the characters are going to be like, how would you like them to be?

Pointers for discussion:

- You can ask them to think about why some fishes are inside the glass jar while some are swimming outside.
- You can discuss if they know any other books or movies where the characters are marine creatures.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think the narrator's family convinced their old neighbours to leave their glass jars?

What would the conversation been like? How you can encourage other people to rethink their opinions and can perhaps change their beliefs?

- What do you think the fishes who live inside the jars think about the two humbug fishes?

Do you think they question why the humbug fishes do not mind roaming around freely? Do you think they are envious of the humbug fishes or think of them as foolish for being reckless?

- What do you think the humbug fishes think about those who live in jars?

Do you think the humbug fishes are taking advantage of the fears of these fishes? Would you call them opportunists or industrious? Do you think they are selfish or they are just smart enough to use the situation to their benefit?

- The two humbug fishes would bring oyster shells filled with food and sell them to the other fishes. What food do you think they collected?

Think about the kind of food available in ocean. What kind of food would small fishes like the ones in the story eat?

- All the characters in the book live in the ocean. Do you know any other creatures that live under water?

You can discuss which creatures live in the sea and which live only in rivers or ponds? Can any of these creatures survive outside the water? You can introduce the concept of 'habitats' and ask the students if they know of animals that live in particular habitats like **desert, forest, river** etc.

- Why do you think fishes spend so much time cleaning their jars?

Do you think it is their way of avoid boredom and pass the time as they cannot go out and explore? Could it be that this is their way of showing-off to their neighbours since they do not have any adventures or other achievements to talk about?

- What is the importance of striking a balance between safe choices and bold decisions?

Do you think the fishes would never have had to live through such stressful times if they hadn't been overly cautious?

Do you think the narrator's family made a reckless decision? How can you strike balance between being cautious and being adventurous?

- What is the importance of asking questions to bring about change?

Do you think the fishes would have been able to break free earlier if they questioned why the humbug fishes were not afraid to roam around freely? How important is it to not accept everything that people want you to believe and think for yourself and question things? how do they think of themselves in relation to the various roles they have?

- Why do you think the narrator's family became happy and healthy once they left the jars?

Do you think it's because they are now self-reliant instead of being dependent on the humbug fishes? How can they be happy despite facing certain dangers? Why is freedom important for happiness?

- Why do you think they built the glass jar museum when they could have just left the area?

What role do you think museums play in society? Can we learn important lessons from museums? How important is it to learn from your past?

Activities:

- Activity 1- **Thinking for yourself while keeping an open mind:** Divide the class into groups of 5 and ask them questions related to the book, for example some of the discussion questions. Ask the children what each of them think and enable them to discuss and ask and answer questions from the other children to understand what each of them thinks.
- Activity 2- **Dealing with disagreements:** Again divide the children in groups and ask them to write or enact what a conversation between the narrator's family and the other fishes would be like as the narrator's family tries to convince them to leave the jars. Let the children say what they think and see how they can better engage and deal with differing opinions. What approach do they take while trying to convince the others? Are they persuasive or coercive?
- Activity 3- **Creative problem solving:** This book is written in rhymes. You can ask the students if they know any words that rhyme with a word you tell them. For example: *This item rhymes with 'fish' and starts with 'd'. Can you tell me what it is?* You can also make this exercise more interactive by making chits of papers containing different words and asking the students to pick chits and rhyme with the words they get.
- Activity 4- **Igniting the imagination:** If you lived in a glass jar like the narrator of the story, what would your personal glass jar look like? What would be the shape of jar? Is it big and spacious or small and cosy? What colour would be the glass? Will it have any unique feature? Is it empty or filled it objects you collected from the ocean? What objects? They can either write a short essay on this or draw a picture.

- Activity 5- **Learning outside the books:** There are 4 types of marine creatures in the book:

Fish, Octopus, Turtle, Crab

Divide the class into 4 and assign a creature to each. They will research these animals through various methods—using library books, internet, asking their parents etc. and make a poster with a few interesting facts about that creature. They can also be encouraged to decorate poster with drawings. Each group will present their poster and talk about their findings in front of the class.

Key Takeaways-It is important to overcome one's fears. Being cautious is good, but irrational and unquestioning fear is the enemy of freedom. One must also keep wondering and trying to learn more about things in order to improve their lives.