

GUIDED IMAGERY for
A Wrinkle in Time
Madeleine L'Engle

PURPOSE:

This activity will enable students to participate more actively in the reading of *A Wrinkle in Time* through the experience of tangible imagery and mental visualization. Not only is this an exercise in imagination and creativity, but enables students to practice adding details, visualizing rich language and imagery in a relatively non-threatening context. More specifically, this guided imagery is designed to launch readers into the beautiful settings that L'Engle creates through her language. This activity is especially helpful for students because of the difficult concepts and images L'Engle asks her readers to visualize.

WHEN:

This activity would be best as a pre-reading strategy to engage or “hook” the students and prepare them for the characters’ galactic adventures, or during reading, before Chapter Four.

INSTRUCTION:

MOOD - Creating an ambience and setting the mood is especially important for this activity. The lights should be dimmed and music should be played; “Somewhere in Time” soundtrack, the “Braveheart” soundtrack, “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” soundtrack, or piano/guitar mixed with nature sounds are all good choices. The teacher should keep in mind, however, that any music choice should be instrumental and *not* vocal. Another alternative may be adding potpourri or scented candles, especially for the scene where students are asked to visualize the planet filled with sweet smells.

BUILDING THE DREAM – Once the mood has been set and the students find their seats (you should decide whether students are to remain in their chairs or find a comfortable position on the floor), ask the students to relax and close their eyes. Tell the students to breathe deeply, concentrating on relaxing muscles and releasing any tension; finally, have the students clear their minds, like a blank canvas, and to follow along as you narrate a certain situation.

READING – Use a soft, calming voice as you read each prompt, taking care to use long pauses and careful articulation. Always read more slowly than you think! The passage should take between seven to ten minutes to read.

WRITING – After sharing the prompt, invite students to write about their experience for fifteen to twenty minutes. Have them jot down as many images they can recall, using phrases, descriptive words, sentences, or even illustrations and doodling. Give them several minutes to write and think. If there is time, you may wish to have students close their eyes and try to remember anything else they may have forgotten. Encourage students to share their experiences if they wish.

CONCLUSION – You may wish to have a small class discussion tying the guided imagery back to the novel, asking the students to further visualize how Meg, Charles, and Calvin felt as they visited and experienced such strange planets. Discuss the emotions of the characters, their actions, their thoughts, their apprehensions, etc.

SCRIPT:

Slowly close your eyes and relax. Take a deep breath in....and blow out, relaxing the muscles in your body. Take another breath in, releasing the thoughts in your mind, clearing your mind until you envision a blank page. Continue to breathe deeply in and out.



Imagine that you are walking down a winding, sloping path. It is evening, and the shadows of the trees are long and twisted and there is a heavy, sweet, autumnal smell in the air. The path takes you through a garden—perhaps your garden is filled with wildflowers, or cornstalks, beans and broccoli, or full of poppies, roses, and iris. As you continue walking, the sudden crisp smell of apples sweeps over you. Ahead of you is a small apple orchard bounded by a stone wall, and beyond that, a dense forest.

You sit on a gnarled fence and as you peer into the gathering darkness, you see a small figure walking toward you in the moonlight. As the person gets closer, you see that it is your favorite person. What does he or she look like? Try and capture the details of his or her face. Your friend waves at you, and settles next to you on the fence.

Suddenly, two eyes spring out at you from the darkness! After a closer look, you see that it is actually the moonlight striking the eyeglasses of a strange old woman. In the flickering moonlight, you discern that she's wearing a strange outfit—she wears rubber boots, a large bed sheet is draped around her, a pink scarf slips from her shoulders, and a felt hat perches atop her head. Can you see what color her hair is? Can you see behind her glasses? What else is she wearing?

As you look at your strange visitor, a faint gust of wind ruffles your hair, the leaves shiver, the patterns of moonlight shift, and in a circle of silver something shimmers and quivers. The trees are lashed with violent frenzy and the light from the moon is completely extinguished, as a candle is snuffed by the wind. You still hear the sound of leaves and a deep rushing and whooshing. You reach for your friend but can feel nothing.

You realize suddenly that there is no sound. No light, no feeling. You try to move, but it seems there is nothing to move. Just as light and sound has vanished, your body is nothing. Complete nothingness.

Slowly, you begin to feel your limbs again, and your skin tingles faintly. You perceive the darkness around you—it is dense and tangible...and absolutely silent. You also begin to feel movement around you. This feeling of moving is somewhat like the feeling of being in the ocean, out in the ocean beyond this rising and falling of breakers, lying on the moving water, pulsing gently with the swells, and feeling the gentle inexorable tug of the moon.

Light begins to pulse and quiver. You are able to take a first look at your new surroundings. You feel tired, but peaceful. You are standing in a sunlit field, and the air about you moves with the delicious fragrance that comes only on the rarest of spring days when the sun's touch is gentle and the apple blossoms are just beginning to unfold. What else can you see in your sunlit field? Perhaps golden ripening wheat, or soft green clover? Are there trees, or long, lolling flatlands?

You had just left the silver glint and biting autumn evening of the apple orchard, and now everything around you is golden with light. Can you feel the sun warming your skin and hair? The grasses of the field are a tender new green, and scattered about are tiny,



multicolored flowers. You turn slowly and face a mountain reaching so high into the sky that its peak is lost in a crown of puffy white clouds. From the trees at the base of the mountain comes a sudden singing of birds. There is an air of such ineffable peace and joy all around you.

Next to you, your strange visitor with the glasses materializes beside you. Her plump little body begins to shimmer, to quiver, to shift. The wild colors of her clothes become muted, whitened. The pudding-bag shape stretches, lengthens, merges. And suddenly before you is a creature more beautiful than you could ever imagine. Instead of an old, plump woman, you see a creature with a marbled white body and powerful flanks. It looks something like a horse, but at the same time completely unlike a horse, for from the magnificently modeled back springs a nobly formed torso, arms, and a head resembling a man's—but a man with a perfection of dignity and virtue, an exaltation of joy such as you have never before seen. From the shoulders of this magnificent creature, a pair of wings unfold, wings made of rainbows, of light upon water, of poetry.

You gaze at the creature silently. It regards you with noble, sad eyes, and you know it is time to leave. You take a step backward, lean your head back, and inhale deeply of the fragrance that surrounds you. A gust of wind hits your body and face, but this time you are not afraid. You feel the swirling darkness surround you, and when you open your eyes, you are sitting back on the fence in the biting autumn air, with apple blossoms spinning around you in the moonlight. You take another deep breath, and remember the sunlit field, the fragrant breeze, and your encounter with the marvelous creature. You picture its translucent wings, and you feel total peace. You may now slowly open your eyes.