

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX
Teachers' Guide

Under the Same Sky

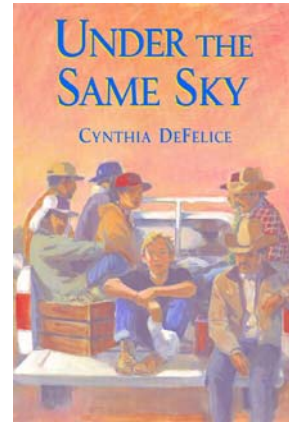
by Cynthia DeFelice

Grade Level:

Grades 5 up

Themes:

- Choices
- Family Relationships
- Father-Son Relationships
- Undocumented Immigrants
- Independence



Introduction

Joe Pedersen longs for a motorbike for his fourteenth birthday, but his father says he needs to earn the money for it. So Joe agrees to go to work with the crew of Mexican laborers who travel to his father's New York farm each summer. At first, he resents the responsible crew boss, Manuel, who is only sixteen, because Manuel has Mr. Pedersen's respect in a way Joe doesn't. Joe also finds the work of planting cabbages, weeding, hoeing, and picking strawberries terribly difficult and utterly exhausting. Soon Joe grows to appreciate the workers' plight of needing to earn money to send back home to their families. Not only does he develop a crush on Manuel's cousin, Luisa, but he begins to see that there is strong prejudice against the migrant workers. Only after men from the Immigration and Naturalization Service appear does Joe realize that some of the workers are in the country illegally. When the rest of his family goes out of state to a family reunion, Joe decides to help those workers escape to work at another farm. By the end of the story Joe has grown in every way and has earned his father's respect.

Discussion

1. Explain how Joe's older sister, LuAnn, changes her opinion of her brother.
2. What things happen in *Under the Same Sky* that change Joe's opinion about his friend Randy?
3. Do you think Luisa and the others make the correct decision in leaving Joe's farm when threatened by the INS?
4. What is the significance of the book's title?

Activity Suggestions

1. Find the meaning in the text or dictionary of the following words: *migra*, *periódico*, *perro*, *muy bueno*.

UNDER THE SAME SKY

2. Luisa cooks a Mexican meal for the workers. Research some recipes at the following Web site: <http://www.rebeccacaudill.org/nominees/2005DeFelice/study.htm>. Prepare a dish to share with the class.
3. Choose a favorite passage from *Under the Same Sky* and, after practicing, read it to your group.



About the Author

Cynthia DeFelice has written many novels for middle-grade readers, including *The Apprenticeship of Lucas Whitaker*, an ALA Notable Book, and *The Ghost of Fossil Glen*, recipient of the Texas Bluebonnet Award. She lives in upstate New York.

For more information on Cynthia DeFelice:

Web sites:

www.fsgkidsbooks.com

Includes a biography of the author and additional information about her books.

www.cynthiadefelice.com

Contains more information about the author and her books.

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by Cynthia DeFelice

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A Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year

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