

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

Teachers' Guide

Boxes for Katje

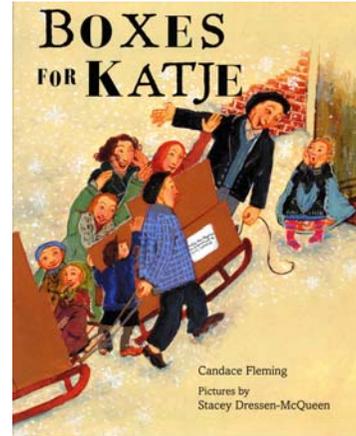
by Candace Fleming,
pictures by Stacey Dressen-McQueen

Grade Level:

Grades K–4

Themes:

- Friendship
- Generosity
- Goodwill
- Kindness
- Motivation
- Multicultural Studies (Netherlands)
- Neighbors
- Pen Pals
- Sharing
- War (World War II)



Introduction:

After Katje, a young Dutch girl, writes to Rosie, her new American friend, in thanks for the care package sent after World War II, she begins to receive increasingly larger boxes. Katje generously shares her gifts with the other needy townspeople in Olst, Holland, and in turn sends letters expressing her sincere thanks to Rosie in Mayfield, Indiana. Adults get involved, and soon the whole town of Mayfield is sending more and more packages to Olst. A final heartwarming package of tulip bulbs is sent from Olst as a thank-you to the generous citizens of Mayfield. This story is based on the author's mother's experience with the Children's Relief Fund after World War II.

Discussion Questions

1. What were the needs of the citizens of Olst? Why did they have these needs? What needs would you guess the children of Iraq might have today? Or the children in the cities destroyed by natural disasters?
2. What details in the book (story and art) let you know how the people of Olst felt about the boxes when they arrived?
3. How would you characterize Katje? Rosie?
4. How were the towns of Olst and Mayfield alike and different?
5. What could your hometown send as a thank-you gift if it were the recipient of Mayfield's generous gifts?

Activity Suggestions

Social Studies

1. Research the history of your town or city. Did your town ever have a sister city or an exchange with another community in a helpful way?

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2. Are there any stories in your local newspapers about outstanding children in your community? What did they do for others?
3. Locate each of the girls' hometown on a map. Estimate the distance between the two cities by using the map key.
4. Use an almanac to find out facts about the cities in the book.
5. Use an almanac and an encyclopedia to find out facts about World War II. Compare and contrast the relevant information from each source.
6. Research the Children's Aid Society. Were there other organizations that also helped families abroad after the war? What were they called and what did they do?
7. Study the postal system and find out how so many packages could best be sent to another country today. (This will involve using math skills to calculate weight, cost, distance, and mileage.)
8. Holland is known by another name today. Find out what the new name is and locate the country on a map. Research current facts about Olst.

Science

1. Grow some tulips. Research the planting and growing procedure for tulips.
2. Study the tulip flower with a hand lens. Draw and label its parts.

Language Arts

1. As a class, research the pen pal process. Find a reliable source of pen pals and initiate a letter exchange, writing regularly.
2. Write a paragraph about what you would like to receive in a care package if you had nothing to eat or wear this winter.

Math

1. See #7 above, under Social Studies.
2. Estimation:
 - How many boxes would it take to ship 200 cakes of soap if each box holds x number of cakes?
 - How much would 200 cakes of soap weigh? cost? Call a store to find out the typical size of a box of soap and the number of cakes inside.
 - How many tulip bulbs are in a pound? Ask everyone to write down an estimate. Buy some bulbs or bring some in from a volunteer's garden. Then weigh them to see whose estimate was the closest.

BOXES FOR KATJE



About the Author

Candace Fleming grew up in a house filled with books and loved stories and the magic of words. Today she is the author of many fiction and nonfiction picture books, including *Sunny Boy: The Life and Times of a Tortoise* and *A Big Cheese for the White House*, among others. She lives in Mt. Prospect, Illinois.

For more information on Candace Fleming:

Web sites:

www.fsgkidsbooks.com

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

www.candacefleming.com

Contains more information about the author and her books.

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ISBN-10: 0-374-30922-1

ISBN-13: 978-0-374-30922-0

A Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year

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An NCTE Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts

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19 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003

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Curriculum Guide created by Emporia State University for the William Allen White Children's Books Award Master List.

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