



School-Home Connection

Your child is reading an excerpt from *Blue Willow* by Doris Gates. In the story, Janey Larkin and her parents, who work as migrant field hands, move to a new community. Janey dreads going to the camp school because it reminds her that she doesn't have a permanent home. Janey uses a horned toad she catches to test whether her new teacher will be friendly, and the teacher passes the test. After her first day of school, Janey feels as though she has the most wonderful teacher in the world.

Memories of the First Day

At a family gathering, you might invite everyone to share a personal recollection of a first day at a new school. After everyone has told his or her story, invite your child to retell the story of Janey Larkin's first day of school and then tell whether her experiences were similar to those of any family member.

VOCABULARY

Say It, Guess It

The following words are new vocabulary that your child has learned while reading "Blue Willow":

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|-------------|-------------|
| sulkily | protruded |
| undoubtedly | indifferent |
| heartily | certainty |
| loathe | |

To reinforce the meanings, play a game in which you read out the word's dictionary definition and your child tries to guess the word.



TIME TO READ

Encourage your child to read for at least 30 minutes outside of class each day.

A Family Keepsake

Except for one special object, their blue willow plate, the Larkin family owns only necessities that fit in the car. Identify an object treasured by your family, and tell your child the story of how and why it came to be a keepsake.

Learn About a Local Crop

Janey's family harvests cotton in California. What crops grow in your region? How are they planted, harvested, and prepared for market? With your child, learn about one crop. If it's a food crop, prepare a dish together that uses it.

