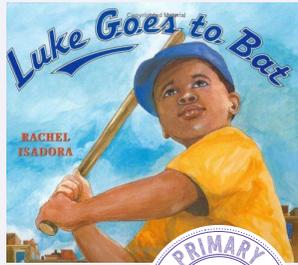


Luke Goes to Bat

by Rachel Isadora

Themes

Never Give Up
Determination
Practice
Positive Thinking
Encourage Others
Patience
Making Good Choices



Luke has been waiting for his turn to join the big boys on the street in their games of stickball. He has practiced and practiced for the day that he is old enough to join the game. When he finally gets his chance, will his “Never Give Up” attitude pay off?

Key Vocabulary

Squirt: a name for a young or small kid
Muttered: to speak in a soft voice that only you hear
Ablaze: bright with light
Stickball: baseball played on the street rather than a field. Often uses rubber ball and a stick or broom handle instead of a bat.

Tricky Phrasing

Crowd goes wild: crowd is excited – usually noisy and jumping up and down
Battle it out: play hard with both sides wanting to win
Crowd roared: cheering and yelling in excitement
Pitcher wound up: the motion of getting ready to throw the ball to home plate
All eyes rested on: everyone looked at the same thing
Crack of the bat: the sound made when the bat hits the ball

Discussion Starters

1. What did the kids in Brooklyn play during the summer in the story? *Stickball*
2. How is it different from Little League baseball that you may play?
Stickball is played on the street rather than a field and uses a stick instead of a bat.

BACKGROUND INFO on STICKBALL: *Stickball uses a rubber ball instead of a baseball, so it won't fly as far (since houses and windows are nearby) and is easier to catch without a mitt. Cardboard or manholes are often used for bases - cars mark "foul lines." Broom handles serve as bats!*

3. Why do you think they didn't play at a field with baseball equipment?
Lived in the city, didn't own baseball equipment
4. Why did Luke not play with the boys?
Too young, too little. Big kids called him a squirt
5. What did Luke choose to do when he couldn't play ball? What other choices **COULD** he have made? Did he make the right choice?
He chose to watch the games and practice catching, swinging and running. He watched the Dodgers play from his roof. He could have chosen to be mad, fight, cry, or give up on wanting to play ball.

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6. **Why did Luke not give up?**

He REALLY wanted to play ball with the big kids. He believed that he could do it!

7. **Why did the kids finally let Luke play with them?**

They were missing a player

8. **How did his first game turn out?**

No balls were hit to him; he struck out hitting the ball.

9. **Did Luke give up? No. How was he encouraged to “Never give up”?**

His grandma reminded him that not everyone plays like Jackie Robinson – not even Jackie Robinson.

10. **How did Jackie Robinson “never give up”?**

Even with 3 balls and 2 strikes, he kept trying and he got a hit to win the game.

11. **Do you think Jackie Robinson really told Luke... “You can’t give up”? Why or why not?**

Allow students to look back at the pages and give their ideas. Draw attention to the illustration style and how it is different from other artwork. Why did the illustrator do that?

12. **In the end, did Luke’s “Never Give Up” attitude help him with stickball? How do you know this?**

The last page shows him playing ball with the big kids and hitting the ball.

13. **Discuss the feelings and emotions kids have while playing sports.**

Talk about how it feels to be great at something or how it feels to not be so great. Remind students to “Never Give Up” and “Encourage Others” every day at recess or P.E., remembering that each person has his or her own strengths.



PRINTABLE:

Goal Setting

Writing Prompt

Think of something YOU would like to do better. Use the printable to draw a picture and make a list of what you can do to NEVER GIVE UP and accomplish your goals!

Activity

Motivational Posters

As a class, create “NEVER GIVE UP” posters. Encourage students to use some of the lists they made in their writings, words from the book, or things said in class discussions (such as practice, watch & learn, encourage others, dream big, think positively). Help them *plan* their posters first (design, wording, spelling etc.) and then create them! Consider gifting a poster to other classrooms or hanging them in the halls at school.

Goal Setting

Directions: Think of something YOU would like to do better. Draw a picture and make a list of what you can do to NEVER GIVE UP and accomplish your goals!



Name: _____

I want to learn to:

Here's what I can do to make that happen:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____