

## LOVE OF LEARNING

**Objective:** *To stimulate interest in learning for its own sake*

**Key Words:** *knowledge , enriched, spaceship, exploring, countryside, astronomy, astronomers, fascination, universe, immensity, splendour, magnificent, telescope, solar system, Milky Way, gravity*

### QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK



*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Discuss what this quotation means.

### SILENT SITTING

Step 1 (*See page 40 of the introduction*)

Steps 2, 4 (*optional*)

Step 5: Imagine you have your very own spaceship ...

Step inside your spaceship ... It is very safe.

If you wish, you can take your spaceship and travel to see the stars.

Imagine you are travelling up, up ...

Away from the pull of gravity of the Earth ...

Out into space ...

What can you see?

As you travel on and on, how quiet and peaceful it feels ...

Look around you at the beauty of the universe . How do you feel?

Now it is time to return.

Gently bring your spaceship back to earth ...

See how beautiful the earth is as you approach ...

Land gently on the earth ...

Step 6.

# STORY TELLING

## STAR-GAZING BILLY

*by Cynthia Bach*

Billy had always loved learning. As a tiny boy he had always been full of questions and now that he was older, he loved to read about the world or go off exploring in the countryside around the small town where he lived with his mother and older sister. But most of all, Billy loved astronomy and many of the books he bought with his pocket money were on that subject. He had loved watching the stars as long as he could remember. His sister, Caroline, often teased him about it and had given him his nickname of Star-Gazing Billy. She did not understand the fascination it had for him. And his mother worked so hard to support them that she did not have the time to take a lot of interest. Billy often wished he knew some of the famous astronomers whose books he read. What interesting talks they would have.

One morning when Billy arrived at school, he found his friends grouped together talking excitedly. “Hey, guess what?” shouted Billy’s friend, John. “Old Watkins has retired - just like that. Hooray!”

“So who’s going to teach the science class now?” asked Billy. Surely they weren’t going to have to miss science? Billy found the science lessons so interesting. Admittedly, old Mr. Watkins had been a bit bad-tempered recently and had little patience to explain things, but maybe he was getting old and was not feeling so well.

“Oh, there’s a new chap, a lot younger than Watkins. He’ll take our class later today,” replied John. “I don’t know his name, but I hope he’s got more go in him than old Watkins.”

The boys went into class and all waited to see what the new science master was like. After lunch they found out and he could hardly have been more different than old Mr. Watkins.

“Well boys and girls,” said the tall man who strode into the class. “I’m glad to come to this school. I shall look forward to getting to know you all. My name is Mr. James and I live quite near here, in Edward Street. If any of you have any problems with our science lessons, I would be happy to help you out at any time. I want you all to enjoy learning. Science is such a wonderful subject and covers so many interesting things. Now, down to the lesson; I would like each of you to tell me what you have enjoyed learning about most, with Mr. Watkins.”

The class had a problem with this. No one had really enjoyed the lessons with Mr. Watkins, except Billy, who was always happy if he was learning something new. Slowly a few of the boys spoke up about their own interests in the subject.

“Right, I can see that there are some gaps in your knowledge, so I will try to fill those and this is what we shall be doing in the next few weeks.” Mr. James went on to outline the subjects they were going to learn about within science. Billy listened with interest to this list, but when he heard astronomy included, he could not stop

himself from jumping up with excitement. “What’s the matter with you, young man? What’s your name?” asked Mr. James. His voice brooked no nonsense, but was kindly.

Billy, red in the face, stammered, “I’m Billy Jones, Sir. And I, well I, I really like studying the stars. It’s my favourite ....” He trailed off.

“Star-gazing Billy,” tittered some of the class, several others groaned.

“That’s enough,” said Mr. James severely. “I am very happy to hear of your interest, Billy. The study of the universe is one of the most important aspects of science. The immensity and splendour of it can help us remember not to take our silly little wants and worries too seriously and remind us that we are part of a greater magnificent whole. And now it is time for the class to end. I shall look forward to our science lessons on Thursday. I am sure you will all have a lot to contribute. Good afternoon, girls and boys.” And with that Mr. James left the room.

Surprised and excited comments from the children arose as they gathered their books to go home. Billy was very quiet. He couldn’t believe his luck. A new teacher who was interested in the stars and who would teach them astronomy! It seemed too good to be true.

When his mother arrived home from work, he told her the good news. “That’s very nice, dear,” she said as she hurriedly took off her coat. “Now go and finish your homework while I prepare supper.”

Billy went to his room feeling a bit sad that his mother had so little time for him, but he soon cheered up as he remembered the science lessons he had to look forward to with the new teacher. He wondered if Mr. James had a telescope - what a marvellous thing to look through one of those and see the stars and planets.

A few weeks went by and at last the science class had a lesson on astronomy. Billy was fascinated, there was such a lot to learn. Mr. James answered some of the questions he had been thinking about for a long time, but he had the other boys to help too, many of whom were also interested. Billy decided to ask him if he could see him on his own after school some time as he had so much more to ask about.

“Yes, of course, Billy,” replied Mr. James kindly when Billy had plucked up the courage to ask him. “Where do you live?”

“Only two roads from you, Sir.”

“Then would you like to come round to my house one evening. Bring one, or both, of your parents as well. I like to meet my pupils’ parents if possible and hear how they feel you are getting on at school.”

“I’ve only got a mother and she’s always busy. But I will ask her. If she can’t come, can I come on my own?” Billy hoped the meeting did not depend on his mother coming too.

“Of course you can, Billy. I understand how much your mother must have to do. But please invite her anyway. I would like her to call in to say whether it is all right for you to come. As a parent she will want to know where you are. Come round about half-past six.”

Billy ran all the way home, in a real state of excitement. He was longing to be able to ask more questions and hear more of what Mr. James knew about the stars.

“Mum! Mum! What do you think?” shouted Billy as he rushed through the front door.

“Well, what?” asked his mother, who was home early from work as it was her half-day.

“Mr. James said I can go round to his house and learn more about astronomy. He has asked me to bring you as well. Will you come, Mum, please?” Billy said it all in one go, and after his run home, he was completely out of breath. He flopped down on the sofa, looking at his mother with such a pitiful face that she started to laugh.

“All right, Billy,” she reassured him. “I’m not so tired when I work half a day, so I will come with you tonight, as long as it is not for too long. But I’m sure Mr. James is tired after teaching all day as well, so don’t keep him talking too late.”

Billy was so happy. He went to his room to do his homework as there would not be time when they got back. Later as they were eating their supper, he wondered again whether Mr. James had a telescope. To his mother’s amazement, Billy declined pudding so they could go.

Mr. James house was only a five minute walk away. It was a neat little cottage at the end of a small terrace. “My aunt used to live in this house, Billy, when I was young,” his mother commented as they knocked on the door. “I often used to visit her here.”

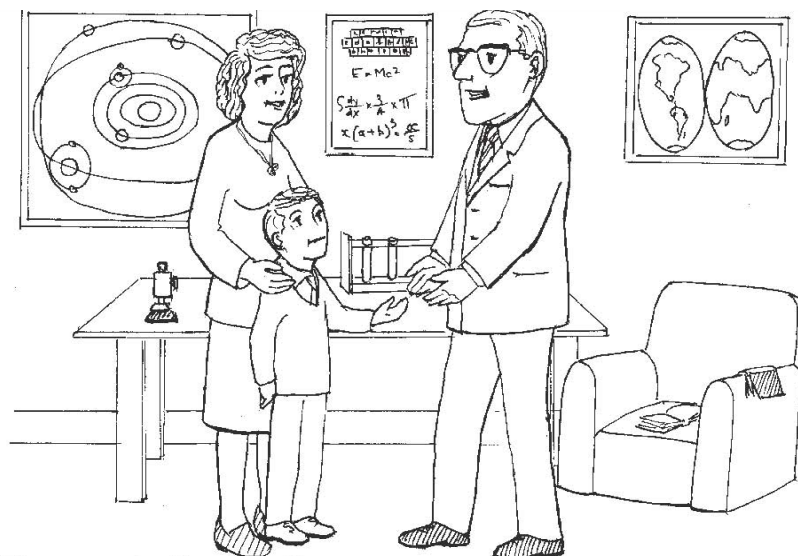
“Oh hello. Do come in, Billy. Mrs. Jones? Thank you for coming. Let me take your coat.” Mr. James showed them into the front room. The walls were covered with interesting pictures and prints.

“Have you got a telescope, Mr. James?” Billy ventured, unable to bear the suspense of not knowing any longer.

“I have, Billy. I’m going to make a room for it in the loft in the summer holidays. But for the moment, it’s in the spare room upstairs overlooking the garden. You can go and see it, if you would like to, while I have a few words with your mother.”

Billy ran upstairs feeling as if his dreams were coming true. He was so engrossed in the mysteries of the sky which the telescope revealed that he took no notice of the snatches of conversation drifting up from downstairs.

Mr. James and his mother had gone into the kitchen to make some tea.



“Oh! You’ve extended the kitchen very cleverly,” his mother exclaimed.

“Thank you. I had it done before I moved in last month. You know the house, do you?”

“Oh! Please excuse me. I should not have said that. But, yes I do know the house. I came here often as a little girl. My aunt and uncle lived here for a while.”

“It’s interesting to know the history of a house,” said Mr. James encouragingly.

“I don’t know much. They emigrated to New Zealand when I was about seven. I believe the house was let out for a while and then sold. My parents kept in touch with them.”

“Your aunt’s name wasn’t Rose, was it?”

“Aunty Rosey. Yes. How did you know?”

“My mother’s name was Rose. Rose Evans. She lived here with her first husband before they went to live in New Zealand. Her husband unfortunately died and later she married my father and I was born. I recently decided to come back here to live and work for a while and look up my mother’s family. But I’ve been so busy, what with buying a house and getting a new job that I haven’t had the time yet. If it is the same person that would make us cousins.”

“How wonderful,” laughed Mrs. Jones. “And I know another person who is going to be delighted. Billy’s been singing your praises ever since you started in the school.”

And delighted Billy was. As time went on he often came with his mother to her

cousin Robert's house. Robert James encouraged his love of learning and that of his class mates too. He gained their affection and respect and they learned not to make fun of each other. Billy's sister, too, learnt how foolish it was to tease him, but rather to be more respectful, even if he was her younger brother and had different interests from herself.

#### QUESTIONS:

- 1 What name would you give this story?
- 2 Why was Billy called Star-Gazing Billy?
- 3 Mr. James said to his pupils, "I want you all to enjoy learning".  
Do you believe that this is important?
- 4 What do you like learning?
- 5 What would you like to learn in the future?
- 6 What made Billy ask Mr. James if he could visit him?
- 7 Mr. James invited Billy's mother too. Is it important that parents know where their children are, or know what they do and whom they meet?
- 8 How did Billy and his mother find out that they were related?
- 9 What did you feel when you heard this story?
10. Does it remind you of anything in your own life?

### GROUP SINGING

#### THE UNIVERSE IS YOU

*(music by Stuart Jones, lyrics by Jenny Gaze)*

Every star in the universe shines out its light from you.  
Every flower in the universe gives beauty just from you.  
Every seed in the universe bursts forth with life from you.  
Every child in the universe - is you.

### GROUP ACTIVITY

#### ROLE PLAY: TV INTERVIEWS

Work in pairs and take five minutes each to discuss your favourite subject or topic. Two or three volunteers then role play a TV interview introducing their partner and asking questions about their favourite subject, e.g. "I understand that you know a lot about ....." and ensuring that all the points they raised are brought out in the interview.

#### Extension exercise/Links to Other Subjects:

As a class, the children can be encouraged to learn more about stars, the solar systems, the Milky Way and other planets. Together they may choose to produce a collage wall display and write stories about what it would be like to travel into space. *History:* Children can research Neil Armstrong's visit to the moon. What were his first words upon landing on the moon?