

Ideas for teachers to enhance the reading of

***RED as in Russia and Measles and Love***

and

***GREEN as in Springtime, New Life, and God's Will***

and

***WHITE as Christmas Snow, a Candle's Glow, and Heaven's Robe***

**For teachers of primary students as they read the books aloud:**

**FOR RED:**

**-Play Hide & Seek:** Where would you hide the Bible to keep bad people from destroying it? Every day have children take turns hiding a Bible in the room. Before reading a chapter of *RED*, the teacher asks three students to guess where the Bible is hidden. If they guess correctly, the Bible disappears for the day. If they guess incorrectly, the Bible is saved and kept on the teacher's desk. Keep a tally of saved Bibles throughout the reading of the book.

**-Read the Bible:** Papa taught Lisenka to read using the Bible. Divide the students in the class into partners. As the teacher reads a familiar portion of Scripture have students help each other point to the words. For advanced readers let them read as partners independently.

**-Taste Kraut Kuchen:** Find a kraut kuchen recipe on line. Have a parent prepare one for the class to sample.

**-Grow Pumpkins:** Lisenka fought back tears when seeing the sad, little pumpkins and dead pumpkin vines. Plant pumpkin seeds to see if happy or sad pumpkin vines grow. Discuss what is needed to produce healthy vines. (good soil, water, sunshine, etc.) Read John 15 to your students. Discuss what is needed for strong spiritual vines.

**-Track the Travel:** On a world map trace the travel of Lisenka's family. Use wheel marks for the cart travel from Prebnow to Lublin, train tracks from Lublin to LeHavre, and water waves from LeHavre to Ellis Island.

**-Watch a Video:** Watch a video about Ellis Island

**For GREEN:**

**-Learn German:** Lisenka learned the unfamiliar English words for the German words she knew; reverse the process for your students. Have them learn the German words for familiar English words. Besides the words mentioned in the book, google German nouns and introduce a new word every day while you are reading GREEN. Write the German word on an index card and tape it on that object in your classroom. As their German vocabulary increases, challenge your students to remember a German word with its English meaning as a password to go out for recess.

**-Dress Paper Dolls:** Give the girls a girl doll and the boys a boy doll. Have the girls make an outfit of the clothes Lisenka wore in Prebnow, at Ellis Island, on her first day of school and for graduation night. Have the boys make an outfit for Yurgi in Prebnow, in Fond du Lac for play and for going to church.

**-Eat Cake:** Have a cake made similar to the cake described in the book. See if the students have the same reaction as Lisenka.

**-Write a Letter:** Imagine that Lisenka is a member of your classroom. When you find out her mother is sick and away from home for medical care, as a class, write a letter to Lisenka's mother.

**-Make Cards:** Have students write get well cards to Lisenka's mother or sympathy cards to Pastor Moussa's family.

**-Watch a Video:** Watch a video clip showing the Ford cars that were driven during Lisenka's arrival time in Fond du Lac.

**For WHITE:**

**-Build a Hobo Jungle:** Students may make a diorama of a hobo jungle or the classroom could make one big "jungle" from appliance boxes. Students could even earn privileges to do homework or read in the boxes

**-Collect Food:** Students could bring in packaged food to be given to a homeless shelter. Perhaps they could even help deliver the food or the shelter manager could talk to the students about how it feels to be homeless.

**-Collect Clothing:** Students could bring in clothing for distribution to a homeless shelter. Perhaps the teacher would want to limit this to only the student's own clothes.

**-Study Trains:** Students could research trains from the 1920s and perhaps draw a train engine or a boxcar.

**-Sew on Buttons:** Sewing on buttons is a skill that even primary students can master—maybe with the help of a mother or two. How long would it take to sew on buttons for a whole shirt?

**-Make Christmas Decorations:** Yurgi's class made snowmen from rag balls, but students could glue Styrofoam balls together and decorate their snowmen too. Cutting out paper snow flakes and putting glitter on pinecones would also remind students of simple Christmas decorations.

**-Braid Yarn or Ribbon:** Braiding is a skill of coordination. Even boys could learn to braid yarn or a ribbon.

**-Sample Fruitcake:** Find fruitcake in grocery stores (after Christmas for a better price) and let the students sample it.

**-Make Soup:** Like Albert, the teacher could simmer a beef bone overnight. A crock pot could work for this and the students could bring vegetables, cut and ready to put into the broth, the next morning. By lunch time, they could each sample homemade, hobo soup.

### **FOR RED, GREEN, and WHITE**

**-Make a Prayer Journal:** After reading each chapter, have the students select one character from the days reading as ‘character of the day’. In a journal write a prayer you would have prayed for that person if you had been there with them that day.

**-Sing Happy Tunes:** Papa played his violin and led singing of joyful, inspiring songs to get their minds off their troubles. Have your class make a list of ‘Happy Tunes’. They can be hymns or secular songs you have taught them. Post the list of songs on a big chart or write the titles of the songs on individual slips of paper to be kept in a bag or cup. In between classes or while passing out papers, select a song from the ‘Happy Tunes’ and begin to sing a cappella. You’ll be surprised as to how it picks up the spirits of everyone!

**-Picture a Scene:** After reading each episode, select one student to draw a picture about it. Number the pictures and mount them on paper. Help the students write a sentence caption to put under each picture. You may assemble a book when you are finished or mount the captioned pictures on a roll of paper to make a mural. The whole class could help decorate the edges of the mural with footprints, oxcart tracks, train tracks and water waves. Display mural for all to see.

**-Find a Favorite:** When you are done reading the book, have your students draw a picture of their favorite part of the story. During a share time, have them show their picture and tell why they liked that part the best.

**For teachers of middle school students as the students read the books:**

-**Check out** the primary students' activities and adapt them to older students

-**Follow guidelines in your reading books:** Use these guidelines to help students understand mapping, character building, plot development, and setting in these books.

-**Highlight the themes:** In today's world of children's literature, students aren't often directed to God's guidance.

-In *RED* they learn to trust God when situations look hopeless: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28 KJV)

-In *GREEN*, children will learn that God's will is sufficient: "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God." (Psalm 143:10 KJV)

-In *WHITE*, students learn the value of trusting God and being generous. "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." (Romans 12:12-13 NIV)

**Students could:**

-**Write:** Respond to things they are reading with their own writing. Teachers could suggest an event in the story and ask the students to write about the causes of the event or make predictions.

-**Report:** Have individual students or groups of students write articles or editorials, pretending they work for the newspaper, first in Prebnow and then Fond du Lac. Some suggested headlines for *RED* are "Soldiers Close Lutheran School," "Conditions in Prebnow Worsen," "Herr Schmidt Exiled," "Schallert Family Disappears." For *GREEN*, headlines could read "New Family Joins Russian Community," "Casket Company Now Hiring," "Bedbug Infestation on Brooke Street." Ideas for headlines for *WHITE* are "Stock Market Crash Hurts Fond du Lac," "Hobo Jungle Growing on Brooke Street," "Layoffs Begin at Local Casket Company," "Pillar of Community Dies on Christmas Day." Students could add advertisements and photos to the newspaper.

-**Perform:** Turn favorite scenes into a play to perform for other students or for their parents. Bag puppets could be used to turn the plays into puppet shows.

-**Research:** Check out what Martin Luther said about Christian education and list the many benefits that he noted. Students could also pick out a favorite Luther quote on education and share it with the classroom.

**-Discuss:** Talk about immigrants that they know or have seen on TV and compare their difficulties with those of Lisenka—first in leaving home in a faraway country and then in adjusting to a new home, new language, and new culture.

**-Search:** Use the Ellis Island website to search for names of families who immigrated through Ellis Island. Students could find their own last names.

**-Focus:** Study the history of the USA or their state during the late 1920s and relate it to Lisenka's life.

**-Scrapbook:** Students could “collect” Lisenka’s treasures and create an ongoing scrapbook. What would Lisenka have treasured? A rooster feather, a dried pumpkin leaf, a piece of straw from the oxcart, train ticket, boat ticket, the wrapper from her first cracker, a page from Pastor Moussa’s newspaper, Johannes’ letter, a lock of her long hair, her report card, the letter from Mrs. Monroe.

**-Create:** Recreate a favorite scene by making a diorama  
(<https://www.nederland.k12.tx.us/view/12407pdf>)

**-Copy:** Make a torn-paper mosaic of the book cover or design a better book cover.  
(<http://www.dentonisd.org/cms/lib/TX21000245/Centricity/Domain/6555/Torn%20Paper%20CollageWEB.pdf>)

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