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| **Genre: Realistic Fiction** |
| **Subject: Education** |
| **The Wonderful World of The Jollys** |
| **The Activity Wheels** |
| **By Jep Nohland**  **Illustrated by PPAT** |
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Always use both metric and imperial measurements. — three feet (1 meter)

CHAPTER 1

The Gloomy Weather

It was the start of another week. Before the school bell rang on Monday morning, the students were already seated at their desks in Ms. Green’s second-grade classroom.

This was unusual. Most days, the students would be chatting and playing with each other. The normally loud and cheery students were uncharacteristically quiet. Even the twins were not talking with each other.

This was all because of the awful weather. It had been raining all weekend. The sky was covered with gloomy gray clouds, and, naturally, the kids felt down.

“Good morning class,” Ms. Green said.

Ms. Green was a fantastic teacher, and she normally had no problems getting her lessons started, but she knew it wasn’t going to be easy getting their attention today.

She thought she might get them started by asking about their weekends.

CHAPTER 2

What Did You Do This Weekend?

“Who would like to share with the class something exciting they did this weekend?” she asked energetically.

There was no reaction from the class.

“Sophia, what did you do this weekend? Anything exciting?”

“Umm… not really. I was supposed to go to the park with my dad, but it rained all weekend, so we just stayed home and watched TV,” Sophia sighed.

“Oh. Well, that doesn’t sound so bad. What about you, Matt? What did you do?” Ms. Green asked. Matt always had stories about his accomplishments. Maybe he would have something interesting to share with the class.

Excited that the spotlight was on him, Matt got up from his chair and cleared his throat. Sticking his chest out, he loudly announced to the class, “Since it rained all weekend, my mom let me play video games all day long! I finished three different games and won thirteen different trophies for being so awesome!”

“That’s… nice,” Ms. Green wavered. She wasn’t quite sure she wanted to encourage the kids to be sitting at home all weekend in front of their screens. Maybe that’s why the energy in this class was so low.

“So, no one has anything else interesting to share? Luke? What about you?”

“I, uh, played Monopoly a few times,” Luke replied quietly, unsure whether that qualified as interesting.

“Lovely!” Ms. Green clapped her hands. “At least one of you was playing board games with his family.

“Well,” Luke admitted sheepishly, “It wasn’t exactly with my family. My mom downloaded it onto the computer for me.”

Exasperated, Ms. Green threw her hands up in the air.

“Did anyone in this class NOT sit in front of their screens all weekend?”

After looking around at each other, the class noticed that only Dennis had his hand up.

“I stayed home memorizing the different life cycles of a frog. Would you like me to recite them?” Dennis said rather proudly.

What he said gave her an idea.

“Thank you, Dennis, I’ll take you up on that offer, but you may sit down for now.”

CHAPTER 3

Inspired

“So, class, what do you think I have learned about rainy days?”

They shrugged.

“That rainy weather stinks,” Sophia said.

The class snickered.

“That’s a terrible thing to think.” Ms. Greene gasped. “Rainy days can be a beautiful thing. If it didn’t rain, the plants wouldn’t grow, and there would be very little life on this planet.”

She walked between their desks and continued. “No, what I learned is that no one in this class, other than Dennis, is inspired on rainy days.”

“What’s inspired?” Ava asked.

“Inspired, is when you get ideas from somewhere. For example, I just had an idea when you all told me your weekend stories. The class inspired me,” Ms. Green explained. “I realized, that you guys aren’t inspired with ideas of what to do other than sitting around using your devices. When I was little, we didn’t have tablets and computers, so we did lots of activities.”

“So, what’s your idea?” Tom asked.

“First of all, maybe Dennis can explain to us the life cycle of a frog.”

CHAPTER 4

Life Cycles

Dennis gladly explained to the class what he had learned. He drew a circle on the board, drew a frog on the top, and explained, “See, a frog lays eggs, which hatch into tadpoles. These tadpoles grow up, their tails get thicker, and they start to sprout legs.”

He drew a rough picture of each stage around the circles.

“Their bodies get bigger and their tails get smaller. They sprout arms in the front and start looking more like frogs. They become froglets.”

Dennis looked at the class and continued “Then it begins all over again. They become frogs that lay eggs that…”

“Thank you very much Dennis,” Ms. Green cut him off. If she didn’t stop him now, he would repeat the cycle over and over again.

Dennis walked back to his seat with his head held high.

“It’s the same for the water cycle. It rains, water is collected on the ground, and when it’s hot, the water evaporates into the air, collecting in the sky as clouds.” She pointed at the frog’s life cycle, from start to finish. “Then it starts all over again. The clouds get heavy and it rains.”

“What else can you think of that goes round and round, time after time?” Ms. Green asked.

“A circle?” Mason questioned.

That wasn’t quite the answer she was looking for.

“A clock!” Most students chimed.

“Correct!” Ms. Green said. She drew lines inside the circle, from one side to the other, connecting them all in the middle.

“Now, it’s a wheel,” Grace shouted.

“Exactly!”

“I want all of you to grab a sheet of drawing paper from here, and fold it like I’m doing.” Ms. Green folded the paper in half, then again and twice diagonally, until it looked like an ice cream cone

“Now cut the top off in a small arc, and when you open it, you’ll get a pie circle with sixteen equal parts.”

What started as a quiet morning, slowly filled with the sounds of paper rustling, scissors snipping, and children chattering.

*That’s more like it.* Ms. Green thought to herself.

CHAPTER 5

Wheel of Fortune

When they were finished, some of them had pies looking like flowers and others with straight edges. With Ms. Green’s instructions, they had traced the lines and created another circle in the middle. They wrote down the eight numbers equal to their waking hours that excluded mealtimes.

“What is this supposed to be?” Alan asked.

Ms. Green laughed, realizing she had not yet told them.

“Why, I forgot to tell you all, we’re making an Activity Wheel! I was inspired by the TV game show, Wheel of Fortune, where you spin a wheel to get points while solving a puzzle. We’re going to write ideas of what we could do on a rainy day, in these different pies. When we are done with our wheel of ideas, we can spin a pencil on top to select the activities and the time when you would do them,” she explained.

“So, what indoor activities can we put in these slices that don’t include using screens?” She asked.

“Reading a book.”

“Drawing a picture!”

“Piecing a puzzle.”

“Playing board games.”

The students were throwing out great ideas, one after another. Ms. Green wondered how they could possibly have spent all weekend doing nothing.

“But I don’t have a puzzle,” Sophia said,

“Yeah, and I don’t have interesting books at home,” Addison added.

“I’ll let you all take a book out from the classroom to save for a rainy day,” Ms. Green offered. “As for everything else on the list, like playing board games, you could make your own! That could even be an activity as part of your pie.”

“Can we decorate our activity wheels?” Victoria asked.

“Absolutely! Color it, draw pictures, you can all do what you want with your wheel!” Ms. Green responded.

They spent all morning exchanging ideas, writing and erasing, focusing on their wheels. They handed in colorful round shapes with all kinds of creative ideas. Ideas included ‘help mom with sweeping and mopping the floor.’ Another read, ‘sort out your toys.’ But her favorite was, ‘pretend that you’re a cat until someone tells you to stop’.

Ms. Green gathered the colorful wheels as the kids went off to lunch. She spent the next hour laminating, trimming, and folding the edges of the clear plastic. Finally, she pinned them up in a special pattern near the windows.

Lunch time was over and as the bell rang, the students ran back into the classroom.

“What are you doing Ms. Green?” Victoria asked curiously.

“I stuck them on some sticks and straws and made pinwheels. They’re just so beautiful I want to look at them for a little bit longer. I thought we could display them here for a week before you bring them home on the weekend,” she said.

When everyone returned to their seats, she called for their attention.

“The nice thing about rainy days is that they are often windy. And we can take advantage of the wind to make something beautiful.” She opened the windows just a little and a tiny breeze came through the classroom.

At that moment, the pinwheels started turning one by one. Their movements and colors contrasted beautifully with the grey sky.

The class oohed in unison. Ms. Green was right, rainy days could also be beautiful.

Comprehension Questions

1. What activity was the class making?
2. Which sentence uses the word *inspire* correctly?
3. The cake was inspired with candles.
4. Frogs inspire into tadpoles.
5. “That’s a great inspire!” Tom exclaimed.
6. Playing video games inspires me to create my own game.
7. All of the above.
8. Nobody was excited to make their Wheel of Fortune?
9. True
10. False
11. What’s is not a good example of things that happen in a cycle?
12. Life cycle of frogs
13. Water cycle
14. Cycle of life
15. Bicycle
16. Ms. Green was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by Dennis, as well as the television game show, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to create the activity wheel.
17. To laminate means to cover something in clear plastic to protect it.
18. True
19. False

**Answer Key**

1. They were making activity wheels inspired by Wheel of fortune, for rainy days.
2. D
3. B
4. E
5. Inspired/Wheel of Fortune
6. A

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